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FREETHINKERS IN EUROPE

NATIONAL AND TRANSNATIONAL SECULARITIES, 1789–1920S

Edited by Carolin Kosuch

RELIGION AND SOCIETY

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Edited by
Gustavo Benavides, Frank J. Korom,
Karen Ruffle and Kocku von Stuckrad

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Daniela Haarmann studied history, ancient history, and musicology at the University of Vienna. In the years 2012 to 2015 she was Research Assistant for the history of veterinary medicine in the Habsburg Empire at the University of Veterinary Medicine of Vienna, and from 2015 to 2018 Prae-Doc and Research Assistant at the Institute of Classical Studies, University of Vienna, supported by the Doctoral Fellowship Program of the Austrian Academy of Science. In 2019, she held a Post-Doc scholarship of the Austrian Academy of Science. Beginning in autumn 2019, she is supported by a FWF-Schrödinger-scholarship at the Hungarian Academy of Science. Her research interests comprise the history of knowledge and science, the history

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Anton Jansson
Anton Jansson is a Swedish intellectual historian, who gained his PhD from the University of Gothenburg in 2017. His dissertation dealt with the intersection between Christian theology and political thought in the German *Vormärz* period. His current research is focused on two themes: the history of atheism and secularism in Sweden, and the history of the humanities in postwar Sweden. From 2019 he holds a position as a Postdoctoral Researcher at the Lund Centre for the History of Knowledge (LUCK), Lund University, and is also an affiliated researcher at the Department of Literature, History of Ideas, and Religion, University of Gothenburg. Jansson is one of the directors of the research network ISHASH (International Society for Historians of Atheism, Secularism, and Humanism).

Carolin Kosuch
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Daniel Laqua
Daniel Laqua is Associate Professor of European History at Northumbria University in Newcastle upon Tyne, UK. His work is concerned with the dynamics and tensions of transnational activism, covering a variety of international movements and organizations. He is the author of *The Age of Internationalism and Belgium, 1880–1930: Peace, Progress and Prestige* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013) as well as the (co-)editor of three edited volumes and three themed journal issues. He has also published a range of journal articles and book chapters; his articles in *Labour History Review* (2009) and the *European Review of History* (2014) as well as his chapter in Isabella Löhr and Bernhard Gißibl, eds, *Bessere Welten: Kosmopolitismus in den Geschichtswissenschaften* (Frankfurt/Main: Campus, 2017) have shed light on different aspects of international freethought.

Christoffer Leber
Christoffer Leber, PhD, studied modern history and German literature at LMU Munich, where he completed his Master's degree in 2014. From 2015 to 2018 he was a PhD student at the International Research Group "Religious Cultures in 19th and 20th Century Europe" at LMU Munich. His PhD project focused on the history of the German monist movement around 1900, relating it to the history of secularity in Imperial Germany. Since 2018, he is a Research Assistant at the History of Science Department at LMU Munich. His research interests include the history of science in nineteenth and twentieth century Germany and the intersection of science and politics.

Antoine Mandret-Degeilh
Antoine Mandret-Degeilh holds a PhD in political science from Sciences Po Paris (2015) and a Master's degree in political sociology, also from Sciences Po Paris (2007). His Master's thesis focused on the political and societal dimensions of the contemporary practice of republican baptism (also called civil baptism or civil godparenthood). His PhD is a socio-history of the kinship rituals celebrated by French and German municipalities (civil marriages, civil baptisms, Mother's Day, wedding anniversaries, etc.). Mandret-Degeilh is currently pursuing his research on the rites of municipal institutions and political symbolism in general, as well as on the symbolic construction of Franco-German relations at a local level.

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Claus Spenninger is a PhD-candidate in the history of science at LMU Munich. As a member of the International Research Training Group "Religious Cultures in 19th and 20th-Century Europe" he works on the relationship between science and religion. After studying history, history of science, and political science at LMU Munich and Caltech, he is currently working on his dissertation on the interconnections of science, religion, and politics in nineteenth-century scientific materialism.

Barbara Wagner
Barbara Wagner is a historian and Professor at the Institute of History, University of Warsaw. Her research centers on modern history and social history. Other research interests include the history of education, didactics, and civic education. She is the author of five books, among them *Przeobrażenia w edukacji historycznej w Polsce w latach 1945–1956* (Warsaw: COM SNP, 1986), dealing with the social history of education in Poland. Her latest book, *Uzależnieni wolnomyśliciele: Stowarzyszenie Myśli Wolnej w Polsce 1945–1951* (Warsaw: Instytut Historyczny Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 2002), is an in-depth study on the history of Polish freethought associations in the wake of communist politics after the Second World War. It provides explanations on the processes of secularization in Poland.

Abstracts

Costanza D'Elia

Group Portrait with Freethinker: Jacob Moleschott, Risorgimento Culture, and the Italian Nation-Building Process

This essay aims to shed light on the philosophical and political implications of the scientific materialist and atheist Jacob Moleschott's (1822–1893) thought and on his role during the process of Italian nation building. In particular, his relationship to Francesco De Sanctis (1817–1883), one of the founding fathers of the unified Italian nation state, will be analyzed. Moleschott and De Sanctis first met in Zurich as exiles after the failure of the Revolutions of 1848–49. Moleschott proved influential on De Sanctis, distancing him from Hegelianism. After 1860 and in the process of a radical reform of the university system, the latter, as first minister of public education in the new Italian state, offered Moleschott an academic position in Italy. Moleschott's teachings became very popular and contributed to the secularization of science in Italy, namely the detachment from the traditional philosophical framework and the endorsement of materialist and Darwinist positions which were fiercely refused by the Catholic Church. De Sanctis' and Moleschott's cases exemplify a particular "Italian way" of secularization in which intellectual renewal was intertwined with a marked anticlericalism – an important element in the building of the new, unified nation. Not necessarily atheist, this anticlericalism included claims for a truly Christian mandate, or the quest for a non-transcendent civic faith.

Laura Fournier-Finocchiaro

Garibaldi and Mazzini: Anticlericalism, Laicism, and the Concept of a National Religion

During the process of the Italian national unification, the Risorgimento, a strong anticlerical ideology came up. Freethinkers and "Neo-Ghibellines" joined forces to denounce papacy which seemed the main obstacle on the way to the Italian nation state. Despite their radicalism, there were very few supporters of infidelity in the ranks of those secularists. Rather, the positions adopted by the two leaders of the Italian unification movement, Giuseppe Garibaldi (1807–1882) and Giuseppe Mazzini (1805–1872), proved decisive for the culture of Italian freethinkers during the nineteenth century. Among the anticlerical and anti-papal views expressed in their writings, Garibaldi attacked the "vileness of priesthood" and defended state's laicism, while Mazzini struggled against the popes' authority in the name of a new national religion. Yet both also differed from the self-declared freethinkers of their time because Mazzini's and Garibaldi's specific anticlerical-

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ism did not necessarily separate politics and religion. In fact, and despite the negative terminology of anticlericalism, their ideas – deeply influential on Italian culture – conveyed a positive political ideology beyond reaction and destruction: the "fathers of the nation" aimed at building a new society based on a new religiosity.

Johannes Gleixner

Socialist Secularism between Nation, State, and the Transnational Movement: The International of Proletarian Freethinkers in Central and Eastern Europe

After the First World War, freethinkers in Germany and in newly established Czechoslovakia faced similar problems, albeit with different consequences. Before the war, both national organizations belonged to the most influential branches of the worldwide freethought movement. After the war, however, both were faced with the challenge of embodying the new paradigm of the democratic and progressive society while, at the same time, they had to deal with an ever-increasing mass public. In the long run, this constellation reduced their impact significantly. Consequently, the old question came up anew of whether freethinkers should ally with a political party or stay apolitical. Parts of the national freethought movements felt drawn to the newly established communist parties because their radical approach of challenging and changing society resonated well with them. Even though this alliance seemed quite natural and manifested mostly in an aggressive pursuit of propagating atheism, it also had its limits, as the case of the emerging *Союз воинствующих безбожников* (*Sojuz voinstvuiushchikh bezbozhnikov*, Soviet League of the Godless) exemplifies. This chapter aims to study the different frameworks in which several Czech and German freethought organizations interacted. A special focus will be on the collision of different expectations and timeframes, particularly on the International of Proletarian Freethinkers that went in opposition to its "bourgeois" freethought mother organization. Moreover, all the national organized freethinker groups had troubles finding a common denominator between an international organization and their own national ambitions, leading to diverging expectations of what a secularized society should look like. These tensions offer a fascinating insight into different "secularities," or rather: "secularisms," their interplay, and the process of finding their place on national as well as on European levels.

Daniela Haarmann

Freidenkerei, Libre-pensée, Szabadgondolkodás – Concepts of Freethinking during the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries

Different words carry different meanings, not only in various languages, but also within a language itself. This holds true for freethinking, secularism, and athe-

ism, too, three key terms of this volume. This paper traces the conceptual history of these notions in different languages, such as English, French, German, Hungarian, and Romanian, during the so-called "long nineteenth century" (1789–1918). It discusses the respective entries in contemporary encyclopedias and dictionaries and analyzes the written works of the most influential intellectual leaders of secularism in these areas of language. In three parts, the chapter traces the historical development of the concepts, reaching from a non-organized, loose collection of ideas developed by European scholars at the beginning of the eighteenth century to the organized movements at the end of the nineteenth century. The introductory part examines the initial situation by embedding freethinking, secularism, and atheism in the English, German, and French Enlightenment before 1789. The second and third parts analyze and compare the terms in the periods from 1789 to 1848 and from 1848 to 1918, respectively, to highlight similarities and differences in their structures and contents. Covering the period from revolution to restoration to radicalization, the chapter demonstrates that the lexicographic reception of freethinking, secularism, and atheism was highly influenced by the philosophical and political spirit of their age. Furthermore, it contributes to a translingual approach to conceptual history.

Anton Jansson

Friends and Foes: Two Secularisms in late Nineteenth-Century Sweden

Sweden, which historically has had a strongly Lutheran culture, today ranks among the most secular countries in the world. A first shift toward a more diverse and secular political and social landscape occurred in the late nineteenth century. Around the 1880s and 1890s several secularist organizations were founded, such as the *Föreningen för religionsfrihet* (Association for the Freedom of Religion) and the *Utilistiska samfundet* (Utilist Society). This was also a time for the foundation of the Swedish *folkrörelser* (popular movements), most notably the temperance movement, the revivalist/free church movement, and the labor movement. These are generally considered decisive for the establishment of the modern democratic Sweden. Swedish secularism needs to be understood in this context either as a popular movement of its own, or as part of the formation of these larger movements. In this chapter, I will focus on two different ways of conceiving and performing secularism at the high point of Swedish freethought around 1890. To this end, I will concentrate on two leading freethinkers of the time: the social democrat Hjalmar Branting (1860–1925), who was to become the Prime Minister of Sweden in the 1920s, and the utilist Viktor Lennstrand (1861–1895). Proceeding from this, I will discuss the freethinkers' legacy and role in the forging of secular modernity in Sweden.

Daniel Laqua

"The Most Advanced Nation on the Path of Liberty": Universalism and National Difference in International Freethought

Freethinkers frequently cast their views and actions in universalist terms, claiming that their cause transcended national differences. From 1880 onwards, they also maintained an international organization, the *Fédération Internationale de la Libre Pensée* (International Freethought Federation, IFF), to advance secularist aims across national borders. Yet despite their professions of unity, specific national visions and understandings of "secularity" featured prominently within international freethought circles. This chapter investigates such tensions. After highlighting different national contexts and terminologies surrounding freethought and the promotion of secular ideas, it examines how the IFF staged and celebrated commonalities through its congresses. In this context, the veneration – and, in some instances, appropriation – of particular individuals as "freethought martyrs" is considered in particular depth. Finally, the chapter discusses the IFF's Prague congress of 1907, as this event allows us to trace some of the wider issues in question. Ongoing tensions surrounding Czech–German relations in Bohemia clearly affected the congress which became a forum for the expression of national anxieties but also for affirmations of transnational bonds.

Christoffer Leber

Integration through Science? Nationalism and Internationalism in the German Monist Movement (1906–1918)

The *Deutsche Monistenbund* (German Monist League), founded in 1906, was a leading middle-class freethought movement in the German Empire. It promoted a universal worldview (*Weltanschauung*) based on natural sciences. As a main representative of German secularism at the turn of the century, the Monist League shaped different concepts of secularity and added them to the idea of the modern German nation. Monists not only popularized a scientific worldview; they also opposed the Christian churches and conservative forces in Wilhelmine Germany. This paper examines the conflicting relationship between nationalism and internationalism present in the writings of Ernst Haeckel (1834–1919) and Wilhelm Ostwald (1853–1932), head of the Monist League from 1911–1915. Drawing on a close reading of Haeckel's and Ostwald's monist accounts, I argue that the self-image of the monist movement oscillated between nationalism and internationalism. Although Ostwald was a strong defender of internationalism, especially before 1914, he believed in the supremacy of Western – not to say German – science. In his writings, two concepts were in conflict: the universality of science and the particularity of the nation. Referring to a nationalist and interna-

tionalist rhetoric at once, he and other monists defined their own path to a secular nation.

Antoine Mandret-Degeilh

A Secular Avant-garde? About the Unknown Freethinker Roots of Today's French Civil Baptism

This chapter studies the unknown freethinker roots of French civil baptism, a family ceremony nowadays celebrated at French town halls. The ritual borrows from Catholic baptism: during the ceremony two persons — generally a woman and a man — are appointed to be godparents for a child. Descendant of the so-called "red baptisms" conducted in French communist municipalities of the interwar period, civil baptism originally was developed by freethinkers during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries with strong secularist leanings. This contribution of early secularists to today's French municipal secularity remains a fact still widely unrecognized. Though nowadays civil baptism's performance is neither authorized nor prohibited but left to the discretion of mayors, it has strongly developed in France during the last three decades. But contrary to its ideologically charged secularist origins, the large majority of today's parents, by opting for civil baptism, do not pursue any anticlerical or anti-Catholic, and not necessarily anti-religious goals. Rather, their first concern is to create a spiritual kinship at the lowest possible symbolic cost, which is why they prefer civil baptism over the Catholic ritual. The administrative procedures, to them, seem less burdensome at the town hall compared to the church. As this chapter shows, an initially secular practice takes on different meaning in the course of history.

Katharina Neef

Politicizing a (Non)Religious Act: The Secularist Church Exit Propaganda of the Komitee Konfessionslos (1908–1914)

In 1910, the secularist activism network intensified its propaganda on church exit. It concentrated forces to make visible the supposedly advanced secularization of the German society. This chapter centers on the *Komitee Konfessionslos* (Committee Un-Denominational), a prominent secularist initiative in those days. By analyzing the Committee's publications not only its activities and its impact on society are reconstructed, but – from a larger perspective – the potentials, means, and limits of propaganda used by fringe groups in the Wilhelmine Era are discussed. In particular, this chapter probes the specific communicative strategies of the German secularists, who wanted to be acknowledged as scientific and not as ideological or political players in the public sphere. Above all, the scientific debate on secularist activists offers a contra-intuitive, new view

on the development of the sciences in modernity. Other than their self-image suggests, the sciences were far from being unaffected by non-academic life and not as objective as they claimed to be. Rather, they have been shaped as a cultural practice under the influence of societal claims, necessities, and intrusions. In this process, secularism has been a key player from the outset.

Claus Spenninger

A Movement That Never Materialized: The Perception of Scientific Materialism as a Secular Movement in Nineteenth-Century Germany

Scientific materialism dominated the German-speaking debates on science and religion in the 1850s. Its main proponents – the zoologist Carl Vogt (1817–1895), the physiologist Jacob Moleschott (1822–1893), and the physician Ludwig Büchner (1824–1899) – propagated a science-based worldview that denied the existence of immateriality. Everything was to be explained by the laws of matter. The materialists sparked a polemical debate about the adequate role of science and religion in modern society. However, it would be misleading to assume a coherent movement or institutionalized group behind scientific materialism. Its proponents were only loosely in contact with each other and never founded an official organization dedicated to their views. Yet for their contemporaries it still seemed like Vogt, Moleschott, and Büchner figured as the leaders of a well-organized, growing secular mass movement. This chapter explores the fragile group identity of materialists as well as the ways in which their opponents interpreted materialism as a movement. Their perception not only came to dominate the debates over materialism but also contributed to the broader discourse over secularism after the Revolutions of 1848–49.

Barbara Wagner

Secularity in the New State: The Case of Poland

This chapter aims to present the main phases in the history of the Polish freethought movement, which commenced its organized activity in Paris in July 1906, and further developed in the new Polish state established after the First World War. The history of the relationship between Polish freethinkers and state authorities proved very conflictual. Initially, the government allowed for their legal open activity, but later disbanded the freethought organizations. Polish freethought was heavily influenced by both Western European philosophical thought and organized freethinkers of other countries. Yet Polish secularists also developed their own unique ideology corresponding to the complex national setting in Poland, where ethnic minorities constituted one third of the society. Against the backdrop of the particular religious situation in Poland with Roman Catholics representing 68% of the population, secularity, as exemplified

by Polish freethinkers, took on a specific character. Shortly after 1918, a divergence in views between the leaders of the Polish freethought movement became evident. Parts of the organized Polish freethinkers established contact with the Polish labor movement, while the most radical Polish activists were fascinated with communism and admired post-revolutionary Russia. In these regards, Polish secularism and politics sealed a strategic alliance.

Carolin Kosuch

Freethinkers in Modern Europe's Secularities: Introduction

Classical theories of secularization have been called into question for some time now. Their attempt to systematize a continuing process of religious differentiation and explain religion's apparent loss of importance in modern societies – along with their assumption that modernity renders this development irreversible – has been challenged by numerous sociological, religious, anthropological, and historical studies, which have broadened and diversified our picture of the place and value religion has held in past and present European and non-European societies.[1] It is to their credit that we understand the secular today more as an epistemic category, shaped by a dynamic interplay with the religious. Following cultural anthropologist Talal Asad, the religious and the secular both seem determined by the same discursive process – that is, they are not fixed categories per se, but made and remade, each influencing the other's definition and contours.[2] Current studies on the topic are conducted mostly in the field of "secular studies," which have been experiencing a boom lately, especially in anthropology, ethnology, and sociology, with a focus on contemporary non-European

1 For critical approaches to secularization, see Peter Berger, ed., *The Desecularization of the World: Resurgent Religion and World Politics* (Washington: Ethics and Public Policy Center, 1999); Steve Bruce, ed., *Religion and Modernization: Sociologists and Historians Debate the Secularization Thesis* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2001); Olaf Blaschke, *Konfessionen im Konflikt: Deutschland zwischen 1800 und 1970, ein zweites konfessionelles Zeitalter* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2002); Friedrich Wilhelm Graf, *Die Wiederkehr der Götter: Religion in der modernen Kultur* (Munich: C.H.Beck, 2007); Manuel Borutta, "Genealogie der Säkularisierungstheorie: Zur Historisierung einer großen Erzählung der Moderne," *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 36, no. 3 (2010): 347–376; Benjamin Ziemann, "Säkularisierung und Neuformierung des Religiösen: Religion und Gesellschaft in der zweiten Hälfte des 20. Jahrhunderts," *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte* 51 (2011): 3–36; and Rebekka Habermas, ed., *Negotiating the Secular and the Religious in the German Empire: Transnational Approaches* (Oxford/New York: Berghahn, 2019).

2 See Talal Asad, *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003), 1–17. Asad's approach has to be critically revaluated, particularly if applied in studies with a historical focus. See Rebekka Habermas, "Negotiating the Religious and the Secular in Modern German History," in Habermas, *Negotiating the Secular and the Religious*, 6–7.

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regions.[3] In comparison, the numbers of historical studies dealing with the subject in nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Europe is relatively modest.[4]

This absence seems surprising, as the ideologically charged and politically significant interplay between the secular and the religious substantially shaped the histories, cultures, and mentalities of the European long nineteenth century. Opposing forces that nonetheless frequently intersected, the secular-religious dichotomy deeply influenced the era, both in institutional-political ways and in terms of worldviews and beliefs. The former led to politicized debates on secularism and the politics of secularization in a time characterized just as much by religious renewal and the ongoing importance of religious institutions and authorities in politics and society, while the latter inspired a shift in power relations that granted the individual more say in how they chose to interpret their belief system.

In epistemic and anthropological terms, the secular seems the natural counterpart of the religious, and therefore carries a certain significance that transcends time and culture. When focusing on historical Europe, though, once it became deeply involved with the political sphere in the late eighteenth century, the secular has manifested in the form of the above-mentioned secularism and secularization.[5] A historical perspective, in these respects, offers the benefit of obser-

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3 See, e. g., Rajeev Bhargava, *The Promise of India's Secular Democracy* (New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010); Marian Burchardt, Matthias Middell and Monika Wohlrab-Sahr, eds, *Multiple Secularities Beyond the West: Religion and Modernity in the Global Age* (Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter, 2015); or Daniel Kinitz, *Die andere Seite des Islam: Säkularismus-Diskurs und muslimische Intellektuelle im modernen Ägypten* (Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter, 2016).

4 See, e. g., the studies of Owen Chadwick, *The Secularization of the European Mind in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990); Manuel Borutta, *Antikatholizismus: Deutschland und Italien im Zeitalter der europäischen Kulturkämpfe* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2010); Lisa Dittrich, *Antiklerikalismus in Europa: Öffentlichkeit und Säkularisierung in Frankreich, Spanien und Deutschland (1848–1914)* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2014); Todd Weir, *Secularism and Religion in Nineteenth-Century Germany: The Rise of the Fourth Confession* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014); and Habermas, *Negotiating the Religious and the Secular*. This volume aims at filling this research gap further.

5 The term secularism "can refer most broadly to a whole range of modern worldviews and ideologies concerning 'religion', which may be consciously held and reflexively elaborated or, alternatively, which have taken hold of us and function as taken-for-granted assumptions that constitute the reigning epistemic *doxa* or 'unthought'. But secularism also refers to different normative-ideological state projects, as well as to different legal-constitutional frameworks of separation of state and religion and to different models of differentiation of religion, ethics, morality, and law." (José Casanova, "The Secular, Secularizations, Secularisms," in *Rethinking Secularism*, ed. Craig Calhoun, Mark Juergensmeyer and Jonathan VanAntwerpen [New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011], 66.) Even though secularism overlaps with secularization, there are dif-

vational distance, helps to reconnect these broad epistemic categories to concrete events and political backgrounds in a particular time and links them to a rich set of printed and unprinted historical sources.

This focus on the European long nineteenth century is not meant to imply that secularization and secularism were without historical precursors reaching far back into history, at least as far as Martin Luther's Reformation and the Confessional Age that followed.[6] Still, it was in this era and region that they took on ideological features, along with a central and charged position in a culture war being waged against Catholicism by influential public intellectual and political figures holding anticlerical[7] and scientific materialist[8] views – the freethinkers.[9]

ferences when "secularization" is used to describe the processual replacement of religiously based public bodies, social institutions, but also views and opinions, by secular, that is, non-religious ones. On the twisted history of the term secularization, see Hermann Lübbe, *Säkularisierung: Geschichte eines ideenpolitischen Begriffs* (Freiburg: Alber, 2003).

6 See Philip S. Gorski, "Was the Confessional Era a Secular Age?," in *Umstrittene Säkularisierung: Soziologische und historische Analysen zur Differenzierung von Religion und Politik*, ed. Karl Gabriel, Christel Gärtner and Detlef Pollack (Berlin: Berlin University Press, [2]2014), 189–224. Some historians even trace back the roots of secularization to the Investiture Controversy of the Middle Ages. See Gerd Althoff, "Libertas ecclesiae oder die Anfänge der Säkularisierung im Investiturstreit?," in *Umstrittene Säkularisierung: Soziologische und historische Analysen zur Differenzierung von Religion und Politik*, ed. Karl Gabriel, Christel Gärtner and Detlef Pollack (Berlin: Berlin University Press, [2]2014), 78–100.

7 Anticlericalism functioned as the main cultural code in the European culture wars. It has strong secularist leanings but forms a category of its own with its hostile, polemicizing focus on Christian church officials of all denominations. (See Lisa Dittrich, "Europäischer Antiklerikalismus: Eine Suche zwischen Säkularisierung und Religionsreform," *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 45, no. 1 [2019]: 5–36.) A concise definition of anticlericalism provides Wolfram Kaiser in stating that anticlericalism "was at once a deeper rooted and a politically more heterogeneous movement that can be discerned from an analysis focused exclusively on parliamentary debates and liberal governmental measures." (Wolfram Kaiser, "'Clericalism – that is our Enemy'!: European Anticlericalism and the Culture Wars," in *Culture Wars: Secular–Catholic Conflict in Nineteenth Century Europe*, ed. Christopher Clark and Wolfram Kaiser [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003], 48.) Anticlericalism is also a vital part of anti-Catholicism, yet it carries a broader significance in turning against religious authorities in general, including Protestant and Jewish ones. (See also Nigel Aston and Michael Cragoe, eds, *Anticlericalism in Britain, c. 1500–1914* [Stroud: Sutton, 2001].) However, both anticlericalism and anti-Catholicism primarily targeted the "traditional" Catholic clergy as many anticlericalists and anti-Catholicists stemmed from a Protestant, liberal Catholic, or leftwing, that is, socialist, anarchist, or communist, background. A special issue of the *Journal of Contemporary History* (3/2018) is dedicated to a comparison of nineteenth- and twentieth-century culture wars with focus on the interwar period and its ideological clashes. The contributions aim to stress the role of religion in the politicized Age of Extremes which seems to echo those of the nineteenth century. (See Todd Weir, "Introduction:

Equipped with sharpened polemical weaponry, these radical players wanted the rapid secularization of their respective nations, and envisioned secularism as the basis of a nascent modern society. It was due at least in part to their continuous efforts that the specifics and aims of secularism were further defined:[10] freethinkers called for the propagation of a worldview based on natural sciences; the separation of church and state; the coordination of measures to leave the church; legal and social acceptance for secular alternatives to religious life rituals, such as civil baptism, the *Jugendweihe* (civil confirmation), civil marriage, and cremation; and the substitution of religious education by non-religious moral or ethical instruction in schools. With these measures, Europe's freethinkers intended to reduce the influence of religion on society and culture, and in the long run tried to remove it from the center of public institutions. On a political level their goal was to re-balance interpretations of culture and discursive power structures, re-grounding the secular-religious entanglement in favor of the secular. Following this freethinking logic, the residues of religion should be relocated in the private sphere, in the form of moral and ethical convictions – or eventually given up completely.

What the historical European freethinkers established in nineteenth-century Europe has echoes in the multifaceted secular-religious discourse in many parts of the world today, with varying outcomes and shifting implications. In the nineteenth century, though, their radical goals often intersected with more moderate attitudes adopted by Europe's Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish liberals and liberal socialists. This large group furthered a self-understanding based on science, civic values, and reason, but did not fight institutionalized religion the way the

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Comparing Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Culture Wars," *Journal of Contemporary History* 53, no. 3 [2018]: 489 – 502.)

8 Scientific materialism was an influential concept advocated and popularized by intellectuals and scientists such as Jacob Moleschott, Ludwig Büchner, Carl Vogt, or Heinrich Czolbe. Deeply shaped by Darwin, those secularists developed a worldview based on natural sciences and positivism. Their concepts more or less openly opposed the Christian doctrine and significantly contributed to freethinking positions. On scientific materialism, see Annette Wittkau-Horgby, *Materialismus: Entstehung und Wirkung in den Wissenschaften des 19. Jahrhunderts* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1998).

9 On freethinkers, see the following.

10 See Asad, *Formations of the Secular*, 23. For historical figures such as the freethinkers, modernity and secularity went hand in hand. This rather ideological view is contradicted by recent trends that indicate the opposite in many cases. Modernity and secularity align, when secularism is equated with a positive notion of liberation from religion (a "historical stadial consciousness" [Casanova, "The Secular, Secularizations, Secularisms," 67]). The example of the United States and other non-European states show that – if this condition is not fulfilled – societies can be modern without being overall secular.

small minority of radical secularists did. Rather, they assigned religion a new place in society, whether as humanism or civil religion.[11] Still, they added to the interplay of the secular and religious, and transitioned fluidly to making more radical demands.

This volume focuses on the historical players of radical European secularism. It aims to shed light on Europe's multifaceted freethinkers, which it frames as early secular agents, notably on their ideas, projects, networks, associations, and their sometimes heterogeneous, sometimes convergent goals in the age of European nation building. The chapters of this book present freethinkers' political and cultural visions for the forming or consolidating European nation states: these radical secularists set high hopes in the modern state, despite its often expressly Christian foundations. Because of the homogenizing tendency of the national project and in accordance with their own ideologically charged progressivist, liberal, socialist, and modernizing viewpoints, Europe's freethinkers expected the alliance of throne and altar soon to break up. They took it for granted that a scientific worldview would eventually triumph, paving the way for a renegotiation of the place and value of religion in society. In order to speed up this process and to distribute freethinking ideas, radical secularists such as the Italian iconic political figures Giuseppe Garibaldi and Giuseppe Mazzini, the Swedish social democrat Hjalmar Branting, and the scientific materialist and physician Jacob Moleschott used their professional networks, associations, and publications, but also prominently engaged in the political process of nation building, as the chapters by Laura Fournier-Finocchiaro, Costanza D'Elia, and Anton Jansson emphasize in addressing Italian and Swedish secularisms. The state, however, did not follow this freethinking direction unconditionally. Quite the contrary: to state authorities, radical secularists often seemed suspicious, uncomfortably close to socialism and revolutionary sentiment and in general inclined to challenge the status quo by criticizing religion and its representatives. Thus, especially in times of war, political conservativism, and totalitarianism, freethinkers were faced with surveillance and persecution, leading to the dissolution of their associations, as Barbara Wagner's and other chapters of this volume explore.

With its emphasis, our book ties into recent attempts to de-ideologize secularism and to embed its concrete historical impact in the context of a specific time, politics, and mindset.[12] The authors of this volume also strive to historicize

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11 Weir, *Secularism and Religion.*

12 See, e.g., Borutta, "Genealogie der Säkularisierungstheorie," 347–376; Lisa Dittrich, "European Connections, Obstacles, and the Search for a New Concept of Religion: The Freethought

certain notions connected to the secularist enterprise, such as “progress” and “modernization,” and position them at the intersection of the fierce secular political propaganda that came from Europe’s freethinkers and existing secularizing tendencies in the European societies the freethinkers were part of.

While we acknowledge that secularity and modernity, in their various forms, unquestionably take on global dimensions,[13] our book deals with their European incarnations, including Central-European secularist pioneers, from a historical perspective in the first era of modernity – that is, the period from the late eighteenth century to the first decades of the twentieth century.[14] This seems reasonable, as freethinkers often acted on national and transnational *European* levels, inspired each other, and, in many cases, maintained European networks. Their efforts led to an influential discourse that added to secularist ideas in other parts of the world, and – as the century moved on – was in return enriched by developments from abroad.[15]

This volume adopts a rather wide temporal span, starting from the Enlightenment and the French Revolution as the initial points of secularism in politics and society, not least in legal and institutional terms, and ending with the 1920s, which were crucial for Central Europe’s young nations and the secularist activities therein. The 1840s, the 1880s, and the First World War, the age of totalitarianisms, and particularly the period after 1945 initiated further major shifts in the

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Movement as an Example of Transnational Anti-Catholicism in the Second Half of the Nineteenth Century,” *Journal of Religious History* 39, no. 2 (2015): 261–279.

13 On the multifaceted dimensions of modernity, see Jürgen Osterhammel, *The Transformation of the World: A Global History of the Nineteenth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015). On the global scales of secularity, see Marion Eggert and Lucian Hölscher, eds, *Religion and Secularity: Transformations and Transfers of Religious Discourses in Europe and Asia* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2013).

14 On the differentiation between the first (orthodox) and second (reflexive) modernity, see Ulrich Beck, Anthony Giddens and Scott Lash, *Reflexive Modernization: Politics, Tradition and Aesthetics in the Modern Social Order* (Cambridge: Polity, 2007).

15 On freethinkers in the United States of the same time period, see Susan Jacoby, *Freethinkers: A History of American Secularism* (New York: Henry Holt, 2005). See for the European connections of US-freethinkers: Katja Rampelmann, *Im Licht der Vernunft: Die Geschichte des deutsch-amerikanischen Freidenker-Almanachs von 1878 bis 1901* (Stuttgart: Steiner, 2003). Outside of Europe and in addition to the United States, freethinkers were, e.g., influential also in Australia already in the nineteenth century. A detailed study on their impact, however, is still missing. Besides, anticlericalism leading to a secularist policy was particularly strong in Central and South America.

structure of European secularisms, which would be sufficient material for another volume entirely – and therefore are not at the center of our considerations.[16]

The era and region the chapters of this book deal with were characterized by massive political, religious, social, cultural, economic, scientific, and technological changes.[17] They manifested in and simultaneously were triggered by the profound upheavals of the Enlightenment, the Industrial Revolution, the political revolutions of 1789, 1848–49, and 1917, and the First World War. With the broad removal of social and economic barriers, the extension of infrastructure, the granting of personal rights, freedom, and liberalism, a climate of unprecedented mobility and social permeability was created. Promoted by scientific and technological innovation and educational campaigns addressing larger parts of the populations, European modernities set once-statically organized societies in motion, leading them to break with conventions, beliefs, traditions, social norms, and securities. Knowledge and values that were once taken for granted, together with the Christian conception of creation, were put to the test by scientists and scholars, including Faraday, Schleiden, Darwin, Mendel, Freud, Durkheim, Einstein, and many others. Side by side with philosophers, artists, liberals, socialists, and radical-democratic politicians, several of those scientists, especially the natural scientists, spearheaded the most significant changes of their century. Catchwords like rationality, reason, positivism, and progress spread and reached a growing number of people. National movements formed that in some cases visibly adopted secularist views, sometimes using them – as in the Czech, French, Italian, or Polish cases – to draft strong secularist political agendas when shaping their state constitutions.

In the course of the century, numerous new religious, political, and ideological ideas, including socialism and anarchism, the woman's liberation movement, spiritism, esotericism, theosophy, the European branches of Buddhism, and vegetarianism – just to name a few – gained popularity and added to the existing confessions, political positions, and worldviews.[18] This multitude of choices enabled individuals to express their opinions in different and more

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16 For a periodization of secularism, see Todd Weir, "Säkularismus (Freireligiöse, Freidenker, Monisten, Ethiker, Humanisten)," in *Handbuch der Religionsgeschichte im deutschsprachigen Raum*, vol. 6.2: *20. Jahrhundert: Religiöse Positionen und soziale Formationen*, ed. Lucian Hölscher and Volkard Krech (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2016), 189–218.

17 On the era of modernity, see Peter Gay, *Modernism: The Lure of Heresy* (New York: Norton, 2007). See also Zygmunt Bauman, *Modernity and Ambivalence* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990).

18 See, e.g., Diethart Kerbs and Jürgen Reulecke, eds, *Handbuch der deutschen Reformbewegungen 1880–1933* (Wuppertal: P. Hammer, 1998).

autonomous ways. Among these new movements, radical secularism started as a small and primarily male project, with women a target group to be emancipated and "freed" from religious influences, closely following a broader tendency toward anti-Catholicism.[19] However, a few stalwart female freethinkers participated in the European secular movements, including British feminists Annie Besant and Harriet Law. In their numerous public speeches, articles, and written disputes, they were active in fields far beyond charity and caring, the focal areas society assigned to women at the time. And even though vocational training and higher education were far from being broadly available to women in their era – an issue that would become the core of many European women's liberation movements – these female freethinkers went further than many other feminists: their dedication to traditionally male-coded topics such as philosophy, science, politics, and atheism, their confident public appearances, and their thorough scholarly reasoning were met with curiosity, shock, resistance, and ambivalence, even by other freethinkers. In any case, their ideas and actions proved quite provocative for women who had just entered the public.[20]

In the rapidly growing cities, with their new factories, their accelerated rhythms, their countless possibilities for consumption, artistic creativity, and entertainment, and their diversifying public sphere, European modernity found its most vivid expression. But also its dark side became apparent, namely in the precarious conditions of existence that shaped the everyday realities of many Europeans, and – together with new pressures, constraints, obligations, and fears – weighed heavily on their shoulders. Against this backdrop, Europe's modernities seem an age of reconciling opposites.

It was on these shifting grounds that freethinkers developed their ideas and influence. Not least due to the heterogeneous cultural, historical, and religious backgrounds of these agents in an era of upheaval, secularity took on different forms, too: "[t]he way secularity figures within configurations of modernity is fundamentally shaped by the *long* [*sic*] *durée* of civilizational history,"[21] as Monika Wohlrab-Sahr points out. Her idea of "multiple secularities," which builds upon Shmuel Eisenstadt's notion of "multiple modernities,"[22] is vital for our vol-

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19 See Borutta, *Antikatholizismus*, 366–386.

20 See Laura Schwartz, *Infidel Feminism: Secularism, Religion and Women's Emancipation, England 1830–1914* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2017), 5. For further reading, see Joan Wallach Scott, *Sex and Secularism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018).

21 Marian Burchardt and Monika Wohlrab-Sahr, "Multiple Secularities: Religion and Modernity in the Global Age," *International Sociology* 28, no. 6 (11/2013): 605.

22 See Shmuel Eisenstadt, *Comparative Civilizations and Multiple Modernities* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2003), 679–910.

ume. It helps us to explore how exactly the secularities were defined and negotiated by Europe's freethinking secularists, how they relate to the religious, and how they were implemented as political projects in society and state policies, with national and transnational ramifications.

Our book works with a rather wide definition of freethinkers, including "freethinking" or "freethought" as intellectual concepts. The terminology refers to the flexible and mutating self-designations of individuals loosely united by a movement, which in turn comprised associations, clubs, magazines, lectures, publications, and political and cultural initiatives. They shared a certain set of broadly defined values and convictions, most prominently a longing for worldliness – that is, the separation of church and state and the promotion of a scientifically based, inner-worldly, rational, empiric, and positivist worldview. This, of course – in line with their ambivalence to more moderate stances mentioned above – does not mean that some freethinkers would not have shown an interest in radically re-valuing Christianity itself, purifying it from its alleged defects and turning it into the moral base of the newly formed nation. Many freethinkers were also curious about cultural reformist, pantheist, and even spiritualist and esoteric ideas.[23] Thus, in addition to their associations with freethought movements, some secularists also joined branches of the life reform movement, the peace movement, or new religious circles like theosophism or anthroposophism.[24] Nevertheless, or even for this very reason, their aims remained secular, and they struggled passionately for a secular society rather than one interwoven with organized, politically influential religion, for secular political and social in-

23 So called occultist, spiritualist, or esoteric ideas did not form the distinct "Other" of the modern striving for scientific rationalism, but rather contributed to promoting this aspiration. Because they shared central assumptions such as the belief in science and its methodology, and heavily criticized the Christian churches, freethinkers could enter such circles while maintaining their membership in the secularist camp. At this point we again encounter the secular-religious entwinement. (See Corinna Treitel, *A Science for the Soul: Occultism and the Genesis of the German Modern* [Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004]; Monika Neugebauer-Wölk, Renko Geffarth and Markus Meumann, eds, *Aufklärung und Esoterik: Wege in die Moderne* [Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter, 2013].)

24 See Weir, "Säkularismus," 194. See also the concept of "multiple deviance" developed by religious studies scholar Heinz Mürmel (University of Leipzig) that captures the simultaneous activities of freethinkers (and other religiously and culturally nonconformist figures) in various reform groups. (For a theoretical outline, see Katharina Neef, "Multiple Devianz: Zu Fassbarkeit und Struktur eines alternativ-kulturellen Phänomens," in *Devianz und Dynamik: Festschrift für Hubert Seiwert zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. Edith Franke, Christoph Kleine and Heinz Mürmel [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2014], 185–203.) Notwithstanding persisting differences, ideologies, worldviews and reform efforts merged into a heterogeneous, deviant field towards the end of the nineteenth century.

stitutions, and for a secular morality based on equality, reason, individual responsibility, and autonomy, while polemicizing against the Christian churches with their influential links to politics, their supposed paternalism, their backwardness, and their exploitation.

But we also take into account that scientific materialist, monist, radical anticlericalist, and – from a political perspective – radical liberal, socialist, communist, and anarchist stances added to, were closely related to, or were even intertwined with freethinking secularism in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.[25] The chapters by Laura Fournier-Finocchiaro, Costanza D'Elia, Christoffer Leber, and Claus Spenninger in this volume are dedicated to the study of some of these freethinking agents, exploring secularism's ranges of ideas and networks, its influencers, and its promoters in the nineteenth century.

These different ideological foundations are to some degree related to the various social backgrounds of the freethinkers, as is particularly highlighted in the chapters of Katharina Neef and Antoine Mandret-Degeilh. In its early stages, radical secularism in Europe was promoted mainly by educated upper-middle-class men. However, this rather bourgeois tendency was complemented by proletarian secularist branches once the growing labor movements and the organized lower-middle classes gained importance socially and politically toward the end of the century. Some, though not all, of the freethinking positions found their equivalents in proletarian, communist, and anarchist circles, and were promoted emphatically by leading socialists – above all, rigorous religious criticism and anticlericalism, often framed as an element of the class struggle.[26] This politicization proved especially important for Central European freethinkers, who were faced with the siren's call of the Bolshevik Revolution even

25 See, e. g., Frederick Gregory, *Scientific Materialism in Nineteenth Century Germany* (Dordrecht/Boston: D. Reidel Publishing Company, 1977); Edward Royle, *Radicals, Secularists and Republicans: Popular Freethought in Britain, 1866 – 1915* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1980); Jochen-Christoph Kaiser, *Arbeiterbewegung und organisierte Religionskritik: Proletarische Freidenkerverbände in Kaiserreich und Weimarer Republik* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1981); Guido Verucci, *L'Italia laica prima e dopo l'unità 1848—1876: Anticlericalismo, libero pensiero e ateismo nella società italiana* (Rome/Bari: Laterza, 1981); Frank Simon-Ritz, *Die Organisation einer Weltanschauung: Die freigeistige Bewegung im Wilhelminischen Deutschland* (Gütersloh: Kaiser, 1996); Jacqueline Lalouette, *La Libre Pensée en France, 1848—1940* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1997); and Michael Rectenwald, *Nineteenth-Century British Secularism: Science, Religion, and Literature* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016).
26 See Kaiser, "Clericalism," 56 – 57; 59. See also Sebastian Prüfer, *Sozialismus statt Religion: Die deutsche Sozialdemokratie vor der religiösen Frage, 1863 – 1890* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2002).

more than their Western European equivalents, as the chapters of Barbara Wagner, Johannes Gleixner, and Daniel Laqua show.[27]

But the convergence of scientific and historical materialism had its limits: while the former leaned more toward changing religion into a worldview based on scientific findings, experiment, and observation, which would in turn help to solve social and economic problems, the latter aimed at changing economies and societies more directly and more profoundly, turning hierarchies and power relations upside down by political means. Freethinkers and Marxists also differed regarding the question of individual autonomy and personal development versus class struggle and collective, not primarily personal advancement, with the freethinkers leaning toward the former and the Marxists the latter. This fundamental difference in direction caused the formation of factions in the freethought movement, even within their respective national contexts. As the historical circumstances changed, with bourgeois culture giving way to an unstable peace and the lure of communism after the First World War, freethinkers tended more and more toward politics.

Given the importance of terminology and conceptual distinctions in the complex fields of secularism and freethinking, this volume opens with a chapter dedicated to these subjects, authored by Daniela Haarmann. She traces the conceptual histories of terms vital for our book, such as atheism, deism, freethinking, and secularism, based on their respective entries in seminal eighteenth- and nineteenth-century historical European encyclopedias and reference works in five language areas (English, French, German, Hungarian, and Romanian). In her chapter, she studies the development of these notions from their first appearance to their manifestations as organized movements. In doing so, Haarmann is able to show that their reception was highly influenced by political constellations, by various cultural and religious backgrounds, and by different intellectual traditions reflecting the heterogeneity of secular concepts in Europe. To give our readers an impression of the freethinkers' authentic tones and diverse backgrounds, this and all other chapters of this volume include selected quotations in the original languages next to the English translations.

27 See, e.g., Brian Porter-Szűcs, *Faith and Fatherland: Catholicism, Modernity, and Poland* (New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 336. For Czech anticlericalism, see Stanislav Balík, Lukáš Fasora, Jiří Hanuš and Marek Vlha, *Der tschechische Antiklerikalismus: Quellen, Themen und Gestalt des tschechischen Antiklerikalismus in den Jahren 1848–1938* (Vienna: LIT, 2016), 368. On Czech freethinkers in the nineteenth century, see also Jana Marková, *Religiöse Konzepte im tschechischen nationalen Diskurs (1860–1885)* (Hildesheim/Zurich/New York: Georg Olms, 2016), 111–113.

Arranged in three parts, the following ten chapters center on the freethinkers' history, as well as their organizations, dynamics, and networks. They explore social backgrounds, practices, and projects, the reception of ideas, and freethinkers' relations to politics. The freethinkers' diverse cultural, national, and religious settings are discussed, in particular the Belgian, Czech, French, German, Italian, Swedish, Polish, and Russian contexts, against the backdrop of Europe's rich plurality of Christianities. The structure of the volume mirrors our attempt to grasp this diversity: its three sections are organized along broader, connecting topics, not according to geographical, confessional, or political considerations. They study Catholic and Protestant cultures as well as the different national situations of various European freethinker groups, following the idea of the heterogeneity of the secular. This allows for an in-depth analysis of national and transnational viewpoints. Hence the chapters written by historians, philologists, political scientists, and religious studies scholars will deal with the many levels of conceptual framing and politicization, along with the different degrees of influence these processes exerted on policy, their diverse modes of institutionalization, and their varying relations with religion, especially how the freethinkers interacted with the predominant denominations of their respective states.

The rich heterogeneity of secularisms already becomes evident in the first section, which includes four chapters dealing with freethinkers in the process of nation building. These essays suggest that the ideas of Europe's freethinkers had a lasting influence on society and politics and added to Europe's nations and their self-concepts. As these chapters show, nineteenth- and twentieth-century efforts to reestablish or achieve national sovereignty for the first time, or to widen the bases for social and political participation in the existing nation state, were accompanied by the slow advance of secularization processes. With Laura Fournier-Finocchiaro's essay on the leading Italian secularist intellectuals and famous "national heroes" Mazzini and Garibaldi, we plunge into a secularist, anticlerical setting formative for the Italian Risorgimento culture of the nineteenth century, which also proved influential on other secularist initiatives in and outside of Europe. Interestingly, and despite the manifest radicalism in their writings – in Garibaldi's case especially in his novels – both differed from the secularity of their fellow Italian freethinkers by struggling for a new, purified national religiosity closely aligned with politics. Rather than adopting atheist non-religion, their particular anticlericalism led both to develop new concepts of "civil religion." These concepts evolved in protest against a powerful Catholic culture, the physical presence of the popes, and their growing opposition against the nascent nation state. Based on Christian ethics, morality, liberalism, and humanity, this influential idea of a "civil religion" lived on in the new Italian nation state.

Costanza D'Elia's chapter examines the Italian case from a different perspective. She studies the personal relationship between the scientific materialist, atheist politician Jacob Moleschott, who was famous throughout Europe, and Italian *pater patriae* Francesco De Sanctis. Their encounter proved crucial for Moleschott's impact on the newly founded Kingdom of Italy: it was De Sanctis who offered Moleschott an academic position at the University of Turin, opening up the Peninsula to Moleschott's secularist thought. Darwinism, anticlericalism, and materialist positivism were enforced by Moleschott's scientific and political work in Italy, which also affected the direction Italian philosophy took in general, slowly turning it away from Hegelianism. With her case study, D'Elia confirms the idea brought up in Fournier-Finocchiaro's chapter on Mazzini and Garibaldi, namely that there was a uniquely Italian secularity, which D'Elia labels the "two religions." This concept entails both anticlerical notions and the depreciation of institutionalized Catholicism, and claims that a renewed, purified Christianity would be the moral base of a future civic faith that would mirror the "civil religion" of Mazzini and Garibaldi. Physician and senator Moleschott in particular contributed to the anti-Catholic, secularist notions by furthering the memory of heretics like Giordano Bruno. De Sanctis, on the other hand, helped to implement a positive concept of scientific materialism as a dynamic and revitalizing force in Italian culture and politics.

Even though Italy's and Poland's national cultures were both fundamentally shaped by Catholicism, Polish freethinkers had to overcome larger obstacles, as Barbara Wagner points out in her chapter. During the Era of Partitions, and later in the young nation state, Polish Catholicism functioned as a cultural and political glue, as well as a national good that distinguished Poland from its Russian and Prussian neighbors. Polish freethinkers – many of them convinced patriots –, in their engagement with secularity, did not fit into these religious-national semantics. They drew their insights instead from Polish authors, and particularly from Western European philosophies and secularities they encountered in exile. But unlike in the Italian case, no Polish nation state was founded prior to the First World War, and no secularist-political players with international reputations comparable to those of Mazzini and Garibaldi managed to convert the Polish public. In 1919 the new Polish nation state was founded with strong secularist leanings. Yet despite the presence of significant national minorities with different religious backgrounds, Catholicism held onto its privileged position. In order to stand a chance in their struggles against this situation, Polish bourgeois freethinkers, marginalized in the national discourse, began to look for role models and alliances elsewhere: the United States, revolutionary Russia, and the Polish labor movement. But their initiatives remained rather apolitical, which added to their relatively limited impact.

Intellectual-cultural programs, political missions, the concrete effects of freethinking secularist ideas, and their dialogue with other secularist enterprises constitute the subject matter of Anton Jansson's chapter on Swedish secularism in the late nineteenth century. With his essay we switch to a Protestant setting in which secularists started from different conditions, and see how the freethinkers were able to achieve a higher degree of organization, a higher level of mobilization, and a greater impact on an already politicized society. As Jansson emphasizes, Swedish freethinking developed in the late nineteenth century in close proximity to the Swedish popular movements. Two emblematic figures, social-democrat Hjalmar Branting and utilist Viktor Lennstrand, formed the opposing poles of Swedish freethinking, which comprised political-socialist strands and atheist-republican leanings. While the latter, though almost forgotten, provided the grounds for future, more confrontational secularist efforts, it was freethinking as defined by social-democratic viewpoints – conciliatory, and with less profound religious criticism – that prevailed in the long run. It became a sort of substitute religion in Sweden – today a nation with a high percentage of non-religious people and a significant but constantly decreasing number of Evangelical Lutherans.

The second part of this volume extends the national perspective adopted in the first part to freethinkers' international relations, probing the dimensions and depth of their self-understanding and cooperation across borders and across different secularities. Particular focus is placed on freethinkers' national and international organizations and on their attempts to impose a shared agenda by uniting forces, not unlike the Catholic Church – a vertically and horizontally cross-linked inter- and transnational operating institution. Thus, as the chapters of this section reveal, the secular and the religious seem intertwined in terms of national and transnational organizational matters as well. Yet Europe's freethinkers – who were still citizens of their respective nations in a time of patriotism – struggled to balance the contradictions and tensions between the national self-image and the transnational direction the movement had taken. These tensions between patriotism and globalism cast shadows over international freethinker conferences and associations, and limited the potential success of transnational secularism.

Christoffer Leber analyzes these conflicts between nationalism and internationalism in the *Deutsche Monistenbund* (German Monist League) in the early twentieth century. As his essay shows, leading German monists like Ernst Haeckel and Wilhelm Ostwald, with their scientific and universal worldview, which came to take on ideological and dogmatic stances, were integral parts of the freethinking secular sphere in the Wilhelmine Empire. Yet monism was caught between nationalist pride and the respective allegiances of its

most known representatives – famous and widely read German scientists working during a period of national prosperity – and the cosmopolitan-pacifist internationality the movement tried to popularize. From this a specific idea of secularity arose that contained traces of German Protestant culture: while the secularists shared and perpetuated the anticlerical tendencies of their time, German monists, convinced of the superiority of their national intellectual achievements and culture, hoped to simultaneously use secularism as a vehicle to finalize the legacies of Luther and Goethe.

The freethinkers' oscillation between national and international frameworks not only shook up the national movements, but also their umbrella organization, the *Fédération Internationale de la Libre Pensée* (International Freethought Federation, IFF), along with its regularly organized meetings over several decades, as Daniel Laqua highlights in his essay. He probes the ways freethinkers launched their distinct national objectives on international stages, how they made use of the platforms provided by the international meetings to promote their nationalism, and how the Czechoslovak and German freethinkers, which are also studied in the following chapter, collided in this international environment. However, as in the case of German monism on the eve of the First World War, the conflict between national and universal frames proved creatively fruitful, preparing grounds for the re-appropriation of national encoded figures, events, songs, and texts for the international secularist movement in times of peace, as is emphasized by Laqua's chapter. He points to a certain fluidity of national and transnational codes in freethinking secularism, and underlines the importance of the universalist utopia for freethinkers.

Johannes Gleixner's chapter discusses examples of the German, Czech, and Soviet Russian organized secularist landscapes from national and international perspectives in the decades following the end of the First World War. With this triple focus, his work offers a particularly rich picture of the heterogeneity of historical European secularisms. During and after the war, the once large and flourishing German and Czech freethought movements with their numerous associations were faced with similar challenges, especially the same question of politicization that had stirred up German monists and Polish freethinkers. As in the case of the latter, parts of the postwar German and Czechoslovak freethinker circles felt attracted to communism and the Soviet system, and as in the cases of monism and the IFF, the national movements found themselves facing a difficult balancing act between local specificity and internationality. The bourgeois roots of prewar freethinking and the proletarian basis of much of its new membership further added to these problems, as Gleixner shows with the International of Proletarian Freethinkers, who were caught between Soviet dogmatism and freethinking visions of liberty in a time of intensified cooperation

between the state and the church. Under these circumstances, success was unlikely from the start.

Freethinking positions were not only expressed in intellectual reflections, political efforts, and strategic cooperation on various other grounds, but also featured practical implementations. Secularist networks, enterprises, and rituals proved influential on discourses, cultural trends, social certainties, and legal rights in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The third section of this volume addresses these topics of implementation and the lasting influence of secularist endeavors.

At the core of Claus Spenninger's study are questions of secularist networks and their external reception. He discusses the three main representatives of scientific materialism, Jacob Moleschott, Ludwig Büchner, and Carl Vogt, and their purported joint efforts to establish an organized movement. As Spenninger clarifies, the idea of collaboration and of a shared scientific materialist undertaking was one that was projected from the outside on the three scientists, especially by contemporary observers and critics of scientific materialism. In truth, they maintained only loose contact with each other. Thus it was actually because of this external perception that a more "coherent" scientific materialist worldview based on anticlericalism, the scientifically proven laws of matter, immanence, and secularity emerged and successfully entered the public discourse. Moleschott, Büchner, and Vogt were at the forefront of organized freethinking and secularism, with Büchner one of the founding fathers of the *Deutsche Freidenkerbund* (German Freethinker League) in 1881, Moleschott a prominent atheist and advocate of a new (secular) morality, and Vogt a leading popularizer of Darwinism.

Katharina Neef's chapter offers insight into German freethinking activities in different regions of the Wilhelmine Empire, more specifically the regional base of the church exit propaganda of the *Komitee Konfessionslos* (Committee Unconfessional) and its transregional reach. She also addresses the problems posed by group-specific tensions between socialist and bourgeois freethinkers. As her analysis reveals, the *Komitee* made use of scientific methods such as statistics to prove its claims. Otto Lehmann-Rußbüldt, the head of the initiative, together with his fellow freethinkers, in close proximity to Ostwald's monism and side by side with other German freethought movements, drew attention to the issue of leaving the church by popularizing anticlericalism, launching extensive propaganda offensives, setting up a wide secularist network, and organizing spectacular mass-exit campaigns. But even though the events held in larger cities such as Berlin, Leipzig, and Chemnitz, with their public lectures and gatherings, attracted broad audiences, they had limited practical impact, and could not motivate greater numbers of participants to actually exit the church. Still, the *Komitee*

managed to direct mass attention to the topic of leaving the church, and in doing so paved the way to the legal codification of secularist demands in the twentieth century.

The freethinking roots of today's secularism and freethinking-inspired popular secularist practices of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries are also at the heart of Antoine Mandret-Degeilh's essay. He focuses on the practice of civil baptism in contemporary France, a ceremony adopting central aspects of the Catholic ritual but translating them into a secular language. While today civil baptism is chosen mainly for pragmatic reasons and not because of a general hostility toward religion or the church, its precursors first appeared during the French Revolution against an anti-Catholic background; workers associations in the early nineteenth century attempted to revive these rituals, with little success. It was up to French freethinkers to build the civil baptism ceremony on more solid ground in a municipal setting with political symbols, polemics against Catholicism, and republican imagery in the later nineteenth century. Similar to the case studies analyzed in the previous chapters, the foundations of French civil baptism show a clear shift from bourgeois to socialist/communist conceptions after the First World War. As a more or less politicized kinship ritual, it slowly attracted wider public support, and even spread to rural areas, though not without facing difficulties. The freethinking element, as Mandret-Degeilh underlines, lives on in these rituals to this day. They directly draw from the nineteenth-century secularist designs, and not, as is frequently assumed, from civil baptisms performed during the French Revolution.

In its three sections, this volume approaches secularisms as advocated by Europe's freethinkers of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, looking at both their national and transnational ramifications. The pieces prove that freethinkers helped to form and advance secularist – anticlerical, non-religious, atheist, scientific materialist, or monist – viewpoints, which, along with religious ideas, became part of Europe's forming multifold modernities, their cultures, and their self-perceptions. The legacy of these early secularists often seems difficult to trace, if not entirely hidden. In these regards, this volume helps to clarify our picture: it shows that freethinkers were among the first to combine cultural and political measures in the struggle for secularity in the long nineteenth century and the 1920s. Their efforts manifested as anticlerical polemics and a strong negative image of the Christian churches, but freethinkers also established a positive agenda, focused on education, culture and participation, personal and family rituals, and the free, self-determined development of the individual. These

claims managed to live on in current secularist enterprises and trends.[28] What is more, they also added to the leitmotifs of the modernities, which draw from both the religious and the secular in their ever-changing constellations.

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28 See, e. g., Stefan Schröder, *Freigeistige Organisationen in Deutschland: Weltanschauliche Entwicklungen und strategische Spannungen nach der humanistischen Wende* (Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter, 2018).

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Daniela Haarmann

Freidenkerei, Libre-pensée, Szabadgondolkodás – Concepts of Freethinking during the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries

Ever since their first emergence in eighteenth-century Europe, the concepts of freethinking, secularism, and atheism have carried manifold and, at times, even paradoxical meanings.[1] During the nineteenth century, their ambiguity grew even stronger with the foundation of clubs, associations, and societies institutionalizing these terms.[2] This chapter analyzes and conceptualizes different understandings and developments of freethinking, atheism, and secularism[3] during the so-called "long nineteenth century" (1789 – 1918) by using the theoretical and methodical approaches of the *history of concepts*, particularly those

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1 According to Reinhard Koselleck, a pioneer of German *Begriffsgeschichte*, these manifold meanings define the character of a concept; Reinhard Koselleck, "Richtlinien für das Lexikon politisch-sozialer Begriffe der Neuzeit," *Archiv Für Begriffsgeschichte* 11 (1967): 86.

2 The list of research literature on the history of this chapter's main terms is manifold. See, e.g., Reinhard Koselleck, "Säkularisation/Säkularisierung," in *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe: Historisches Lexikon zur politisch-sozialen Sprache in Deutschland*, ed. Otto Brunner, Werner Conze and Reinhard Koselleck (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1984), 791 – 794; Georges Minois, *Histoire de l'athéisme: Les Incroyants dans le monde occidental des origines à nos jours* (Paris: Fayard, 1998); Gavin Hyman, "Atheism in Modern History," in *The Cambridge Companion to Atheism*, ed. Michael Martin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 27 – 46; Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007); Jack D. Eller, "What Is Atheism?," in *Atheism and Secularity*, ed. Phil Zuckerman (Santa Barbara: Praeger, 2010), 1 – 18; Craig J. Calhoun, Mark Juergensmeyer and Jonathan VanAntwerpen, "Introduction," in *Rethinking Secularism*, ed. Craig J. Calhoun, Mark Juergensmeyer and Jonathan VanAntwerpen (New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 3 – 30; Georges Minois, *Dictionnaire des athées, agnostiques, sceptiques et autres mécréants* (Paris: Albin Michel, 2012); and Stephen Sebastian Bullivant, "Defining 'Atheism'," in *The Oxford Handbook of Atheism*, ed. Stephen Sebastian Bullivant (New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 11 – 21.

3 The terms "secularism" and "secularity" are often used interchangeably, yet they carry different meanings: "Secularism" describes the concept, and "secularity" the condition of the separation of state and church affairs and of the eradication of religion from public and social life; see Hans Raun Iversen, "Secularization, Secularity, Secularism," in *Encyclopedia of Sciences and Religions*, ed. Anne L. C. Runehov and Lluis Oviedo (Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands, 2013), 2116 – 2121.

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formulated by Koselleck and Zillig.[4] To this end, it focuses primarily on the cases of Britain, France, and the Protestant German-speaking countries, since they were the "birthplaces" of modern freethinking. Nevertheless, other language areas – such as the Hungarian or Romanian – are also considered to meet the volume's pan-European, transnational approach.[5] In doing so, this essay combines Western and Eastern European conceptual viewpoints: so far, research has tended to study either Western or Eastern European language areas,[6] although – as will be shown – both complement each other.

In three parts, the chapter traces the historical development of the concepts of freethinking, secularism, and atheism, reaching from a non-organized, loose collection of ideas developed by European scholars at the beginning of the eighteenth century to the organized movements at the end of the nineteenth century. The introductory part examines the initial situation by embedding freethinking, secularism, and atheism in English, German, and French Enlightenment before 1789. The second and third parts analyze and compare the terms in the periods from 1789 to 1848 and from 1848 to 1918, respectively, to highlight similarities and differences in their structures and contents.

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4 According to Koselleck, concepts document events and ideas and must be analyzed on these grounds; Koselleck, "Richtlinien," 86. The linguist Zillig describes the relationship between conceptual history and lexicography: Werner Zillig, "Lexikologie und Begriffsgeschichte," in *Lexikologie*, ed. David A. Cruise, Franz Hundsnurscher, Michael Job and Rolf Lutzeier, vol. 2 (Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter, 2005), 1834–1835. For the history of conceptual history and its integration into other disciplines, see Ernst Müller and Falko Schmieder, *Begriffsgeschichte und historische Semantik: Ein kritisches Kompendium* (Berlin: Suhrkamp, 2016).

5 For the benefits and challenges of such a translingustic approach, see Ulrich Ricken, "Zum Verhältnis vergleichender Begriffsgeschichte und vergleichender Lexikologie," in *Begriffsgeschichte, Diskursgeschichte, Metapherngeschichte*, edited by Mark Bevir and Hans Erich Bödeker (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2002), 29–48. In its beginnings, the history of concepts was supposed to be monolingual to hold the analytical process in a distinct frame. Reference works such as *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe* or *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie* were only concerned with German concepts. As Ricken proves with the example of "Enlightenment," using a multilingual approach helps to make visible the European dimensions of a concept. It seems therefore essential to consider the multilingual aspects of a term when it comes to pan-European research.

6 Charles Taylor, for example, distinguishes between the Eastern (North African, Middle Eastern, Asian) and Western/Northern Atlantic worlds (Taylor, *A Secular Age*). Eastern Europe, however, is hardly identifiable with the Northern Atlantic zone. Rather, the past and present of Eastern European peoples and language areas are determined by other geographical attributes (e.g. the Black Sea, the Baltic Sea, the Carpathian Mountains, inland waters).

Historical encyclopedias and dictionaries are the primary sources of this chapter due to their normative character.[7] When reference works gained popularity during the eighteenth century, they were supposed to comprise the knowledge of their time. This purpose turned them into authorities protective of the truth in past and present. By contrast, this chapter considers that lexicographical knowledge is not at all objective but was determined by the specific socio-historical context in which those works were created. Still, the discursive power of reference works makes them an indispensable and unique source for the study of conceptual history.

For the given timeframe of the long nineteenth century, a transnationally embedded, comparative conceptual history of freethinking, atheism, and secularism is still lacking. Most studies discuss conceptual developments in relation to either one or more representatives of freethinking generally limited to a national framework.[8] This chapter attempts, for the very first time and in a transnational approach, to analyze the conceptual discussions of freethinking, atheism, and secularism in modern reference works beyond the definitions of single persons and movements. These works were selected by matters of reception and influence, including the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, the *Encyclopédie*, and the *Brockhaus*, to name some of the most seminal. However, the work of individuals such as Anthony Collins, Christian Wolff, and Pierre Bayle cannot be entirely neglected, since they influenced either the freethought movements as such or the authors of the encyclopedias' entries. In some cases, they even authored entries themselves. Therefore, they are briefly considered, particularly in the very first sections.

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7 Reinhard Koselleck, "Hinweise auf die temporalen Strukturen begriffsgeschichtlichen Wandels," in *Begriffsgeschichte, Diskursgeschichte, Metapherngeschichte*, ed. Mark Bevir and Hans Erich Bödeker (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2002), 46.

8 A transnational, yet limited to Western Europe, approach is taken by Lisa Dittrich, *Antiklerikalismus in Europa: Öffentlichkeit und Säkularisierung in Frankreich, Spanien und Deutschland (1848–1914)* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2014); Lisa Dittrich, "European Connections, Obstacles, and the Search for a New Concept of Religion: The Freethought Movement as an Example of Transnational Anti-Catholicism in the Second Half of the Nineteenth Century," *Journal of Religious History* 39, no. 2 (2015): 261–279.

Initial Situation: Freethinking pre-1789 in British, German, and French Reference Works

While the existence of the concepts of freethinking and atheism can be traced back as far as to antiquity,[9] the Enlightenment's discourses on the topics were rooted in humanism and the Renaissance. The first author to introduce the term *libertas philosophandi,* the Latin variant of "freethinking," was the Italian Dominican Tommaso Campanella, in his *Apologia pro Galileo* (Apology of Galileo, 1622).[10] At that time, *libertas philosophandi,* along with the related term *libertas cogitandi*, did not challenge the doctrines of the Bible.[11] Yet their further use was not determined and depended on the viewpoints of the author, who referred to those notions.[12]

However, encouraged by reformation movements, more radical voices called for a critical study of the Bible and demanded a general critical stance toward the restrictive power of the Catholic Church. While most medieval Christian scholars thought of the world's knowledge as fully discovered, humanist scholars assumed a world beyond the realms of the Bible and the Christian text corpus. Encouraged by the achievements of the scientific revolution, such as Columbus' discovery of America; Copernicus', Kepler's, and Galilei's theories of heliocentrism; and Newton's laws of motion and universal gravitation, scholars strove to explore these unknown worlds. Newton, in particular, proved that na-

9 See the frequently reprinted works of John B. Bury, *A History of Freedom of Thought* (New York/London: Henry Holt, 1913), 21–50; John M. Robertson, *A Short History of Freethought Ancient and Modern*, vol. 1 (London: Watts & Co., [3]1915), 120–217. These concepts differed, of course, from those of the Early Modern Period. Yet freethinkers and works on freethinking used to recall the great ancient Greek and Roman philosophers such as Socrates, Plato, or Aristotle. This attempt of constructing continuity from the classic antiquity up to the present was a common practice of scholarship. From the many academic works discussing this issue, the following collection of essays shall be mentioned as exemplary: Gábor Klaniczay, Michael Werner and Ottó Gecser, eds, *Multiple Antiquities – Multiple Modernities: Ancient Histories in Nineteenth Century European Cultures* (Frankfurt/Main: Campus, 2011).

10 Robert B. Sutton, "The Phrase 'Libertas Philosophandi'," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 14, no. 2 (1953): 311.

11 Anita Traninger, "Libertas philosophandi," in *Neue Diskurse der Gelehrtenkultur in der Frühen Neuzeit: Ein Handbuch*, ed. Herbert Jaumann and Gideon Stiening (Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter, 2016), 178.

12 Kay Zenker, *Denkfreiheit: Libertas philosophandi in der deutschen Aufklärung* (Hamburg: Meiner, 2012), 11.

ture was not dependent on the capriciousness of the biblical God but rather on rational laws.[13]

These complex intellectual changes heralded the age of reason.[14] The new knowledge eventually led to the development of a new religious mentality called *deism*. In contrast to *theism* – the traditional Christian belief in a personal God who is continuously influential on the course of the world and the individual within – deists believed in a more distanced Creator-God without further impact on the world and its inhabitants. To them, the Bible was created by man, not revealed by God, and therefore seemed open to criticism. This critical approach called "biblical hermeneutics" coalesced with the enlightened dogma of *ratio,* and together they were taken as the only means to explain and fully discover God's creation. Two of the most noteworthy spokesmen of deism were René Descartes and Baruch de Spinoza. Spinoza's idea of rationalism, called Spinozism, pioneered the early eighteenth-century concepts of freethinking. In his most influential work, *Tractatus theologico-politicus* (Theologico-Political Treatise, 1670),[15] he claimed a secular state, religious freedom, and the detachment from the biblical dogma.[16] Contrary to some of his fellow contemporary philosophers, he wrote his treatise in Latin rather than a vernacular. Spinoza justified

13 For a general introduction, see Malcolm Oster, ed., *Science in Europe, 1500–1800: A Secondary Sources Reader* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002); Wilbur Applebaum, ed., *Encyclopedia of the Scientific Revolution: From Copernicus to Newton* (London: Routledge, [2]2008); John Henry, *The Scientific Revolution and the Origins of Modern Science* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, [3]2008), particularly 73–85; Lawrence Principe, *The Scientific Revolution: A Very Short Introduction* (New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011); Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, [4]2012). For special aspects, see Stephen Gaukroger, ed., *The Uses of Antiquity: The Scientific Revolution and the Classical Tradition* (Dordrecht/Boston: Kluwer, 1991); and Margaret C. Jacob, *The Cultural Meaning of the Scientific Revolution* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1993). On discussions of the canonic correlation, see Margaret J. Osler, ed., *Rethinking the Scientific Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000). For biographical approaches, see Laura Fermi and Gilberto Bernardini, *Galileo and the Scientific Revolution* (Greenwich: Fawcett, 1965); Desmond Clarke, "Descartes' Philosophy of Science and the Scientific Revolution," in *The Cambridge Companion to Descartes*, ed. John Cottingham (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 258–285; Gale E Christianson, *Isaac Newton and the Scientific Revolution* (New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998); and Matjaž Vesel, *Copernicus: Platonist Astronomer-Philosopher, Cosmic Order, the Movement of the Earth, and the Scientific Revolution* (Frankfurt/Main: Peter Lang, 2014).

14 For a specific elaboration on freethought, secularism, atheism, and the age of reason, see Edward Royle, *Victorian Infidels: The Origins of the British Secularist Movement, 1791–1866* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1974), 9–58.

15 For a critical English translation, see Benedictus de Spinoza, *Theological-Political Treatise*, ed. Jonathan Israel (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

16 Traninger, "Libertas philosophandi," 181; 184.

this decision by stating that he did not want to reach the largest possible target group, but only the "*Philosophe lector.*"[17]

The choice of language is an oft-overlooked aspect in the study of freethinking. While the Republic of Letters still used Latin – the language of the Catholic Church and the popes – as the language of scholarly communication and of publication, freethinkers opted for the vernacular. This initiated a major break with the Latin-speaking world of the Catholic Church. Even Christian Wolff – who, next to Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, was one of the key figures of the German *Freigeisterei* (freethinking) – wrote his *Ausführliche Nachricht* (Detailed News, 1726) in German and not – as he did with other works – in Latin. Using the vernacular supported the general goal of Enlightenment to reach wider parts of society by publishing in a language that the general public would understand. Thus it is hardly surprising that the opponents of freethinking continued to write their refutations in Latin.[18] Still, the choice of language was in no way a rule, as the example of Kant will illustrate.

Freethinking in Early Enlightenment: First Conceptual Approaches

In contrast to "deist," "freethinker" was a self-given designation of a more or less organized philosophical movement in late seventeenth-century Britain.[19] The popularity of deism and freethinking in Britain did not come by accident: the religious conflicts and the Glorious Revolution (1688/89) created the perfect breeding ground for both concepts. Two of their representatives are notable, since the work of both authors also influenced freethinking's ideas in France and in the German-speaking countries: John Toland and Anthony Collins.

17 Ibid., 183; original in Baruch de Spinoza, *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* (Amsterdam: s.l., 1674), fol. B.

18 This observation resulted from the academic conflicts about freethinking in Germany. (Described in Zenker, *Denkfreiheit*, 159 – 262.)

19 Günter Gawlick, "Einleitung," in *Anthony Collins: A Discourse of Freethinking*, ed. Günter Gawlick (Stuttgart/Bad Cannstatt: frommann-holzboog, 1965), 9; Günter Gawlick, "Die ersten deutschen Reaktionen auf A. Collins' 'Discourse of Free-Thinking' von 1713," *Aufklärung: Interdisziplinäres Jahrbuch zur Erforschung des 18. Jahrhunderts und seiner Wirkungsgeschichte* 1 (1986): 21 – 22.

Toland was the illegitimate son of a Catholic priest, born 1670, somewhere in Northern Ireland.[20] Although he broke with his father's religion at the age of 16, he graduated in philosophy and theology in Edinburgh, where he first encountered Newton's Natural Philosophy.[21] Only slightly later, in 1692, he traveled to Leiden and Utrecht, in those years both centers of heterodox ideas. He read Spinoza and got to know deistic and freethinking spirits, such as John Locke and Pierre Bayle.[22] Ten years later, Toland met Leibniz in Hannover when traveling as a member of a royal delegation.[23] Even then, he already evoked feelings of deep disagreement in his contemporaries once he had published his first and most famous book, *Christianity not Mysterious*, in 1696.

As the book's title indicates, Toland supported the idea that the Christian religion is based on rational principles rather than mysterious beliefs. Throughout his work, specific terms, such as "truth" and "reason," as well as their antonym, "mystery," mirror the influence of Enlightenment:

> Truth is always and every where the same; and an unintelligible or absurd Proposition is to be never the more respected for being ancient and strange, for being originally written in Latin, Greek, or Hebrew.[24]

This quotation also displays Toland's use of the vernacular and his criticism of traditional authorities. Regarding religion, Toland claimed that his work would be a defense of the Christian faith and a rejection of the "mistaken Unbelievers."[25] However, between the lines, his doubt becomes quite visible: "All the Doc-

20 Geneviève Brykman, "Pour en savoir plus, cherchez dans mes écrits," *Revue de synthèse* 116, no. 2–3 (1995): *John Toland (1670–1722) et la crise de conscience européenne:* 22.

21 Ibid., 221.

22 On Locke: Geneviève Brykman, "Les Deux Christianisme de Locke et de Toland," *Revue de synthèse* 116, no. 2–3 (1995): *John Toland (1670–1722) et la crise de conscience européenne:* 281–302. This article revised the assumption of Locke's fundamental influence on Toland. On Bayle: Brykman, "Pour en savoir plus," 222.

23 On this journey and Toland's acquaintance with Leibniz, see Michel Fichant, "Leibniz et Toland: Philosophie pour princesses?," *Revue de synthèse* 116, no. 2–3 (1995): *John Toland (1670–1722) et la crise de conscience européenne:* 421–440; Tristan Dagron, *Toland et Leibniz: L'Invention du néo-spinozisme* (Paris: Vrin, 2009); and Nora Gädeke, "Matières d'esprit et de curiosité Oder: Warum wurde John Toland in Hannover zur Persona non grata?," in *G. W. Leibniz und der Gelehrtenhabitus: Anonymität, Pseudonymität, Camouflage*, ed. Wenchao Li and Simona Noreik (Cologne/Weimar/Vienna: Böhlau, 2016), 145–166.

24 John Toland, *Christianity not Mysterious: Or, a Treatise Showing, that there is Nothing in the Gospel Contrary to Reason, nor Above it: And that no Christian Doctrine Can be Properly Call'd a Mystery* (London: Sam. Buckley, [2]1696), xix.

25 Ibid., viii.

trines and Precepts of the New Testament (if it be indeed Divine) must consequently agree with *Natural Reason*."[26]

The idea of freethinking is also present in this book, although Toland does not refer to the concept directly:

> But 'tis the Perfection of our *Reason* and *Liberty* that makes us deserve Rewards and Punishment. We are perswaded [*sic*] that *all our Thoughts are entirely free, we can expend the Force of Words, compare Ideas, distinguish clear from obscure Conceptions, suspend our Judgments about Uncertainties, and yield only to Evidence.*[27]

Expanding upon Toland's understanding of freethinking as a combination of reason and liberty, Anthony Collins further developed the concept. Born in 1676 in Heston/Middlesex, and educated at Eton and Cambridge, his most influential work was his *Discourse of Free-Thinking*, which he published anonymously in 1713. Collins, a student and close friend of Locke, defined "freethinking" as follows:

> By Free-Thinking then I mean, The Use of the Understanding, in endeavouring to find out the Meaning of any Proposition whatsoever, in considering the nature of the Evidence for or against it, and in judging of it according to the seeming Force or Weakness of the Evidence.[28]

These words mirror the Enlightenment's ultimate maxim, *sapere aude:*[29] Collins demands making use of the cognitive ability in the sense of Descartes' *cogitare* as an active process of reflecting on a statement *(proposition)*. He further invokes his readers to prove the available evidence critically and to form their own opinions. In this context, "truth" serves as one of the key notions of his considerations: "Self-evident Truths,"[30] according to Collins, are part of God's will to be

26 Ibid., 46 (emphasis in the original).
27 Ibid., 60 (emphasis in the original).
28 Anthony Collins, "A Discourse of Free-Thinking, Occassion'd by the Rise and Growth of a Sect Call'd Free-Thinkers: London, Printed in the Year M.DCC.XIII," in *Anthony Collins: A Discourse of Freethinking*, ed. Günter Gawlick (Stuttgart/Bad Cannstatt: frommann-holzboog, 1965), 5. (Emphasis deleted for improved readability.)
29 Although this phrase is inextricably linked to Immanuel Kant's essay *Was ist Aufklärung?* (What Is Enlightenment?, 1784), it merely summarizes a concept that already had existed in the Early Enlightenment, as Collins' case exemplifies.
30 Collins, "A Discourse of Free-Thinking," 8.

DISCOURS
SUR LA
LIBERTÉ
DE
PENSER.

Ecrit à l'ocaſion d'une nouvelle
Secte d'*Eſprits forts*, ou de Gens
qui penſent librement.

Traduit de l'Anglois & augmenté d'une
LETTRE D'UN MEDECIN ARABE.

A LONDRES

MDCCXIV.

Figure 1: Front cover of the first and ragged French translation of Collins' *A Discourse of Free-thinking* (1714).

known by men.[31] "Therefore," he concludes, "a *Right* to know any Truth whatsoever implies a Right to *think freely.*"[32] It is also noteworthy that Collins chose to call freethinkers a "sect" in the subtitle of his work, although the term "society" would have been appropriate, since some British freethinkers, back then, were already a loosely organized group who even edited their own journal.[33] Though he did not further define his reading of the concept of "sect," Collins' wording could be interpreted as a provocation of the defenders of the traditional Christian worldview. Furthermore, "sect" is a first indication of the freethinking practice to create "substitute religions." The latter became a characteristic of the freethought movements of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Collins' *Discourse* was discussed vividly, yet controversially, in the Low Countries and in the Protestant parts of Germany, where the German Enlightenment originated.[34] The debates on *libertas philosophandi* and *cogitandi*, however, had already been strong prior to Toland's and Collins' impact in the German-speaking territories. Most of these early discourses focused on reviewing or – more accurately – contradicting Descartes and Spinoza. With regard to the traditional deep entanglement between the universities and the churches in Germany,[35] scholars agreed that freethinking must be compatible with the Christian dogma.[36] Those exceeding the dogma's limits were accused of *licentia philosophandi* (arbitrary philosophizing) and faced the threat of exclusion from the academic world.[37] Despite these disputes, deism never gained major support in Germany. Wolff, for example, aligned faith and reason, yet he always adhered to the idea of divine revelation.[38] His notion of freethinking resulted from his criticism of authority, as he explained in the *Ausführliche Nachricht:* "Therefore, I do not

31 Ibid., 6: "IF the Knowledge of some Truths be requir'd of us by God; if the Knowledge of others be useful to Society; if the Knowledge of no Truth be forbidden us by God, or hurtful to us; then we have a *right* to know, or may lawfully know any Truth." (Emphasis in the original.)
32 Ibid., 6.
33 The weekly journal *Free-Thinker* was published for a brief period in the second half of 1711. It should not be confused, however, with the eponymous journal published in 1718 and 1719, reprinted in 1722 and 1723; see Gawlick, "Einleitung," 22; 35, and note 20. Gawlick does not tell who the members of this first freethought organization were. The very few existing issues of this journal are held in the Bodleian Library in Oxford and in the Archives of the University of Edinburgh.
34 Gawlick, "Die ersten deutschen Reaktionen"; James O'Higgins, *Anthony Collins: The Man and His Works* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1970), 201–222; and Zenker, *Denkfreiheit*, 190–240.
35 Ibid., 20; 155.
36 For a detailed analysis of the German discourse on freethinking, see ibid., 25–158.
37 Ibid., 20; 155.
38 O'Higgins, *Anthony Collins*, 201.

care if that, what I say, accords with another one's opinion or not, if *Aristoteles, Cartesius,* Leibniz or another one understood it like this or not. I present my thoughts, and I dare to assert them against anybody."[39]

In France, Collins' concept of freethinking was received much more warmly and openly. After a first French translation in 1713, which was so ragged that it changed the original's content,[40] a more accurate version appeared in 1766. At the height of the French Enlightenment, the interest in English deism and freethinking was greater than ever before.[41] According to O'Higgins, the French view on religion as a failing and unpopular idea explains Collins' late success in France.[42]

Freethinking in the "Encyclopedic Era"

Following the alphabetical system of Ephraim Chambers' *Cyclopaedia* (2 vols., 1728),[43] the concept of encyclopedias spread all over the European English, French, and German language areas from the middle of the eighteenth century on. Publications such as *Zedler's Universal-Lexicon* (1732) in Germany, the famous *Encyclopédie* (1751) in France, or the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (1768) in Great Britain assembled all kinds of "true" knowledge and opinions,[44] presented them in the vernacular, and made them accessible to the literate members of society. The following analysis focuses on chronologically comparing the encyclopedias' definitions of "freethinking," "atheism," and "secularism" and asks how scholars received these terms in different language areas.

Chamber's *Cyclopaedia*, the oldest and most influential reference work, did not contain a separate entry on "freethinker," yet it referred to the term as a sy-

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39 Christian Wolff, *Ausführliche Nachricht von seinen eigenen Schrifften, die er in deutscher Sprache von den verschiedenen Theilen der Welt-Weissheit herausgegeben, auf Verlangen ans Licht gestellt* (Frankfurt/Main: Hort, 1726), fol. 7v–r. (Emphasis in the original.) Unless otherwise stated, all translations are the author's.

40 Gawlick, "Einleitung," 30.

41 Ibid., 31–32; 39, and footnote 47.

42 O'Higgins, *Anthony Collins*, 201.

43 Ulrich Johannes Schneider, *Die Erfindung des allgemeinen Wissens: Enzyklopädisches Schreiben im Zeitalter der Aufklärung* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2013), 50.

44 The convergence of the two notions of "knowledge" and "opinion" is highly debated within the sociology of knowledge and the history of the sociology of knowledge.

nonym for "deist."[45] This equation was due to both movements' idealization of reason and natural philosophy, their shared criticism of the idea of divine revelation, and the restrictions on the free expression of ideas implemented by the church:

> They complain, that the Liberty of thinking, and reasoning, is oppress'd under the Yoke of Religion and that the Minds of Men are ridden, and tyranniz'd over by the Necessity impos'd on them of believing inconceivable Mysteries; And contend, that nothing should be requir'd to be assented to, or believed, but what their Reason clearly conceive.[46]

However, the *Cyclopaedia* also contradicts the equation of deists with freethinkers and atheists. Its definition of atheism exposes this contradiction: "In this Sense, *Spinosa* [*sic*] may be said to be an Atheist; and it is an Impropriety to rank him, as the learned commonly do, among *Deists* [...]."[47] This quote also emphasizes the close ties between Spinozism, deism, freethinking, and atheism. Furthermore, it shows that, in these times, those categories were external ascriptions, rather than deliberately chosen self-descriptions. The term "secularization," however, had no connection to atheism, deism, or freethinking at all. The author simply defined it as "the Action of *Secularizing,* or of converting a regular Person, Place, or Benefice into a Secular one [...]."[48] An example of how to implement this term, together with regulations for secularization in France and the Catholic Church, completes his definition.[49]

The next oldest reference work, the German *Zedler*, neither contained entries on *Deismus* (deism) nor *Freidenker*/*Freigeisterei* (freethinker, freethinking),[50] yet it provided entries on *Atheisterey* (atheism) and *Säkularismus* (secularism). In its second volume (1732), the *Zedler* dedicated ten pages to atheism, composed primarily of descriptions of different types of atheists, combined with moralizing assessments. Atheists, the reader is told, are those following doctrines that do

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45 "Deist," in *Cyclopaedia: Or, an Universal Dictionary of Arts and Sciences*, ed. Abraham Rees (London: J. and J. Knapton et al., 1728), 179: "Deists, a Class of People, known also under the Denomination of *Free-thinkers* [...]." (Emphasis in the original.)

46 Ibid., 179.

47 "Atheist," in *Cyclopaedia: Or, an Universal Dictionary of Arts and Sciences*, ed. Ephraim Chambers (London: J. and J. Knapton et al., 1728), 166.

48 "Secularization," in *Cyclopaedia: Or, an Universal Dictionary of Arts and Sciences*, ed. Abraham Rees (London: J. and J. Knapton et al., 1728), 46.

49 Ibid.

50 For this chapter, all spellings of "Freidenker" and "Freigeisterei" (such as Freydenker or Freygeisterey) were considered.

not concur with the “wahrer Begriff” (“true notion”) of God.[51] Following the dictionary, in strict sense atheism is the “Irrtum” (“error”) of denying the existence of God.[52] Among atheism, the *Zedler* listed “Deisterey” (“deism”) along with naturalism, pantheism, and *Atheismus Dogmaticus*. But while the dictionary identified Spinozism as a general dogmatic variant of atheism, it was naturalism, pantheism, and deism that were further specified as indirect forms of *Atheismus Dogmaticus*.[53] Thus *Zedler* referred to “*Indirectus*, if God’s name is mentioned, but practically a being is described, which can impossibly be identified with the name of God.”[54]

Almost two decades later, the French philosopher Claude Yvon – characterized as an atheist by his contemporaries[55] – defined “Athéisme” in the famous *Encyclopédie* as “l’opinion de ceux qui nient l’existence d’un Dieu auteur du monde” (“opinion of those, who negate the existence of a God, the creator of the world”).[56] The mere denial of God’s existence, according to this interpretation, did not qualify to carry the “titre odieux” (“odious title”)[57] of atheism, but only the active fight against the idea of God: “L’*athéïsme* ne se borne pas à défigurer l’idée de Dieu, mais il la détruit entierement.” (“*Atheism* is not limited to disfigure the idea of God, but to destroy it entirely.”)[58] Although Yvon’s initial description and the adjectives he chose might have indicated that he holds the same moralizing opinion as the *Zedler*, in fact, he defended atheism as a method of tolerance. He devalued religion as an invention of governments to keep societies stable and their subjects obedient.[59]

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51 “Atheisterey,” in *Johann Heinrich Zedlers grosses vollständiges Universal-Lexicon aller Wissenschafften und Künste* (Halle/Leipzig: Johann Heinrich Zedler, 1732), 2016.
52 Ibid.
53 Ibid., 2017–2018.
54 Ibid., 2017.
55 Sylviane Albertan-Coppola and Françoise Launay, “Abbé Claude Yvon (1714–1789),” Database. *Les Contributeurs: Édition numérique collaborative et critique de l’Encyclopédie*, accessed November 29, 2018, http://enccre.academie-sciences.fr/encyclopedie/documentation/?s=76&. Yvon even was forced to leave the country, while Diderot defused his theological articles; see Hisayasu Nakagawa, “Diderot, Rousseau et autres ‘incrédules’ au service du catholicisme: À propos du déisme réfuté par lui-même de l’abbé Bergier,” *Recherches sur Diderot et sur l’Encyclopédie*, no. 39 (2005): 158.
56 Claude Yvon, “Athéisme,” in *Encylopédie, ou dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers*, vol. 1 (Paris: Briasson – David – Le Breton – Durand, 1751), accessed March 22, 2019, http://enccre.academie-sciences.fr/encyclopedie/article/v1-3414-0/, 815.
57 Ibid.
58 Ibid. (Emphasis in the original.)
59 Ibid., 817.

Edmonde Françoise Mallet, theologian and educator, authored an article on deism that he defined as "doctrine de ceux dont toute la religion se borne à admettre l'existence d'un Dieu, & à suivre la loi naturelle" ("a doctrine of those, whose whole religion is limited to admit the existence of God and to follow the natural law").[60] Deism, for Mallet, was not synonymous with atheism, but – quite the contrary – a religion of its own, supportive of the idea of God. This definition stood out in particular because the author did not add anything else to his article. For a more detailed analysis, he created another entry titled *Déistes*, in which he equated the British "modern deists" to "freethinkers."[61]

Other than the *Enyclopédie*, Johnson's *Dictionary* (1755) also compared freethinking to atheism.[62] First, it defined "freethinker" as a "libertine; a condemner of religion."[63] The pejorative term "libertine," building on the French insult *libertin*, already indicates the *Dictionary's* negative stance toward freethinkers. Then, by characterizing them as "condemner of religion," the article related freethinking to atheism. The author further emphasized this connection by adding a pertinent quote of Joseph Addison's *Drummer* (1716) to his text: "Atheist is an old-fashion'd word: I am a *freethinker,* child."[64] The *Dictionary* presented atheism merely as the disbelief in God, without attaching further moral judgment to the term. In the same manner, the entry on deism maintained its neutral tone and followed the contemporary understanding of the concept as an acknowledgment of God, the creator, but not of the idea of a divine revelation and intervention in the course of the world. Explicit connections to freethinking are absent.[65]

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60 Edmonde François Mallet, "Déisme," in *Encylopédie, ou dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers*, vol. 4 (Paris: Briasson – David – Le Breton – Durand, 1754), 773.

61 Ibid.: "The modern *deists* are a sect or a sort of ostensible strong spirits, in England known under the name of *free-thinkers*." (Emphasis in the original.)

62 Johnson's *Dictionary* was the first modern dictionary and grammar book in English. It influenced, as will be shown in the next section, the coming generations of English dictionaries and encyclopedias. Besides a profound terminological analysis, the dictionary included one or more quotes from literature for every term to exemplify its usage.

63 "Freethinker," in *A Dictionary of the English Language: In which the Words are Deduced of their Originals, and Illustrated in their Different Significations by Examples from the Best Writers, To which are Prefixed a History of the Language and an English Grammar*, ed. Samuel Johnson, vol. 1 (London: W. Strahan, 1755), fol. T9 2/4.

64 Ibid.; the quotation is shortened. The original comprises a dialogue between Lady Truman and Tinsel during the first act: LADY: "I vow, Mr. Tinsel, I'm afraid malicious people will say I'm in love with an atheist." – TINSEL: "Oh, my dear, that's an old fashion'd word – I'm a freethinker, child." – ABIGAIL: "I am sure you are a free speaker." (Joseph Addison, *The Drummer: Or, The Haunted House, A Comedy* [London: J. Tonson, 1716], 187–188.)

65 "Deism," in *A Dictionary of the English Language: In which the Words are Deduced of their Originals, and Illustrated in their Different Significations by Examples from the Best Writers, To*

The clearest equation of "deism" and "freethinking" is given in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, edited between 1769 and 1771 by the Scottish Society of Gentlemen. For information on "Free-Thinker," the reader is simply referred to "DEIST."[66] Deists, according to the *Encyclopaedia*,

> in the modern sense of the word, are those persons in Christian countries, who acknowledging all the obligations and duties of natural religion, disbelieve the Christian scheme, or revealed religion. They are so called from their belief in God alone, in opposition to Christians.[67]

Atheism and deism, here, clearly relate to each other. However, the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* cited four additional definitions borrowed from the English natural philosopher John Clarke. He understood deism not in opposition to the Christian belief but as its alternative, combining the concept of God with natural religion.[68]

The final example of this section is the *Encyclopédie méthodique*. With this reference work, its founder Charles Joseph Panckoucke, who gave the encyclopedia its alias, *Panckoucke*, intended to perfect Diderot's *Encyclopédie*.[69] To meet this goal, over 200 volumes were published between 1782 and 1832. In contrast to previous reference works, the volumes were arranged according to disciplines, not in alphabetical order. Each discipline was authored by an expert or a team of experts in the particular field. The *Panckoucke* continued its publication, unimpressed by the events of the French Revolution and Jacobin Terror, even during the 1790s. This uninterrupted publication, which covered a timespan of half a century characterized by historical key events and turning points, makes the *Panckoucke* a most interesting source for analyzing conceptual changes of the terms studied in this chapter.

Articles on *athéisme* and *athée* were published over two volumes and in two different disciplines: one in ancient and modern philosophy (1791) and the other in theology (1788). Jacques-André Naigeon authored the philosophical parts

which are Prefixed a History of the Language and an English Grammar, ed. Samuel Johnson, vol. 1 (London: W. Strahan, 1755), fols. 6N 1/4 – 2/4.

66 "Free-Thinker," in *Encyclopaedia Britannica: Or, a Dictionary of Arts and Sciences*, ed. Society of Gentlemen in Scotland, vol. 2 (Edinburgh: A. Bell – C. MacFarquhar, 1771), 631. (Emphasis in the original.)

67 "Deist," in ibid., 1771.

68 Ibid.

69 Michel Porret, "Savoir encyclopédique, Encyclopédie des savoirs," in *L'Encyclopédie méthodique, 1782 – 1832: Des lumières au positivisme*, ed. Claude Blanckaert, Michel Porret and Fabrice Brandli (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 2006), 21.

(three volumes, 1791–1794), while Nicholas-Sylvestre Bergier assumed responsibility for the theological analysis in three volumes (1788–1790).[70] Both had already contributed to Diderot's *Encyclopédie*,[71] and the two could not have disagreed more: Naigeon was an atheist who promoted the separation of church and state and struggled for the limitation of monarchic power.[72] Bergier, on the other hand, opposed the Enlightenment and acted as a canon at Notre-Dame. Among those apologetic of the Catholic Church, he was "the most faithful, the most zealous, and also the most polemic"[73] one. While Naigeon openly confessed his radical views on freedom, Bergier refused them by all available means. Particularly decisive for our case are Bergier's *Déisme réfuté par luiméme* (Deism refuted by itself, 1765), a monograph polemicizing against the works of Rousseau, and his *Examen du matérialisme ou système de la nature* (Examination of Materialism, or System of Nature, 1771), which was directed against the atheism of Baron d'Holbach.[74]

Because of his biographical background, Bergier's final verdict on atheism in *Panckoucke* and the *Dictionnaire du théologie,*[75] respectively, was damning. For him, deists and atheists were the same: "We take *atheism* not only as the system of those who do not acknowledge God, but also the opinion of those who deny the divine providence because, strictly speaking, a God without providence does not exist for us."[76] Although Bergier did not refer to the idea of "divine revelation," the deistic notion of naturalism, in his view, did not include divine providence. The equation of atheism and deism becomes even clearer in his article on the latter. There, he referenced several times "incrédules" ("infidels") and "religion naturelle" ("natural religion"), while the rest of his elaborations followed, more or less, the arguments already given:[77] deists might recognize a God, but which one? For Bergier, it is because of this vague concept of *a* God rather than *the* Christian God that deists are qualified as atheists: "We should not be

70 On the participation of Bergier, see Didier Masseau, "Un apologiste au service de l'Encyclopédie méthodique: Bergier et le Dictionnaire de théologie," in ibid., 153–168.

71 Bergier was not an author but offered his help and expertise concerning the articles on theology.

72 Franz Arthur Kafker, "Notices sur les auteurs des 17 volumes de 'Discours' de l'Encyclopédie (suite et fin)," *Recherches sur Diderot et sur l'Encyclopédie* 8 (1990): 106.

73 Nakagawa, "Diderot, Rousseau et autres," 159.

74 Masseau, "Un apologiste," 153.

75 This title is commonly used as an alternative to the nineteenth-century reprints of these three volumes of the *Panckoucke.*

76 Nicholas-Sylvestre Bergier, "Athée, Athéisme," in *Encyclopédie méthodique: Théologie,* vol. 1, ed. Charles-Joseph Panckoucke (Paris/Liège: Panckoucke – Plomteux, 1788), 146–147.

77 Nicholas-Sylvestre Bergier, "Déisme," in ibid., 496.

surprised that the partisans of *deism* have almost all fallen for atheism. This progress of their principles was inevitable since one cannot make any objection against the revealed religion that does not fall with all its weight on the so-called natural religion."[78]

In the entry on *Liberté de penser* (freethought), he further pursued this argumentation and his biased reading. According to Bergier, thinking freely keeps the human being away from God. Freethinkers, unbelievers, atheists, and deists – to him – all perpetuated this dangerous illusion and thus were considered as one:

> But by *freethinking*, the unbelievers mean not only the freedom of not believing in anything, and of not having any religion, but also the right to preach unbelief, to speak, to write, and to rally against religion. Some even added the privilege of declaring against the law and the government. They claim that this *freedom* is a natural right.[79]

The text further listed arguments to contradict "the absurdity of their reasoning"[80] and located the roots of freethinking in England, from whence the wave washed over to France. In Bergier's defense of Catholicism as the only true religion, the Glorious Revolution served as an example of the catastrophic consequences that a free press and the publication of atheistic and freethinking thoughts could facilitate.[81] If Catholicism as the traditional authority would have been victorious, he speculated, freethinking would have "ascended the scaffold."[82] Bergier also brought up the term "libertins." Identifying them clearly as anti-Christian and as atheists originating in the first reformatory movements, he further accused them of "libertinage." In a short entry, he labeled those libertarians as "fanatiques," "pervers," "heretic," or "secte" ("fanatics," "perverted," "heretic," or "sect").[83]

From the Catholic clergyman Bergier, we now turn to the atheist philosopher Naigeon. His three volumes expand on Diderot's ideas and consist partially of articles taken from the *Encyclopédie,* written by Diderot, or of translations

78 Ibid., 495.
79 Nicholas-Sylvestre Bergier, "Liberté de Penser," in Encyclopédie Méthodique. Théologie, vol. 2, ed. Charles-Joseph Panckoucke (Paris/Liège: Panckoucke – Plomteux, 1789), 436.
80 Ibid.: "l'absurdité de leurs raisonnements."
81 Ibid., 437.
82 Ibid.
83 Nicholas-Sylvestre Bergier, "Hérétique," in *Encyclopédie méthodique: Théologie,* vol. 2, ed. Charles-Joseph Panckoucke (Paris/Liège: Panckoucke – Plomteux, 1789), 173; Nicholas-Sylvestre Bergier, "Libertins," in ibid., 440; and Nicholas-Sylvestre Bergier, "Secte," in *Encyclopédie méthodique: Théologie*, vol. 3, ed. Charles-Joseph Panckoucke (Paris/Liège: Panckoucke – Plomteux, 1790), 483.

from foreign philosophers that he enhanced.[84] Strikingly, Naigeon does not provide any entries on deism or freethinking, only on atheism. Still, in several of his articles, he quotes known freethinkers and deists such as Toland, Collins, Hobbes, or Locke and refers to the term *pensée libre* in a natural manner. The noticeable lack of any clarifying definition mirrors the author's conviction that it was unnecessary to define, or even defend, concepts that, in his opinion, eventually would become an integral part of a new worldview. Interestingly, neither Bergier nor Naigeon wrote about secularism, although Bergier touched upon the issue of *laïque* (laicist).[85] However, his entry did not distinguish from the already existing ones. He used this term primarily in a political and juristic sense, with no obvious connection to the three other notions. Still, with *laïcité*, Bergier managed to introduce an important new concept, which would become a key term for French secularization in politics, education, and science during the second half of the nineteenth century.

To draw a first conclusion, it has become evident that until the end of the eighteenth century the term "freethinking" was hardly in use beyond the English language area. Influenced by English freethinkers, in the Protestant parts of Germany freethinking ideas derived, to a high degree, from the humanistic concept of *libertas philosophandi* and *cogitandi*. In France, on the other hand, the notion *liberté de penser* (freedom of thought) was in use following the English concept, but it was linked to French philosophers such as Rosseau or Voltaire. They, however, did not self-identify with this movement, or a French equivalent such as *esprit forts*.

When it comes to freethinking in the eighteenth century, it must be stated that throughout Europe individuals with comparable views may have existed, but their stance alone did not qualify them as uncontested freethinkers. In this regard, the Hungarian scholars serve as a striking example. Although some influential philosophers were atheists (Dániel Berzsenyi) or advocates of tolerance (Ferenc Kazinczy), they did not at all consider themselves to be freethinkers. In fact, the concepts of *szabadgondolkodó* (freethinker) and *szabadgondolkozás* (freethinking) first appeared in Hungarian newspapers during the first half of the nineteenth century to report on events or persons outside of Hungary. It was not until the end of the nineteenth century that Hungarian scholars adopted them in a self-describing manner, as the next sections demonstrate.

84 For further reading, see Claire Fauvergue, "Naigeon lecteur de Diderot dans le Dictionnaire de philosophie ancienne et moderne de l'Encyclopédie méthodique," *Recherches sur Diderot et sur l'Encyclopédie*, no. 50 (2015): 105–119.

85 See Nicholas-Sylvestre Bergier, "Laïque," in *Encyclopédie méthodique: Théologie*, vol. 2, ed. Charles-Joseph Panckoucke (Paris/Liège: Panckoucke – Plomteux, 1789), 402–403.

Between the Revolutions: Freethinking from 1789 to 1848–49

The fears of traditionalists such as Bergier were not unfounded. The outbreak of the French Revolution shook the long-established divine right of kings to its very foundations: now, rulers could be legitimatized not only by the grace of God but also by men's will, as constituted in parliaments or assemblies. To a certain degree, Napoleon embodied this "godless" policy: since his self-coronation, the debate over the question if he was an atheist has continued. The long-established ruling dynasties and the adherents of a traditional worldview denounced Napoleon as the Antichrist.[86] After his defeat and the restoration of the old order, freethinkers and members of related movements, even those of reading circles or intellectual gatherings, lived in a state of constant fear of being persecuted. In Austria, where Metternich installed a system of police surveillance, the consequential retreat of many citizens to the private sphere and their occupation with harmless amusements even created a distinct epoch named *Biedermeier*.

The growing censorship often made it impossible to publish ideas that were potentially threatening to the status quo. Still – and regardless of the growing obstacles for authors and publishers – the number of new encyclopedias increased during the first half of the nineteenth century. This might have been because many of the encyclopedias adopted a positive attitude toward the traditional world order. In fact, encyclopedias formed the battleground for the fight of Christianity and Restoration powers against atheism in the early nineteenth century. This situation makes them an even more valuable source for the reconstruction of conceptual changes and the reception of the terms in question. For this purpose, each part of this section discusses the definitions offered by the encyclopedias, starting with the English reference works and followed by the French and German ones.

86 Michael A Pesenson, "Napoleon Bonaparte and Apocalyptic Discourse in Early Nineteenth-Century Russia," *The Russian Review* 65, no. 3 (2006): 373; and Barbara Beßlich, "Zwischen Abwehr und Anverwandlung: Der deutsche Napoleon-Mythos im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert," in *Napoléon Bonaparte oder der entfesselte Prometheus/Napoléon Bonaparte ou Prométhée déchaîné*, ed. Willi Jung (Göttingen: V & R Unipress, 2015), 124–128.

English Concepts of Freethinking

From the late eighteenth century to the middle of the nineteenth century, the concepts of freethinking, deism, atheism, and secularism barely changed concerning their lexicographical reception. Most of the newly published encyclopedias simply, and sometimes word-by word,[87] retained the definitions provided by the eighteenth-century reference works. Or, they decided not to include articles on the topic at all.[88] The same holds true for the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, which was published in its fourth edition from 1801 to 1810. Yet compared to the first edition discussed above, 30 years later, Britain's most successful encyclopedia had grown to 20 volumes and consequently contained much more enhanced articles, including those on "deists" as well as on "deism":

> Deism may be properly used to denote natural religion, as comprehending those truths which have a real foundation in reason and nature; and in this sense it is so far from being opposite to Christianity, that it is one great design of the gospel to illustrate and enforce it. In this sense some of the deistical writers affected to use it.[89]

Although the *Britannica* – contrary to its first edition – did not directly equate deism with atheism, by contrasting deism with Christianity, it allocated deism

87 Johnson's *Dictionary*, for example, deeply inspired the *London-Encyclopaedia* (22 vols., 1829 and 1839). Not only did its editors copy entries of the *Dictionary* word by word, but they also included the quotes of prominent English politicians, philosophers, or clergymen cited therein. Due to their differing concepts, the quotes in the *London-Encyclopaedia* served other purposes than those in the *Dictionary*, since the *London-Encyclopaedia* approached its headwords judgmental. However, the first edition of the *London-Encyclopaedia* literally copied the entry on "freethinker" from Johnson's *Dictionary* of 1755, yet without referencing it. ("Freethinker," in *The London Encyclopaedia: Or, Universal Dictionary of Science, Art, Literature, and Practical Mechanics, Comprising a Popular View of the Present State of Knowledge*, vol. 9, ed. Thomas Curtis [London: Thomas Tegg, 1829], 611.) The definition of "deism" was taken from the fourth edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. ("Deism," in *The London Encyclopaedia: Or, Universal Dictionary of Science, Art, Literature, and Practical Mechanics, Comprising a Popular View of the Present State of Knowledge*, vol. 7, ed. Thomas Curtis [London: Thomas Tegg, 1829], 119.)

88 The *British Encyclopaedia* (6 vols., 1806 – 1809 in London; 12 vols., 1819 – 1821 in Philadelphia) neither contained an entry on freethinking nor on secularization. However, it copied word for word the lemma "Deist" printed in the first edition of the *Britannica* (1771) – with which it is not to be confused. (See "Deist," in *The British Encyclopedia: Or, Dictionary of Arts and Sciences, Comprising an Accurate and Popular View of the Present Improved State of Human Knowledge*, vol. 2, ed. William Nicholson [London: C. Whittingham, 1809], fol. Hh 7v–8r.)

89 "Deism," in *Encyclopaedia Britannica: Or, a Dictionary of Arts, Sciences and Miscellaneous Literature*, vol. 2, ed. James Miller (Edinburgh: Andrew Bell, 1810), 126.

to the concepts of the still loose anticlerical movements. This is highlighted by the article on "deists," which is a reprint of the respective entry in Chambers' *Encyclopaedia:*[90]

> [...] a class of people known also under the denomination of *Free-thinkers,* whose distinguishing character it is, not to profess any particular form or system of religion; but only to acknowledge the existence of a God, and to follow the light and law of nature, rejecting revelation, and opposing Christianity.[91]

Furthermore, the article once more equates deists with atheists, when stating that the self-designation "deists" originated in the desire of the first deists to give themselves a "more honourable appellation than that of atheists" in the middle of the sixteenth century in France and Italy.[92]

As with the *Britannica*, the *Cyclopaedia,* edited by Abraham Rees,[93] referred to Toland, Collins, Hobbes, and Tindal as British deists.[94] Again, the entries on "deists" and "deism" were partially copied from other encyclopedias and put freethinkers on a level with deists.[95] Denouncing deism as an "arrogant ignorance of metaphysical reasoning"[96] and "speculative impiety," Rees' lexicographical work locates deism near to anticlericalism and atheism. Albeit critical of deists for their attitudes, the final paragraphs of both the entry of *Britannica* and the *Cyclopaedia* conclude with identical wording, quite affirmative, that the debates between Christians, deists, and freethinkers had been highly productive, since they added to the consolidation of Christianism to the point of its ultimate

90 For the sake of completeness, it should be mentioned that *Britannica* also reprinted the four definitions of Clarke.

91 "Deists," in *Encyclopaedia Britannica: Or, a Dictionary of Arts, Sciences and Miscellaneous Literature* vol. 2, ed. James Miller (Edinburgh: Andrew Bell, 1810), 126. (Emphasis in the original.)

92 Ibid.

93 Rees was a Presbyterian minister before he was entrusted to re-edit Abraham Chambers' *Cyclopaedia* thanks to his interests in mathematics and physics. When the re-edition appeared in 1778, Rees was highly acclaimed. This success lead Thomas Longman, business manager of the *Longman* publishing company, to invite Rees to edit a new encyclopedia named *The New Cyclopaedia, or, Universal Dictionary of the Arts and Science,* commonly known as Rees' *Cyclopaedia,* between 1802 and 1820. (A. P. Woolrich, "Rees, Abraham [1743–1825]," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography: From the Earliest Times to the Year 2000*, vol. 46, edited by Matthew Colin and Brian Harrison [New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004], 314–316; Asa Briggs, "Longman Family [per. 1724–1972]," in ibid., vol. 34, 402.)

94 "Deists," in *The Cyclopaedia: Or, Universal Dictionary of Arts, Sciences, and Literature*, ed. Abraham Rees (London, 1819), fol. Zz 1r.

95 Ibid., Yy 4v.

96 Ibid.

victory.[97] The same pejorative reading is echoed by the entry "atheist" of the *Britannica:*

> Atheism, absurd and unreasonable as it is, has had its votaries and martyrs. Lucilio Vanini, an Italian, [...] publicly taught atheism in France, about the beginning of the 17th century; and, being convicted of it at Toulouse was condemned to death.[98]

The *London Encyclopaedia* (1829) followed the same pattern by adopting this judgment word-for-word, but instead of citing Vanini as a warning of publicly practiced atheism, it referred to the execution of Spinoza.[99] Spinoza, in general, was frequently quoted as the spokesmen of atheism by encyclopedias, partially, of course, because of the encyclopedists' "copy & paste" practice. The cited examples of non-British atheists and deists were provided to suggest that those two concepts were foreign to British scholars by principle. To that end, the *London Encyclopaedia* used the rhetoric device of "we and the others" – which became more and more common in the context of the development of national identity – in naming Spinoza "a foreigner."[100] Along these lines, the authors attested Newton and his followers, Boyle, and other presumably British deists or freethinkers as "principal advocates for the existence of a Deity [...]."[101]

The *British Encyclopaedia* – not to be confused with *Britannica* – contains the same paragraph on British scholars and cites the Spinoza case, but it also includes original considerations on atheists: "ATHEIST, is one who does not believe in the existence of a God. He attributes every thing to a fortuitous concourse of atoms."[102] Although this specification might appear almost modern, the author followed the ancient Greek idea of atomism, which was quite influential on natural philosophers such as Boyle, Descartes, and Newton.[103] In its further

97 Ibid., fol. Zz lr, and "Deists," in *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 127.
98 "Atheist," in *Encyclopaedia Britannica: Or, a Dictionary of Arts, Sciences and Miscellaneous Literature*, vol. 3, ed. James Miller (Edinburgh: Andrew Bell, 1810), 193.
99 "Atheism," in *The London Encyclopaedia: Or, Universal Dictionary of Science, Art, Literature, and Practical Mechanics, Comprising a Popular View of the Present State of Knowledge*, vol. 3, ed. Thomas Curtis (London: Thomas Tegg, 1829), 212; for full quotation see the following footnote.
100 Ibid.: "In the seventeenth century, Spinosa, a foreigner, was its noted defender."
101 Ibid.; and "Atheist," in *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 193.
102 "Atheist," in *The British Encyclopedia: Or, Dictionary of Arts and Sciences, Comprising an Accurate and Popular View of the Present Improved State of Human Knowledge*, vol. 1, ed. William Nicholson (London: C. Whittingham, 1809), fol. Ee 2v.
103 For a brief introduction to the concept of atomism in modern times and for further reading, see Alan Chalmers, "Atomism from the 17th to the 20th Century," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta, accessed December 14, 2018, https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2014/entries/atomism-modern/.

course, the text holds to the reception of antique philosophers by quoting Plato, who distinguished three different forms of atheists: first, those who deny the existence of a god; second, those who admit the existence of a god but deny his influence on human affairs; and finally those who believe in gods but not in divine punishment.[104]

A further elaboration was offered in the *Edinburgh Encyclopaedia* – next to the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* the most important English lexicographical publication of the early nineteenth century. Reverend John Lee, with five pages of two columns each, contributed a lengthy and original essay on "atheism" that summarized the state of knowledge and the concepts of morality of his time and offered a rigorous definition of atheism, according to which everyone is an atheist who does not concur with the traditional Christian worldview.[105] Whether this understanding also included deism or freethinking remains open to interpretation, since the *Edinburgh Encyclopaedia* does not refer to them in this article or in separate entries.

Concerning secularism, neither the *Edinburg Encyclopaedia* nor the *British Encyclopaedia* dwelled on the issue. These reference works, in specifying secularism, only repeated the definition provided by the *Cyclopaedia* a hundred years before.[106] "Secularization," therefore, still appeared as a political practice, while the three other terms remained philosophical-theological concepts.

Toward and against the *libre-penseur* – French Concepts of Freethinking

In France, the publication of reference works paused until the 1830s. The first one released after the break was the *Encyclopédie nouvelle*, published between 1834 and 1841 in eight partially finished volumes by the economist Pierre H. Laroux and the sociologist Jean Reynaud.[107] Both represented a new generation of scholars heavily influenced (in both positive and negative ways) by the great names of the Enlightenment and by the upheavals initiated by Napoleon, the

104 "Atheist," in *British Encyclopaedia*, fol. Ee 2v–3r.

105 John Lee, "Atheism," in *Edinburgh Encyclopaedia*, ed. David Brewster (Edinburgh, 1830), 5: "We would extend the term still farther: To those who have no idea of God at all [...]."

106 See, e. g., "Secularization," in *The London Encyclopaedia: Or, Universal Dictionary of Science, Art, Literature, and Practical Mechanics, Comprising a Popular View of the Present State of Knowledge*, vol. 19, ed. Thomas Curtis (London: Thomas Tegg, 1829), 763.

107 Volumes five to seven – covering the terms from "Episc" to "Phil" – were only finished partially by the time of publication and were thus edited in one volume.

Second Republic, and the Restoration. Besides, since the final defeat of Napoleon, the Catholic Church in France had again gained grounds, which was also echoed in the encyclopedias. Hence, the article on atheism in the *Encyclopédie nouvelle* offers less a definition than a judgment of the term's usage. The first sentence already states: "Athéisme. Ce mot est un de ceux don't on a fait le plus d'abus." ("Atheism is one of the most abused words.")[108] The further argumentation confirms the impression of "atheism" or "atheist" as being primarily external attributions resulting from a conflict with religion: "But intolerant people do not understand it this way: there is no God but their God, and rejecting their belief is to profess atheism. Also, there was no word more often condemned by the preachers or rejected by those who were accused to be atheists."[109] After referring to some historical personalities associated with this combat term such as Socrates or Spinoza, the article turned its attention to those who self-identified as atheists. The *Encyclopédie nouvelle* labeled them as "quelques insensés" ("some lunatics") who might consider themselves atheists but in reality believed in something comparable to God.[110] To the authors, atheism seemed only an imagination deriving from the aberration of religion and mind. In consequence, the *Encyclopédie nouvelle* distinguished deism and freethinking from atheism, although definitions of these two terms, as well as of secularization, are missing.

In contrast to other reference works, the authors of the *Encyclopédie du dix-neuvième siècle*, edited in 28 volumes by Ange du Saint-Priest,[111] are known by name. Most of them were Catholic scholars or supporters of the *Ancien Régime*. Consequently, the *Encyclopédie du dix-neuvième siècle* adopted a conservative stance. Pierre-Sébastien Laurentie, a Catholic journalist, legitimist, and advocate of an anti-liberal ideology, authored the article on "atheism," which he introduced with a praise to God. His worship reflects the re-emerging power of the Catholic Church, as well as the author's rejection of the radical ideology of eighteenth-century enlightened philosophy: "Grâce au ciel, ce mot fatal d'athée, d'athéisme, disparaît de la langue philosophie contemporaine." ("Thanks to

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108 "Athéisme," in *Encyclopédie nouvelle, ou dictionnaire philosophique, scientifique, littéraire et industriel*, ed. Pierre H. Laroux and Jean Reynaud (Geneva: Slatkine Reprints, [1836] 1991), 195.
109 Ibid.
110 Ibid. Strictly speaking, *Nouvelle's* concept of "atheism as self-identity" resembled agnosticism. Nevertheless, both terms were and still are used synonymously.
111 There is hardly any information available on Ange de Saint-Priest. His name suggests he was a member of the noble family Guignard de Saint-Priest, but the family tree does not mention his name. The only family member conducting intellectual work during the early nineteenth century was Alexis Guignard, diplomat in Russia. Although it might be possible that "Ange" is a short version of his two first names, it seems unlikely, since there was no need for him to publish under a quite obvious alias.

heaven, this fateful word of atheism vanished from the contemporary language of philosophy.")[112] In the following, Laurentie differentiated between four varieties of non-belief: dogmatic, practical, philosophical, and political atheism. In addition to the arguments given in other encyclopedias, he held the materialistic concept of eighteenth-century philosophy and the Enlightenment responsible for the French Revolutions of 1789 and 1830 and the moral decay of society. His reading of practical atheism implied that its representatives would feel empowered to committing a crime due to their lack of fear regarding divine punishment.

Laurentie's third notion of atheism discusses its philosophical, or rather rational, aspects.[113] As both of these adjectives might already indicate, his single-paragraph explanation considers rational atheism "pure deism." According to Laurentie, the enlightened ideal of *ratio* served as a substitute for religion. With his turning toward "athéisme politique" ("political atheism"),[114] for the first time, the connection between atheism and secularism is created. It is the "État athée" (the "atheistic state") that negates the existence and power of God.[115] Characterizing the atheistic state as a "nouveauté contemporaine" (a "contemporary novelty"), Laurentie's moralizing elaborations reflect the historical background of his time with the first political realizations of secularism during the French Revolution. By denouncing political atheism, he adds another distinction: "The private atheism might seem defeated; [now] we have to fight public atheism; the latest expression of so many mistakes in the world."[116] His differentiation between private and public atheism mirrors the general developments of the preceding decades which marked the emergence of a public sector strictly separated from the private sphere. In line with this, the author traces the development of religion as part of both spaces. While until the middle of the eighteenth century, the religion of a person had been a matter of the state, since the passing of various acts of toleration in Europe (e. g. in France or the Habsburg Empire),[117] religion more and more became a matter of the individual sphere.

112 Pierre-Sébastien Laurentie, "Athée, Athéisme," in *Encyclopédie du dix-neuvième siècle*, ed. Ange de Saint-Priest (Paris: Bureau de l'Encyclopédie du XIXe siècle, 1838), 146.
113 Ibid., 149. Laurentie introduced the term "athéisme philosophique," although "rational" was more common.
114 Ibid.
115 Ibid., 150.
116 Ibid.
117 In France: Toleration of Protestants and Jews in South-West France (1787); in the Habsburg Empire: Toleration of the Protestant and Orthodox Churches (1781); Toleration of Jews (1782).

With his focus on natural philosophy in the final paragraph of the article,[118] Laurentie affirmed his equation of deism with atheism. This was further deepened in his entry on "deism," where he stated that because of the deists' conviction of *ratio* instead of God's arbitrariness as the explanation of nature, "le *déiste,* à ce point de vue, n'est guère autre chose que l'athée" ("from this point of view, the *deist* is hardly anything else than the atheist").[119] His definition of this "religion naturelle" ("natural religion")[120] as a sect not only reminds of Collins' freethinking self-description, but also labels deism as a substitute for organized religion. Thus the rest of the entry is written in form of an emotional refutation of deism and the French philosophers of the eighteenth century – above all, Rousseau – supportive of deism and atheism. Laurentie's argumentation is filled with vulgarisms that he partially copied from his previous articles, such as "l'insensé," "maniaque," "vicieux," and "l'idiot" ("the foolish," "the maniac," "vicious," "idiot"),[121] or simply "anarchie pure" ("pure anarchy"), which he pictured as a consequence of deism.[122]

Although the *Encyclopédie du dix-neuvième siècle* does not contain a definition of freethinking, it does mention the term *esprit fort*, the eighteenth-century French equivalent of "freethinker." Again, it was Laurentie who authored this entry, dealing with different concepts of *esprit*, and just as in his previous entries, he grasped *esprit fort* as a sort of atheism and anarchism.[123] Most noteworthy is that he seems to have approached the notion in the past tense, as if this concept would not exist anymore. This choice of tense concludes with the general trend of all of the French encyclopedias of the Restoration period and their attempts to present the ideas of the Enlightenment as vanquished.

118 Laurentie, "Athée, Athéisme," 150.

119 Pierre-Sébastien Laurentie, "Déisme," in *Encyclopédie du dix-neuvième siècle*, ed. Ange de Saint-Priest (Paris: Bureau de l'Encyclopédie du XIXe siècle, 1846), 711.

120 Ibid.

121 Ibid.

122 Ibid.

123 Pierre-Sébastien Laurentie, "Esprit," in *Encyclopédie Du Dix-Neuvième Siècle*, ed. Ange de Saint-Priest (Paris: Bureau de l'Encyclopédie du XIXe siècle, 1850), 89: "A strong spirit was somebody who put himself above the belief and joined the religious faith of the profane that denies God and laughed at hell. Unfortunately, he obeyed his passions and freed his life from all rules."

Between "Freigeist" and "freier Geist" – German Concepts of Freethinking

The number of German encyclopedias rose to unparalleled heights during the first half of the nineteenth century. All of those encyclopedias that included entries on freethinking distinguished between freethinking as a philosophical movement and the art of thinking free, that is, to be free of prejudices. While they held a positive view on the latter, they considered the philosophical movement as "false freedom."[124] Their distrust echoed the alleged connection of freethinking and atheism, which was stressed in *Adelung's Wörterbuch* (5 vols., four editions between 1774 and 1811). According to this influential reference work, a freethinker was someone "der sich von den Gesetzen der Vernunft, Religion und Sitten los macht" (who "freed himself from the rules of reason, religion, and morals").[125]

However, freethinking was not directly identified with atheism but rather taken as a movement of natural philosophy. In its third edition (1815), the *Brockhaus* – the most important German reference work to the present day – substantiates the connection of freethinking and deism, since deists may believe in God but not in divine revelation.[126] For the subsequent five editions, this explanation remained uncontested. The ninth edition (1844), however, deployed some significant modifications. First, *Freidenker* (freethinker) – the regular term in use today – was referenced under the entry "Freigeist."[127] Second, the article differentiated between freethinkers as deists and as atheists:

> Freethinker does not only refer to a thinker, who draws his conclusions independent from the opinions of the church, but also to such a [thinker], who rejects the belief in revelation

124 "Freigeist," in *Brockhaus Bilder-Conversations-Lexikon: Ein Handbuch zur Verbreitung der Kentnisse und zur Unterhaltung*, vol. 2 (Leipzig: F. A. Brockhaus, 1838), 107: "But the sensual human being is wrong in assuming to possess freedom in his self-will, and it is this false freedom that the freethinker upholds."

125 Johann Christoph Adelung, "Freygeist," in *Versuch eines vollständigen grammatisch-kritischen Wörterbuchs der hochdeutschen Mundart, mit beständiger Vergleichung der übrigen Mundarten, besonders aber der Oberdeutschen*, vol. 2, ed. Johann Christoph Adelung (Brno: Joseph G. Traßler, 1788), 290.

126 "Freigeist," in *Conversations-Lexicon oder Encyclopädisches Handwörterbuch für gebildete Stände*, vol. 3 (Leipzig/Altenburg: F. A. Brockhaus, 1815), 309.

127 "Freigeist," in *Allgemeine Deutsche Real-Encyklopädie für die gebildeten Stände: Conversations-Lexikon*, vol. 5 (Leipzig: F. A. Brockhaus, 1844), 567.

> or generally all positive belief. In the first case, freethinking is deism, in the latter unbelief.[128]

Freethinking, thus, still seemed closely linked to religion and theology. But, unlike some decades ago, neither freethinkers nor deists were received automatically as atheists. Instead, the *Brockhaus*, and its compacted edition, the *Bilder-Lexikon,* listed deism and theism as equivalent but antonymous to atheism.[129] In some cases, the *Brockhaus* distinguished between deism and theism but only if deism was taken as a negation of divine revelation as was the case in English deism. To avoid confusion, the *Brockhaus* suggested that any differentiation of those two terms apart from their linguistic origin would be "willkürlich" ("arbitrary").[130] As a reference, Immanuel Kant and his reception of deism and theism was quoted, the *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* (Critique of Pure Reason, 1781), in particular, in which reason was contrasted with the existence of a higher being. For Kant, deism supported only the idea of transcendental theology, while theism also promoted the concept of a natural theology.[131]

These thoughts proved highly influential on the entry on deism in the *Ersch-Gruber* (1832). Besides the notion's basic definition already given in other encyclopedias, Friedrich Köppen, who authored the entry, relied on Kant for his approach:

> Meanwhile, since nobody shall be accused of denying something [here: God], just because he dared to assert [the only transcendental existence of God], so it seems more moderate and accurate to say: the deist believes in a God, the theist believes in an active God [*summam intelligentiam*].[132]

128 "Freidenker," in *Allgemeine Deutsche Real-Encyklopädie für die gebildeten Stände: Conversations-Lexikon*, vol. 5 (Leipzig/Altenburg: F. A. Brockhaus, 1844), 564.
129 "Deismus," in *Conversations-Lexicon oder encyclopädisches Handwörterbuch für gebildete Stände*, vol. 3 (Leipzig/Altenburg: F. A. Brockhaus, 1815), 82; "Deismus," in *Brockhaus Bilder-Conversations-Lexikon: Ein Handbuch zur Verbreitung der Kenntnisse und zur Unterhaltung*, vol. 1 (Leipzig: F. A. Brockhaus, 1837), 522. The following editions of *Brockhaus* kept this equivocation. However, the first edition did not explicitly treat them as synonyms. This equivocation might result from the analogy of "d" and "t" in the German language (contrary to English, the "h" in "theism" in German stays mute). In the spoken dialects, particularly in the southern parts of Germany, as in Switzerland and Austria, "d" and "t" are pronounced almost the same.
130 "Deismus," in *Brockhaus*, 82.
131 Immanuel Kant, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* (Leipzig: Johann Friedrich Hartknoch, [5]1799), 659–660.
132 Friedrich Köppen, "Deismus," in *Allgemeine Encyclopädie der Wissenschaften und Künste*, vol. 23, ed. Johann Samuel Ersch and Johann Gottfried Gruber (Leipzig: F. A. Brockhaus, 1834), 352, after Kant, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, 661.

Here, again, deism and atheism are attributions rather than self-descriptions, and in his subsequent article on "deists" – the actual followers of deism – the author abandoned his neutral tone. Specifying deists as supporters of "irgend eine" ("some") doctrine of God that is not based on the idea of divine revelation, Köppen states that in the broadest sense of the word all those philosophers were to be characterized as "deists" who would attempt to prove the existence of a higher being by "Vernunftsspeculation" ("speculations of reason"), including pagan ones.[133] In the narrower sense of the term, however, the author classified those as deists who would promote the Ionic and Eleatic concepts of the ancient Greeks, such as the French philosophers of the Enlightenment.[134] Of course, both definitions applied to freethinkers *and* to atheists.

All encyclopedias considered so far defined atheism as the simple negation of God. Depending on the reference work, a moral judgment also accompanied this reading.[135] In the early nineteenth century, however, it was still a matter of perception and personal opinion whether a person was regarded to be an atheist. The equation of atheism, deism, and freethinking continued to exist, although an increasing number of reference works downplayed or even denied their existence. The previous analysis suggests that the linguistic reception of freethinking, atheism, and deism differed markedly depending on the language and confessional spheres in the period of the Restoration. In Britain, the definitions written up during the eighteenth century were simply rewritten. In consequence, the identification of freethinking, deism, and atheism did not change at all. Catholic France, being caught between revolution, Napoleon, and the Restoration, did not touch upon the matter for almost three decades. When scholars resumed the lexicographic work, they were highly influenced by the restoration of the Catholic Church as the political power in France. In the German language areas, primarily the Protestant parts were involved with encyclopedias. Yet they could not agree on whether freethinking – as a philosophical movement – was deistic or whether deism equaled theism or rather atheism. These conflicts, as the final section demonstrates, concerned not only encyclopedists but also freethinkers.

133 Friedrich Köppen, "Deisten," in *Allgemeine Encyclopädie der Wissenschaften und Künste*, vol. 23, ed. Johann Samuel Ersch and Johann Gottfried Gruber (Leipzig: F. A. Brockhaus, 1834), 352.

134 Ibid.

135 "Atheismus," in *Damen Conversations Lexikon*, vol. 1, ed. Carl Herloßsohn (Leipzig: Fr. Volckmar, 1834), 340.

Freethinkers in Opposition

Although the encyclopedias suggested a period of stagnation concerning free-thinking and secularization, the spokesmen of freethinking did not rest at all. Again, Britain took the lead, with industrialization triggering a new wave of anti-clericalism.[136] One of the most influential representatives of British freethought at that time was Richard Carlile. In his book *The Deist* (1826), he relied on the already stated key points of deism. More noteworthy was his idea of freethinking, which he deduced from the simple necessity of thinking:

> These arguers [arguers of the rationality of discovering God] they call Freethinkers, and this appellation has obtained, in the understanding of pious believers, the most odious disgrace. Yet we cannot argue without thinking; nor can we either think or argue to any purpose without freedom. Therefore free-thinking, so far from being a disgrace, is a virtue, a most commendable quality.[137]

In France, by contrast, the term freethinking was still not yet in use. The French equivalent, *libre-pensée*, did not appear before 1840, probably first used by Victor Hugo in several letters and unpublished drafts.[138] Other French scholars such as Paul-Louis Courier maintained their focus on atheism and anticlericalism in the follow-up of the Enlightenment.[139] In Germany, freethinking remained closely connected to Protestant movements such as the *Lichtfreunde*[140] (Friends of Light, 1841) and to anticlerical movements, whose best-known example was the *Los-von-Rom* (Away from Rome) initiative of the *Deutschkatholiken* (German Catholics, 1844).[141] At the beginning of the century, Johann Gottfried Herder, in

136 On freethinking during this period, see John Eros, "The Rise of Organized Freethought in Mid-Victorian England," *The Sociological Review* 2, no. 1 (1954): 98 – 120.

137 Richard Carlile, *The Deist: Or, Moral Philosopher: Being an Impartial Inquiry into Moral and Theological Truths, Selected from the Writings of the Most Celebrated Authors in Ancient and Modern Times*, vol. 3 (London: R. Carlile, 1826), 7.

138 See Jacqueline Lalouette, *La Libre Pensée en France, 1848 – 1940* (Paris: Albin Michel, ^{2}2001), 15; and Claude Millet, "Jacqueline Lalouette: 'Victor Hugo et la libre-pensée'," Université Paris 7 equipe 19e siècle, accessed January 16, 2019, http://groupugo.div.jussieu.fr/groupugo/89-02-25lalouette.htm.

139 See also Lalouette, *La Libre Pensée en France*, 15.

140 For further information on these movements, see Jörn Brederlow, *"Lichtfreunde" und "Freie Gemeinden": Religiöser Protest und Freiheitsbewegung im Vormärz und in den Revolution von 1848/49* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1976).

141 Anticlericalism impacted with differing intensity depending on the cultural context. In some countries, it was so strong that it even became a political matter (e.g. the *Kulturkampf* in Germany or the *Los von Rom*-initiative in Bohemia and Austria). Especially for Austria, that

his *Adrastea* (1801–1803), elaborated extensively and in a sincere tone on the issue of *Freidenker.*[142] In particular, he harshly criticized the antithetic use of "freethinker": as (self-)identity of outstanding minds, for one thing, and as stigmatization of intellectual opponents, infidels, or fools, for another.[143] "'Still I do not know', some might say, 'what a freethinker is? Freely shall everybody think, after all'. It would be desirable that everybody shall pause and think before he uses this term as an expletive."[144] This quote again mirrors the rather defensive approach that answered the disdain of freethinking by the defenders of the *Ancien Régime*. The post-Napoleonic era dampened freethinking. Its supporters suffered serious consequences if they expressed their opinions openly: Carlile, for example, was imprisoned on multiple occasions because of his advocacy for deism, atheism, and the rights of women and children. It was only the Revolutions of 1848–49 that caused the rebirth of liberal movements, in general, and of freethinking, in particular.

Freethinking 1848–1918: Organizing Freethought Movements

The events of 1848–49 gave a fresh start to freethinking. Many among the new generation of freethinkers were natural scientists or medical professionals, materialists, atheists, and/or deists influenced by the ideas of the French Enlightenment and revolution.[145] Moreover, a significant part was aligned with the radical

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is, the German-speaking Western parts of the Habsburg Empire, *Los von Rom* was not only a matter of anticlericalism and anti-Semitism, but also of creating a national German identity. For further reading, see Friedrich Wilhelm Graf, *Die Politisierung des religiösen Bewußtseins: Die bürgerlichen Religionsparteien im deutschen Vormärz, Das Beispiel des Deutschkatholizismus* (Stuttgart/Bad Cannstatt: frommann-holzboog, 1978); and Karl-Reinhart Trauner, *Die Los-von-Rom-Bewegung: Gesellschaftspolitische und kirchliche Strömung in der ausgehenden Habsburgermonarchie* (Szentendre: Tillinger, 1999).

142 Johann Gottfried Herder, *Adrastea*, vol. 4.2 (Leipzig: Johann Friedrich Hartknoch, 1802), 214–233.

143 Ibid., 214.

144 Ibid., 223.

145 See Lalouette, *La Libre Pensée en France*, 19; Marius Rotar, "Libera cugetare în România până la izbucnirea Primului Război Mondial: Cazul Doctorului Constantin Thiron," *Archiva Moldaviae* 7 (2015): 143; and Marius Rotar, "The Freethought Movement in Romania until the Outbreak of the First World War: Developments, Criticisms and European Influences," *History of European Ideas* 42, no. 4 (2016): 557.

political left.[146] Their common ground was anticlericalism – on national as well as international levels.

Before we continue, the terms anticlericalism and anti-Catholicism require further specification. This chapter follows Lisa Dittrich's approach, since she provides easily applicable but concrete definitions of both terms. According to her, anticlericalism is a critical stance against all churches, their members, and their dogmas or against religion as such. Anti-confessional movements such as anti-Catholicism can be integrated into this concept.[147] However, anticlericalism is not comparable with an anti-religious stance, since Protestants, free churches, and liberal Catholic movements joined the anticlerical camp.[148] Anti-Catholicism, in contrast, describes positions that are specifically directed against the Catholic Church and its dogmas, policies, and power.[149]

A common characteristic of this period is the radicalization of all of these concepts. This might have been due to the general radicalization of politics. Freethinking, anticlericalism, and anti-Catholicism were often embedded in the context of nationalism and the culture wars,[150] as the following considerations illustrate. A symbol of this radicalization may be the introduction of the term *laïcité*, coined by the French pedagogue and Nobel Peace laureate Ferdinand É. Buisson to describe the specific French development of secularism, that is, the radical and absolute separation of church and state affairs.[151] Buisson conceptualized *laïcité* in the context of the fierce culture war fought between the Third Republic and the Catholic Church.[152]

146 Ibid., 566; and Jacqueline Lalouette, "Une rencontre oubliée: La Libre Pensée française et les savants matérialistes allemands (1863 – 1870)," *Romantisme* 21, no. 73 (1991): 64.

147 Dittrich, *Antiklerikalismus in Europa*, 14.

148 Dittrich, "European Connections," 274.

149 Dittrich, *Antiklerikalismus in Europa*, 14.

150 For an overview, see Christopher Clark and Wolfram Kaiser, eds, *Culture Wars: Secular–Catholic Conflict in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003). For the French case, see Michael F. Leruth, "Laicism, Religion and the Economy of Belief in the French Republic," *Historical Reflections/Réflexions Historiques* 31, no. 3 (2005): *The Dreyfus Affair in the Twenty-First Century: A Reconsideration:* 445 – 467; and Jacqueline Lalouette, "Laïcité, anticléricalismes et antichristianisme," *Transversalités* 108, no. 4 (2008): 69 – 84.

151 This term is often used anachronistically for secular approaches in earlier centuries, which is – strictly speaking – incorrect, since it simply did not exist prior to the later nineteenth century.

152 Michael Germann, "Laizismus," in *Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart: Handwörterbuch für Theologie und Religionswissenschaft* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2002), 38 – 39. In the following decades, however, *laïcité* (status of a given separation of state and church affairs) as well as its relative "laicism" (movement) became de-radicalized. Today, the terms secularism and laicism are mostly used synonymously. This is why the conceptual separation of both terms is difficult

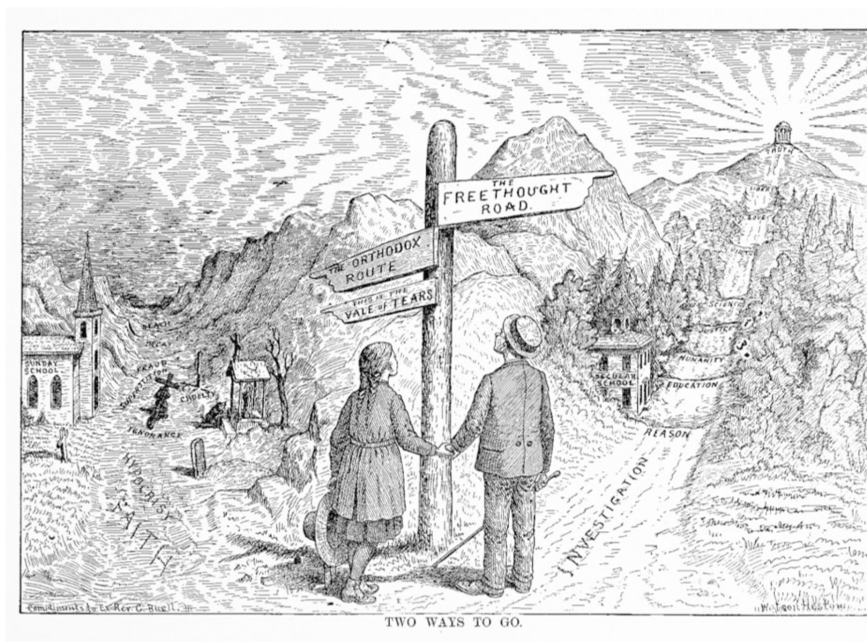

Figure 2: Anticlericalism as common frame of freethinking; Watson Heston, *The Freethinkers' Pictoral Text-Book* (New York: The Truth Seeker Company, 1896), 63.

After 1848 – 49, freethinkers began to found societies and journals, and they acted out their left-wing network ambitions: they held international conferences to join with freethought organizations from other countries. With these steps, they intended to promote freethought, rally support for its ideas, and institutionalize the aims and contents of freethinking.

National and Transnational Dimensions of Freethinking: Constituting a Self-Identity

By the middle of the nineteenth century, freethinking was no longer a Western European phenomenon, but an international movement consisting of regional, national, and transnational networks, organizations, and journals. Accordingly,

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and sometimes even arbitrary, as R. Mehl emphasizes. (Roger Mehl, "Laizismus," in *Theologische Realenzyklopädie*, vol. 20 [Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter, 1982], 404.)

the ways to understand freethinking diversified even further. As a consequence, the internationally aligned freethinkers of the nineteenth century struggled to figure out a commonly accepted definition of freethinking. The following analysis focuses on the conflicts in the process of forming a transnational self-identity of freethinking rather than on tracing single national concepts. Those conflicts about freethinking's definition and purpose rooted in national grounds: British freethinkers, for example, debated whether religion could be a part of freethought or whether it was opposed to freethinking in principle. Jacob Holyoake and Charles Bradlaugh, the most prominent spokesmen of freethinking and secularism of their time in Britain, adopted different positions: while the former advocated for a moderate stance against institutionalized religion, the latter intended to fight any religious interference with state affairs by the principles of secularism and atheism.[153]

The same feeling of opposition – this time against the Orthodox Church – also motivated Romanian (here, inhabitants of the Romanian United Principalities) freethinkers to organize themselves: In response to the Orthodox Association, founded in Iași in 1885, Romanian freethinkers gathered in Bucharest, attempting – in vain, however – to establish a freethought association.[154] Only in 1909 did the physician Constantin Thiron manage to found the *Asociației de Liberă-Cugetare monistă evoluționistă din România* (Association of Monistic Evolutionary Freethinking in Romania)[155] and its journal *Rațiunea* (Rationality, 1911–1914). As the Association's designation indicates, Darwin's theory of evolution was a primary point of reference in the Romanian freethought movement as well as for freethinkers in general. It was welcomed as an ally in the dispute with clericalism, as it seemed to scientifically prove deist, atheist, or monist principles.

153 Laura Schwartz, *Infidel Feminism: Secularism, Religion and Women's Emancipation, England 1830–1914* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013), 9; and Royle, *Victorian Infidels*.
154 Marius Rotar, "The Freethought Movement in Romania," 557.
155 The alternative name of the association was *Asociației Naționale a Liber Cugetărilor* (National Association of Freethinkers). Although this title might have been more common in the narrow literature on Hungarian freethought, the above-given designation is the historical title of the association used by Thiron and inscribed on his tombstone. See *Gazeta Ilustrata*, March 22, 1914, 6. For further information, see Rotar, "Libera cugetare." Monism can be interpreted as a complement to deism, since prominent deists such as Spinoza or Hobbes developed early concepts of monism. It also is a related term to atheism or pantheism, most of all in the scientific interpretation of Ernst Haeckel, who propagated Darwinism in Germany. For further reading, see Todd Weir, "The Riddles of Monism: An Introductory Essay," in *Monism: Science, Philosophy, Religion, and the History of a Worldview*, ed. Todd Weir (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 1–44.

In Hungary, freethinkers did not appear publicly before the turn of the century, although the history of Hungarian freethinking is scarcely studied. The most prominent Hungarian association of freethought was the *Galilei Kör* (Galilei Circle, 1908 – 1919), founded by radical left-wing students in Budapest.[156] Its program – printed in the liberal newspaper *Nepszava* (Word of the People) – primarily denounced backward-looking education in schools. Instead of teaching modern science, philosophy, and literature (the program mentioned Darwin, Nietzsche, and Tolstoy, amongst others), ancient Roman authors and other – according to the Galilei Circle – useless and outdated contents were prioritized.[157]

A few years later, the physician, university professor of sociology, and politician Oszkár Jászi established another society, called *Selmeczbányai Köre* (Circle of Selmecbánya).[158] In his first speech (December 5, 1912), he defined the "essentials and basic principles of freethinking"[159] as follows:

> Yet freethinking does not mean the transformation of new concepts or new dogmas into general knowledge. On the contrary! [It means] that freethinking has neither theorems, nor dogmas, nor paragraphs. We freethinkers do not wish that anybody shall adopt the ideas represented by us, [but] shall be enthusiastic about those ideas. Freethought, dear ladies and gentlemen, has just one condition *and that is the right of the free will.* This is what we expect of everybody.[160]

The very first Hungarian freethinking journal was *Az Új Század* (The New Century, 1906, two issues), published in Cluj (Transylvania) by Adolf J. Storfer and Lénárt Mahler.[161] It was released to be a "szószék" ("pulpit"), and an "oázis"

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156 For further reading, see József Zoltán, *Budapest történetének bibliográfiája: 1686 – 1950*, vol. 6 (Budapest: Fővárosi Szabó Ervin Könvytár, 1969), 307 – 308; Zsigmond Kende, *A Galilei kör megalakulása* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1974); and Péter Tibor Csunderlik, *Radikálisok, szabadgondolkodók, ateisták: A Galilei Kör (1908 – 1919) története* (Budapest: Napvilág Kiadó, 2017).

157 "Haladásról nem szabad beszélni!" ["It is not allowed to speak about progress."] *Nepszava*, February 21, 1909, 8.

158 Today Banská Štiavnica, Slovakia.

159 Oszkár Jászi, "A szabadgondolkodás lényege és alapelvei," in *A szabadgondolkodás lényege és alapelvei: Mi a programunk?*, ed. Selmeczbányai Köre (Banská Štiavnica: Selmeczbányai Köre, 1912), 3.

160 Ibid., 4.

161 Nothing concrete is known about the biography of Lénárt Mahler. He only published an article named "Nemzeti eszme és szociálizmus" (National spirit and socialism) in *Az Új Század: Szabadgondolkodó Folyóirat* (The New Century: Freethinking Journal) in 1907.

("oasis") "in the desert of lies, malevolence, tyranny, and stupidity."[162] Its title recalled the turn of the century and the hopes connected to the nineteenth century as a turning point in history:

> The twentieth century is no pioneer, just the realizer of the hopes of the advanced nineteenth century. Because the nineteenth century gave birth to positivism, sociology, socialism, anarchism, individualism, naturalism, Darwinism, monism, materialism. Because the nineteenth century gave [us] the Comtes, Marxs, Darwins, Haeckels, Zolas, Ibsens, Spencers. Those were the pioneers.[163]

This assessment reflects, on the one hand, the hopes for a prosperous future just before the outbreak of the First World War and, on the other hand, the "conceptual networking" between freethinkers and their allies. It is worth noting that Storfer was not Hungarian but a German-speaking journalist from a Jewish family in Czernowitz. His collaboration with the Hungarian Mahler symbolizes the freethinkers' ideal of cooperation beyond linguistic borders or national interests. Still, linguistic and national differences complicated the establishment of permanent transnational societies during the second half of the nineteenth century. Torn between specific national ideas of freethinking and transnational approaches, and between diverging economic, social, and religious ideals, the only thing freethinkers seem to have been able to agree upon was their shared opposition to the Catholic Church or, respectively, the Orthodox Church. This "common enemy" made freethinkers natural allies of other movements that offered alternative models for society and politics, such as the women's rights movement. (For the gender issue, see also Figure 2: the boy leads the hesitating girl into the light of freedom.)[164]

Anti-Catholicism was the primary motive for the Italian freethinker, journalist, and democrat Giuseppe Ricciardi to organize the First International Freethinker Conference. The so-called "Anti-Council" took place in Naples as a counter-project to the First Vatican Council; both opened simultaneously on December 8, 1869.[165] Despite its ambitious goal of founding an international freethought association, the Anti-Council ended ahead of schedule on the second day of the conference. This was due to the Neapolitan police dissolving the international assembly of the supposed political radicals, as well as for internal rea-

162 Adolf J. Storfer and Lénárt Mahler, "Beköszöntő," *Az Új Század: Szabadgondolkodó Folyóirat* 1, no. 1 (1905): 1.
163 Ibid.
164 For a comprehensive approach which reads together freethinking and the women's rights movement, see Schwartz, *Infidel Feminism*.
165 Dittrich, "European Connections," 267.

sons, because the 55,000 – according to a contemporary testimony – representatives from around the world could not agree upon basic questions:[166] should an international freethought society be materialistic, deistic, atheistic, laic, or political in focus? And which position should it adopt regarding religion as such?[167] While some took freedom of thought literally as the right to choose opinions and beliefs freely, others demanded a resolution of universal principles that would have made freethinking into a kind of substitute religion. In this light, it is hardly surprising that the German national freethought movements were closely linked to the Protestant free churches,[168] whereas the British freethought societies were regarded as sects by some contemporaries[169] because of their rigid ideology, composed of natural law, rationalism, materialism, and atheism.[170] During the nineteenth century, deism's role in Britain diminished, but it continued to be influential on French freethinker circles.[171]

Eventually, the attempt of bringing together the different national freethought movements was successful in 1880, when the *Fédération Internationale de la Libre Pensée* (International Freethought Federation, IFF) was founded on the initiative of the Belgian freethought movement. This Federation organized regular conferences, but since the conflicts of the Anti-Council could not be overcome and impeded all progress, it took until 1904 for the congress in Rome to finally decide upon a common definition of freethinking. The first and general resolution passed in Rome found that freethinking is not a doctrine but instead – as the term already suggests – a method of thinking. While nineteenth-century doctrines or ideologies tended to be "isms" that, according to Koselleck, are nouns indicating concepts of movement,[172] the freethought movement never qualified for this totality, because freethought movements – also within national contexts – stood for different ideas, concepts, and teachings. At times, they even adopted religious patterns to create secular practices and ceremonies, for example, in matters of civil baptism or cremation. The congress in Rome decided on another important general direction: freethinking was declared a secular movement aiming at the separation of church and state. With this decision, a decade-

166 Ibid., 268. But as Dittrich emphasizes, the conference site, the "Teatro San Fernandino," offered seats for only 500 people. The number of 55,000 participants might thus be exaggerated.
167 Ibid., 279.
168 Ibid., 270.
169 Schwartz, *Infidel Feminism*, 22.
170 Ibid., 15.
171 For a detailed description of the interaction of deism, atheism, and freethinking in France after 1848, see Lalouette, *La Libre Pensée en France*, 143–182.
172 Ricken, "Zum Verhältnis vergleichender Begriffsgeschichte," 38–39.

long debate about freethinking's position was put to an end and the up-until-today inseparable connection between freethinking and secularism was established.

Reception of Freethinking: The External Identity

During the second half of the nineteenth century, encyclopedias were published in almost every language. Since not all of them can be studied concerning their definition of freethinking, this section illustrates the reception of freethinking on the basis of three examples that where most influential (*Brockhaus*, *Pallas Nagy Lexikona*) or pioneering (*Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, the first modern theological handbook). They provide an overall impression on the divergences of freethinking from an external point of view. Because of the amount of published reference works after 1850, it would be impossible to discuss related terms just as in the first sections of this chapter. The focus, thus, is on freethinking, beginning with the German *Brockhaus,* which was highly influential on other reference works, such as the Dutch *Winkler Prins Encyclopedie*.

The *Brockhaus* (1892) defined a *Freidenker* (freethinker) as someone who forms his opinion not by relying on religious authorities but according to rational principles. The author differentiated between freethought movements in England, France, and Germany but did not consider more recent developments. Thus he characterized English freethinking as closely connected to deism, while French freethinkers (Voltaire and Rousseau, in particular) were introduced as advocates of atheism. For Germany, the encyclopedia's viewpoint is vague: freethinking emerged as a consequence of the restitution of "Orthodox Churches"[173] and rallied support among different circles of society.[174]

173 See the definition the *Brockhaus* offers for "Orthodoxy": "In the Protestant Church those are called orthodox who keep to the doctrines of the confessional statements of Reformation as infallible divine truth against the critic of modern thinking." ("Orthodoxie," in *Allgemeine Deutsche Real-Encyklopädie für die gebildeten Stände: Conversations-Lexikon* [Leipzig/Altenburg: F. A. Brockhaus, 1896], 658.) Consequently, *Brockhaus* referred to Neo-Lutheranism as a "theological and ecclesiopolitical movement that sought to turn its back on the Enlightenment and rationalism and to renew Lutheranism (Lutherans) on the basis of strict fidelity to Scripture and the Lutheran confessions." (Anselm Schubert and Markus Mühling, "Neo-Lutheranism," in *Religion Past and Present* [Brill, 2011], accessed March 22, 2019, https://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/religion-past-and-present/neo-lutheranism-COM_024078#.) For further reading, see Friedrich Wilhelm Kantzenbach, *Gestalten und Typen des Neuluthertums: Beiträge zur Erforschung des Neokonfessionalismus im 19. Jahrhundert* (Gütersloh: Mohn, 1968); and Gerhard Besier, ed., *Neulutherische Kirchenpolitik im Zeitalter Bismarcks* (Gütersloh: Mohn, 1982).

The Hungarian *Pallas Nagy Lexikona* (Pallas' Great Encyclopedia; 1893 – 1897, 18 vols.) likewise focused on Britain, France, and Germany as the "main countries" of freethinking:

> In our country, freethinking is a less common expression, a translation of foreign terms which mainly describes the anticlerical thinking. It had its origins in Britain, where those were called this way, who believed in God, but opposed church. In France, the freethinkers (libre penseurs) tended more toward atheism. The German Freidenker [*sic*] developed in distinct free churches, and from there, in the further course, into a German Freethinker Union. Just recently those tendencies shift off this burden, freethinkers do not like coalitions.[175]

The final sentence is of particular interest, as it suggests that freethinkers would have scarcely appreciated the formation of organizations. This comment might refer to the fact that it took several years to establish an international freethought society. By identifying the practice of institutionalizing as a "burden," freethinkers appear as loners, and thus suspicious.

The third and final example comes from the *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, edited by James Hasting, John A. Selbie, and Louis H. Gray. In the sixth volume (1908), the entry on "Free-Thought," written by the German Protestant theologian Ernst P. W. Troeltsch, again distinguishes between freethinking in England (deistic), France (atheistic), and Germany (Protestant, free churches). Furthermore, Troeltsch identifies positive and negative forms of freethinking, with the positive as the "assumption that such free or natural thought leads universally to essentially identical conclusions in a natural morality and religion." Conversely, negative freethinking is marked as the "opposition to the church's doctrine of authority and revelation" and the claim for the independence and autonomy of thought. With this, Troeltsch followed the specifications provided by the encyclopedias of the first half of the nineteenth century and evinced his Protestant background. To him, freethinking was welcomed, as long as it followed Christian doctrines, even though this reading conflicted with the notion of "freethinking."

As these discussions of freethinking in the second half of the long nineteenth century have demonstrated, freethinking was rarely about thinking freely

174 "Freidenker," in *Brockhaus Konversations-Lexikon*, vol. 7 (Leipzig/Berlin/Vienna: F. A. Brockhaus, 1892), 257: "In Germany, freethinkers found support in the different circles of society since the renaissance of Orthodox Churches, but also as a consequence of modern *Zeitgeist*."
175 "Szabad Gondolkodó (Freethinking)," in *A Pallas Nagy Lexikona*, vol. 15. Budapest: Pallas Irodalmi és Nyomdai Rt., 1893, digitalized in: Magyar Elektronikus Könvytár. Accessed January 9, 2019. http://mek.oszk.hu/00000/00060/html/094/pc009497.html#1.

but rather about thinking *against* the clerical worldview. The attempts to constitute an international federation of freethinkers imply that freethinkers, as with every other movement, sought to agree on constitutions and rules, and with that, on restrictions of the ideals to be pursued.

Conclusion

This chapter has offered an overview of the conceptual history of freethinking and related terms, including their changes and relations in a transnational context. Freethinking can be traced back to the opposition against the church during the Early Modern Period. These anticlerical movements provided the common ground for the organization of freethought movements on national and transnational levels during the nineteenth century. They form the conceptual fundament of freethinking until today.

The analysis of lexicographical entries from between 1789 and 1848 substantiates the impression that "progressive" ideas such as freethinking, deism, and atheism, faced severe hardships. Reference works reflected the political context of the Era of Restoration. The re-emergence of ecclesiastical power in the post-Napoleonic era as well as the general cultural and philosophic withdrawal from liberal concepts influenced the regressive style of the encyclopedias. Against this backdrop, European reference works hardly offered neutral definitions of terms, such as freethinking, atheism, secularism, and deism, but rather fought them as atavisms of Enlightenment and revolutions. Still, the ways and intensities of those written refutations differed regarding cultural, religious, and national contexts. As this chapter has demonstrated, Protestant Anglican Britain, where modern freethinking – intertwined with deism – originated, offered few new thoughts on this topic in the early nineteenth century. Instead, the authors of the new generation of encyclopedias simply fell back on the findings of the eighteenth century. This confirmed the impression of freethinking as a concept lacking validity, advancement, and development. Furthermore, the authors of French reference works, who were mostly supporters of political reinvigorated Catholicism, stood up against ideas threatening their worldview by using both intellectual arguments and insults. The German encyclopedias, conversely, were primarily published in the Protestant parts of the multi-confessional German Confederation. Although their entries were not as passive as those in British reference works, they did not come close to the offensive tone of the French ones.

The stance against freethinking differed not only depending on the cultural background but also concerning the definitions of freethinking and related terms

provided by the encyclopedias. In Britain, freethinkers were closely linked to deism and joined forces in movements beginning in the early eighteenth century. By contrast, during the eighteenth century, French freethinking was hardly a concept at all, even though there were French scholars to whom the term would have applied. Yet freethinking remained insignificant within the range of anticlerical, liberal, and radical movements in France until the middle of the nineteenth century. Germany took its own direction: here, freethinking was primarily a matter in the Protestant parts, not the Catholic ones. Also, it was closely linked to the free church movements. In other nations, freethinking was of no considerable interest until the end of the nineteenth century. In Hungary, freethought movements, such as the Galilei Circle, concentrated on modernizing the educational system and on spreading the latest scientific theories, such as Darwinism, to fight Catholicism.

Besides, this chapter has proven that the connection of secularism and freethinking in the reference works under consideration was not established before the second half of the nineteenth century. This is because the definition of secularism as the act of secularizing church possessions did not originally comprise the ideology of separating church and state, although this idea did already circulate in the late eighteenth century. But it was not until the second half of the nineteenth century that secularism became a lasting political dogma and practice that liaised with freethinking.

The multifaceted nature of freethinking and its relevant concepts extends to both their meaning and reception. Even though this chapter has focused only on the best-known reference works, it could demonstrate that the meaning and reception of the terms under consideration were not at all enshrined but were highly influenced by the philosophical and political spirit of their time. In line with this, it has been shown that reference works were hardly ever neutral. Rather, their authors were influenced by their general historical as well as biographical contexts, which underpins the oft-neglected necessity of approaching encyclopedias critically. Combining the specific cultural, historical, linguistic, religious, and personal settings with a transnational reading has helped to examine the conceptual history of freethinking, atheism, and secularism as pan-European phenomena. This approach might lay the groundwork for further studies on freethinking and secularism.

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I Secularities: National Perspectives

Laura Fournier-Finocchiaro

Garibaldi and Mazzini: Anticlericalism, Laicism, and the Concept of a National Religion

The differing cultural expressions of the various anticlerical and secular movements[1] that manifested during the process of Italian national unification – the Risorgimento – have long been neglected by both the political and ruling classes, and by historians after 1861, the founding year of the Italian nation state. This led to a delay in studying Italy's freethought movement, a tendency now partially compensated by the pioneering studies of Fulvio Conti, Adrian Lyttelton, Ettore Passerin d'Entrèves, Guido Verucci, and Jean-Pierre Viallet.[2] Still, the analysis of Italy's secular cultures raises the problem of definitions and notions such as anticlericalism or anti-Catholicism circulating in Europe as well as in Italy in the nineteenth century. In this regard, René Rémond's characterization might offer clarification: to him, anticlericalism claims the independence of politics from religion, the separation of civil society and church society: "It is in accordance with the conception of laicism and the inspiration of liberal individualism."[3] For Manuel Borutta, culture war – that is the struggle of democrats and liberals against the influence of the Catholic Church in state and society – in Risorgimento Italy divided society between secularist (anticlerical) and Catholic

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1 Such as the anti-Jesuit campaign of the 1840s; the Neo-Ghibellines, who fought Neo-Guelfism (Vincenzo Gioberti's political movement, started in 1843, that strove to unite Italy into a single kingdom with the pope as its sovereign); the conflict between state and church in Piedmont after 1848; the republican struggle for Rome in the 1860s; liberal anticlericalism after 1860 with the ideal of "a free church in a free state," and militant anticlericalism after 1876 (Masons, atheists, socialists, etc.).

2 See Guido Verucci, *L'Italia laica prima e dopo l'unità 1848–1876: Anticlericalismo, libero pensiero e ateismo nella società italiana* (Rome/Bari: Laterza, 1981); Adrian Lyttelton, "An Old Church and a New State: Italian Anticlericalism 1876–1915," *European Studies Review* 13 (1983): 225–248; Jean-Pierre Viallet, "L'Anticléricalisme en Italie 1867–1915" (Thèse pour le doctorat d'État, Université de Paris X, 1991); Ettore Passerin d'Entrèves, *Religione e politica nell'Ottocento europeo* (Rome: Istituto per la storia del Risorgimento italiano, 1993), and Fulvio Conti, "Breve storia dell'anticlericalismo," in *Enciclopedia Treccani* (2011), accessed December 15, 2018, http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/breve-storia-dell-anticlericalismo_%28Cristiani-d%27Italia%29/.

3 René Rémond, "Anticléricalisme," in *Encyclopædia Universalis* (1983), accessed December 15, 2018, http://www.universalis.fr/encyclopedie/anticlericalisme/. Unless otherwise indicated, all translations are mine.

https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110688283-005

blocks. Yet he also states a more general anti-Catholic tendency on the side of secularists in the European culture wars, including the Italian ones.[4]

It is worth noting, however, that the idea of a monolithic "liberal block" in sharp contrast to a homogeneous "Catholic block," or the overall picture of state and church as diametrically opposed entities, are misleading. As Martin Papenheim puts it with special regard to Italy, "culture wars were not fought along clearly defined lines."[5] When it comes to the particular cases of Giuseppe Mazzini (1805–1872) and Giuseppe Garibaldi (1807–1882), a narrow definition of anticlericalism would exclude them from the circles of Italian freethinkers or other anticlericalists, such as socialists, anarchists, atheists, or positivists.

Giuseppe Mazzini, founder of the secret revolutionary society *Giovine Italia* (Young Italy, 1831), was an uncompromising republican. He believed in God and respected priests (though he did not consider himself a Christian) but refused the pope's territorial sovereignty which barred the way to Italian national unification.[6] In 1848, he returned from his exile in England to Italy and led the Roman Republic (1849) until the French army crushed it following the pope's call for help to Catholic countries. Giuseppe Garibaldi had come under the influence of Mazzini in the 1830s, before he went into exile in South America. In April 1848 he came back to Italy to fight in the First Italian War of Independence. First, he rushed to help the city of Milan, where Mazzini was already present. When Pius IX – threatened by the strengthening liberal forces of the Papal States – fled Rome toward the end of 1848, Garibaldi led a group of volunteers to the city and became the head of its defense. In the Second War of Italian Independence (1859), he directed an army of volunteers to Northern Italy. Soon after, in May 1860, he arranged the conquest of Sicily and Naples, secretly supported by Piedmont. After 1861, however, Garibaldi opposed the Italian government with his will to seize Rome and turn it into Italy's national capital.

While Mazzini's influence on Garibaldi was still strong during the organization of the liberation of the Two Sicilies, the two patriots broke up after the unsuccessful attempt of the Mentana expedition (1867), when Garibaldi failed to free Rome. Even though they continued to share fundamental values such as democracy, republicanism, social justice, humanitarianism, and universal brother-

4 See Manuel Borutta, "Anti-Catholicism and the Culture War in Risorgimento Italy," in *The Risorgimento Revisited: Nationalism and Culture in Nineteenth-Century Italy*, ed. Silvana Patriarca and Lucy Riall (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 191.

5 Martin Papenheim, "Roma o Morte: Culture Wars in Italy," in *Culture Wars: Secular–Catholic Conflict in Nineteenth-Century Europe*, ed. Wolfram Kaiser and Christopher Clark (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 208.

6 The popes, as heads of the Catholic Church, possessed large estates in Central Italy.

hood, they chose separate ways. Garibaldi supported radical anticlerical movements while Mazzini could indeed be considered as a religious leader, a political prophet and a defender of faith: he struggled against the secularization of society in the sense of a separation of politics and religion. Instead, he promoted a clearly religious mission targeting a renewed religiosity as part of the national unification project and a free Europe of democratic nations.[7] Garibaldi frequently expressed religious views in his writings and respected religious faith, too, as most of his fellow Italians remained devoted Catholics.[8] Still, their religiosity differed substantially from the traditional Catholic faith, as will be discussed in the following. Concerning anticlericalism and religiosity, Jean-Pierre Viallet has already pointed out the difference between France and Italy: in the Peninsula, "laicism and anticlericalism are not only distinguished, they are often brought into opposition."[9]

This chapter will highlight the specific anticlericalisms of Garibaldi and Mazzini, which made them true freethinkers, but ones who did not necessarily differentiate politics and religion. Despite this, their visions for society were highly secular as they relied on a new concept of religion including a notion of national faith, based on a new morale. This matches indeed with René Rémond's definition, because Mazzini's and Garibaldi's attitudes proved to be fundamentally positive political ideologies, notwithstanding the overall negative terminology of anticlericalism. Their ideas that deeply and lastingly influenced Italian culture were not restricted to reaction and destruction, but aimed at building a new "secular" society based on a new religiosity.

Garibaldi against the Priests

An essential component of "Garibaldinism" is the polemics against priests, the Catholic Church and papacy. Garibaldi's anticlericalism appears sometimes

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7 See Guido Verucci, "La religione progressiva di Giuseppe Mazzini," in *Cattolicesimo e laicismo nell'Italia contemporanea*, ed. Guido Verucci (Milan: Franco Angeli, 2001), 205–213; Simon Levis Sullam, "The Moses of Italian Unity: Mazzini and Nationalism as Political Religion," in *Mazzini and the Globalization of Democratic Nationalism, 1830–1920*, ed. Christopher Alan Bayly and Eugenio Biagini (New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 107–124.

8 See Dino Mengozzi, *Garibaldi taumaturgo: Reliquie laiche e politica nell'Ottocento* (Manduria: Lacaita, 2008).

9 Jean-Pierre Viallet, "L'Anticléricalisme en Italie (1867–1915): Historiographie et problématiques de recherché," *Mélanges de l'École française de Rome – Italie et Méditerranée modernes et contemporaines* 122, no. 1 (2010): 137–159, accessed December 15, 2018, http://journals.openedition.org/mefrim/564.

rude and rough which is why his clerical counterparts often reduced it to a superficial and confused expression of his personality and behavior. Even Mazzini, in 1871, alluded to Garibaldi's "monomania antipretesca" ("anti-priesthood monomania").[10] It is difficult to distinguish between Garibaldi's political anticlericalism – aiming at the abolition of papal temporal power in order to conquer Rome and to include the city and its surroundings to the Italian nation state; the moralization of society; the secularization of Italy's legal code; the support of secularizing practices such as cremation, and his spiritual anticlericalism with its strong anti-monastic, anti-Catholic, and even anti-Christian leanings.

It was not until his failed attempt to capture Rome in the Battle of Aspromonte (1862) that Garibaldi's letters started to reveal expressions such as "vampiro pretino" ("priestly vampire") or "iena sacerdotale" ("priestly hyena").[11] Besides, he began to brand Pius IX "Grande Satana" (the "Great Satan") and to frequently call him an "assassino del corpo e della mente" ("assassin of the body and soul") or "nemico del genere umano" ("an enemy of the whole human race").[12] After he was defeated by the pope's troops and their French allies in the Battle of Mentana in 1867, his vocabulary and actions became even more radical: as a member of parliament, Garibaldi proposed to eliminate the state's budget for clergy and he suggested to force priests to work, coining the slogan *il prete alla vanga* (priests have to dig). Finally, in September 1880, Garibaldi resigned, arguing that he refused to become one of the legislators of a country "dove la libertà è calpestata e la legge non serve nella sua applicazione che a garantire la libertà ai gesuiti ed ai nemici dell'unità d'Italia" ("where liberty is crushed and laws only serve to guarantee liberty to Jesuits and the enemies of the Italian unity").[13]

Garibaldi's anticlerical polemics are mirrored particularly clear in his often overseen literary writings:[14] in his four novels, written in the 1870s, *Clelia, il governo dei preti* (The Rule of the Monk, 1870), *Cantoni il volontario* (Cantoni the Volunteer, 1870), *I mille* (Expedition of the Thousand, 1874), and *Manlio* (written in

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10 Verucci, "L'anticlericalismo di Garibaldi," 214.

11 Quoted in Jean-Pierre Viallet, "L'Anticléricalisme de Garibaldi," in *Hommes, idées, journaux: Mélanges en l'honneur de Pierre Guiral*, ed. Jean Antoine Gili and Ralph Schor (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1988), 460 – 461.

12 Quoted in Viallet, "L'Anticléricalisme de Garibaldi," 461.

13 Giuseppe Garibaldi, *Epistolario*, ed. Enrico Emilio Ximenes (Milan: A. Brigola e comp., 1885), 296.

14 On Garibaldi's literary works, see Marziano Guglielminetti, "Giuseppe Garibaldi," in *La letteratura ligure: L'Ottocento*, ed. Giorgio Bertone (Genoa: Costa & Nolan, 1990), 215 – 231; Mario Isnenghi, *Garibaldi fu ferito: Storia e mito di un rivoluzionario disciplinato* (Rome: Donzelli, 2007); and Angelo Cardillo, "Garibaldi romanziere," *Misure critiche*, no. 1 – 2 (2011): 93 – 122.

1876, unpublished until 1982), but also in his *Memorie autobiografiche* (Memories, 1872), his historical drama *Elisabetta d'Ungheria* (Elizabeth of Hungary, 1879), and several poems written in Italian and French. There is a biographical component to Garibaldi's anticlericalism, as displayed in his novels, as well as in his political and military actions. He himself stated that anticlericalism was one of the reasons he had started writing in the first place, to reveal "vizi e nefandezze del pretismo" ("the vices and vileness of priesthood").[15] During his travels to England, he had come into contact with masonic circles, anti-papists, and perhaps even with Protestants who all proved influential on his future development. With regard to Italian culture, Garibaldi's principal reference was Italian philosopher, priest, supporter of Mazzini, and promotor of Italian unification under papal rule Vincenzo Gioberti with his tract *Il Gesuita moderno* (The Modern Jesuit, 1846). It was from this book that he borrowed notions of botany and epidemiology to describe the Society of Jesus as a threat to the nation. This anti-Jesuit attitude echoed a widespread antipathy in Europe during the second half of the nineteenth century against Jesuits faithful to the pope and their "clerical sins" which were denounced as early as in the 1850s by the Piedmontese daily newspaper *Gazzetta del popolo*. Besides, many visual and discursive strategies of anticlerical representations were transferred from other countries to Italy, especially from France: through convent novels (*La religieuse* [The Nun, 1796] by Denis Diderot); anti-Jesuit serialized novels (Eugène Sue's *Juif errant* [The Wandering Jew, 1844]); and anticlerical cartoons from the satirical magazine *Charivari* (1832). Garibaldi's novels follow the style of those serialized fictions, and they are interesting mostly from an ideological and political, less from a literary point of view.

First published in London in 1870, *Clelia* became an international success.[16] The plot is set in 1867 Venice, the (fictional) Solitaria Island, and Rome. Clelia is being abused by Cardinal Procopio, but she is finally saved and Procopio and his acolytes are murdered. The second part of the novel offers a historical narration of the events and the battles to conquer Rome: the protagonists meet a republican leader called the *Solitario* who convinces them to fight for Italy's liberation. Soon after, the patriots die in battle and become martyrs of Italian independence and unification. The plot combines real persons (Garibaldi himself, called by his

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15 Giuseppe Garibaldi, *Cantoni il volontario* (Milan: Poletti, 1870), 5 ("Prefazione ai miei romanzi storici").

16 Between 1870 – 1874 alone the book saw three Italian editions, five French, three English, three American, two Serbo-Croatian, one Czech, Dutch, Portuguese, Russian, Swedish, Hungarian, German, and Spanish (from Montevideo).

name in the English version,[17] or *il Solitario* in the Italian; also the Cairoli brothers) and imaginary characters who are borrowed from the history of the ancient Roman Republic (Attilio, Muzio, Giulia). For the historian Aldo Alessandro Mola, this novel is "a popularization of Garibaldinism,"[18] or his manifesto.

Cantoni, the second novel, has a narrative structure very similar to Garibaldi's first book. The protagonist is a real person, Achille Cantoni, who fought in the Wars of Italian Independence and died in the Battle of Mentana. Like *Clelia*, the novel constantly recalls civil and patriotic ideals, combined with Greco-Roman aesthetics. Its context is the Roman Republic of 1849: Garibaldi celebrates the volunteer's heroism against unscrupulous priests, especially the perverse Jesuit Don Gaudenzio, "il Satiro di Roma"[19] (the "satyr of Rome") and "Sanfedista" ("defender of Catholicism")[20] who kidnapped and kept a young girl prisoner. A similar pattern of anticlericalism is displayed in *I Mille*, an autobiographical novel with a heroin of serialized fiction, Marzia, a young Jewess who joined Garibaldi's Expedition of the Thousand dressed up as a boy. She is chased and persecuted by Jesuits, especially Monsignor Corvo, the most repulsive of Garibaldi's characters: he compels Marzia to prostitute herself and imprisons her; he tortures her father and forces her to convert to Catholicism. A final catharsis puts an end to his terror and leads Corvo to commit suicide.[21] Garibaldi's last novel, *Manlio*, on the other hand, is a work of social science fiction or future projection: the plot starts in 1874 and ends in 1896. The main character is Garibaldi's son, destined to pursue and accomplish his father's work among the pirates of the Rif region and the Amazon rainforest. Not surprisingly, also this novel has its Jesuit character, the libidinous Don Pancrazio, who seduces and kidnaps a

17 On the translation of *Clelia*, see Sergio Portelli, "Anti-Clericalism in Translation: Anti-Catholic Ideology in the English Translation of Giuseppe Garibaldi's 'Clelia o il governo dei preti' (1870)," *Forum Italicum* 50, no. 3 (2016): 1099–1108.

18 See Giuseppe Garibaldi, *Clelia*, *Il governo dei Preti*, ed. Aldo Alessandro Mola (Turin: MEB, 1973).

19 Garibaldi, *Cantoni*, 132–133.

20 Ibid., 53. The terms "Sanfedismo" and "Sanfedista" refer to a popular anti-republican movement organized by Cardinal Fabrizio Ruffo in the Kingdom of Naples after 1799. In Garibaldi's polemics, it implies a closed and reactionary clericalism.

21 This novel is a reply to a famous serialized novel by the Jesuit Antonio Bresciani, *L'Ebreo di Verona* (The Jew of Verona, 1850), in which a Catholic converts to Judaism. See Paolo Orvieto, *Buoni e cattivi del Risorgimento: I romanzi di Garibaldi e Bresciani a confronto* (Rome: Salerno Editrice, 2011). For a literary analysis, see Sophie Nezri-Dufour, "La peste pretina, piaga della nostra patria infelice (Garibaldi, 'I Mille', 1874)," *Italies*, no. 15 (2011): 121–133, accessed December 15, 2018, http://journals.openedition.org/italies/3064.

young girl; however, he remains the only priest in Garibaldi's novels who stays alive.

Each of these novels picture priests as negative characters in alliance with evil, and Jesuits, in particular, as clearly the "most disgusting creatures."[22] Garibaldi's role for Italy's freethinkers is vital because he introduced and popularized a specific anticlerical style and rhetoric in their discourse: he implemented a profusion of terms to devalue clergymen such as "nero" ("black"), "paolotto" ("paulist"),[23] "code/codino" ("tail"),[24] "cocolle" ("collar"),[25] "colli torti" ("crooked neck"),[26] "sanfedista," or "negromante" ("soothsayer"). Also, he made up neologisms like "clericume," "chercume," or "pretume"[27] and he invented a bestiary: clergymen are compared to snakes, foxes, hyenas, crocodiles, jackals, vultures, and mostly to parasites.[28] To him, clericalism was a form of illness and dirtiness and he presented the Catholic Church as an abnormality, marked by the semantic field of monsters and monstrosity. Besides, Garibaldi disclosed urban legends which portrayed priests as sadistic torturers of prisoners and murderers of innocent children. In *Clelia*, his protagonist found "in every convent [...] instruments of cruelty and vaults for the bones of infants."[29] His novels also encouraged violence against priests: "Death to the priests! [...] Who deserves death more than this wicked sect which has turned Italy into *a land of the dead* (Lamartine), into a cemetery?"[30]

His *Memories*, in contrast, are – to a certain extend – less radical; in them, he developed a political concept of the Catholic Church and its priests conspiring with foreign powers: "The priest taught the farmers that the enemies of Italy are not the Austrians, but excommunicated us liberals! And the government by the

22 Garibaldi, *Cantoni*, 26. ("Il Gesuita! Il Gesuita! Altra anomalia umana per la quale si diede il nome del Cristo alla più prava, alla più schifosa delle creature.")
23 A "Paolotto" is a member of the charitable Society of St. Vincent de Paul, founded in 1833 by Frédéric Ozanam. Garibaldi used the term in a figurative sense, signifying clerical, bigot, conservative, and reactionary behavior.
24 During the French Revolution and the Era of Restoration, the King's partisans continued to wear tails ostentatiously. The term "codino," in Garibaldi's novels, thus means – figuratively – conservative, and reactionary.
25 In reference to the clerical collar as an item of Catholic clerical clothing.
26 A "collotorto" is a person who flaunts religiosity in an untruthful way or manipulates with hypocritical compunction.
27 Formed with the suffix "-ume" added to the terms "clerico," "chierco," and "prete" (priest), with a pejorative connotation.
28 All references are quoted in Viallet, "L'Anticléricalisme de Garibaldi," 461–462.
29 Giuseppe Garibaldi, *Clelia* (Milan: Fratelli Rechiedei Editori, 1870), 21.
30 Ibid., 341.

grace of God protects the priest."[31] Yet Garibaldi continued to agitate against Jesuits: "I must be tormented by the idea of the priest, who wants to transform the Italians in many sacristans. And if Italy doesn't make up for it, it's a serious affair. The Jesuits can only produce hypocrites, liars and cowards!"[32]

Garibaldi's works reached a wide audience. Due to his writings, secularist ideas disseminated in the unified Italian nation state and furthered its laicist stance. However, in the official commemorations and celebrations of the "hero" Garibaldi, the anticlericalism of his fictional works was mostly ignored.

Mazzini against the Pope's Authority

Other than in Garibaldi's case, Mazzini's anticlericalism was mainly directed against the pope's authority, not against clerics in general or Jesuits in particular.[33] The influence of the republican patriot Mazzini is essential to Italian freethinkers, because his ideology – hostile to each form of theocracy and abuse of authority – led to the creation of a "democratic school" that lastingly shaped the Italian culture of the Risorgimento and political liberal Italy.

Mazzini struggled against the pope's ambition to preserve his temporal sovereignty, against the *Syllabus Errorum* (Syllabus of Errors, 1864),[34] and against the hierarchical organization of the Catholic clergy. For the republican thinker and advocate of national unity, papacy was an outdated form of theocracy, an atavism struggling to survive by forming alliances with tyrants and despotic monarchs. In light of these assumptions it was Mazzini's conviction that the Italians had to fulfill their God-given mission of sweeping away papacy through revolution. These ideas became central during the Revolutions of 1848–49, when the disillusion caused by "Pius IX's betrayal"[35] led Mazzini to forge his

31 Garibaldi, *Memorie*, 283.

32 Ibid., 350–351.

33 See Laura Fournier-Finocchiaro, "La Fin de l'autorité du pape chez Giuseppe Mazzini," in *Pape et papauté: Respect et contestation d'une autorité bifrons*, ed. Agnès Morini (Saint-Etienne: Presses Universitaires de Saint-Etienne, 2013), 378–399.

34 The *Syllabus* condemns a total of 80 errors or heresies, including rationalism (even moderate), socialism, communism, secret societies, liberal clerical societies and liberalism in every political form. To the critics of the *Syllabus*, this document seemed to define Catholicism as a monarchical absolutism denying any kind of freedom. Subsequently, the *Syllabus* was used as a proof text by anticlericalists who accused the Catholic Church of rejecting parliamentary democracy and human rights.

35 The pope's initial policy (in particular his general amnesty for political prisoners) created quite a sensation among Italian patriots, who hoped he would support Italy's revolution. But

idea of a *Terza Roma* (Third Rome)[36] of the people which would supersede the Rome of the Caesars and the Rome of the Popes by re-sacralizing the secularist discourse on the Eternal City.

From 1832 onwards, Mazzini repeatedly declared: "Il Papato è spento: il Cattolicismo è spento." ("Papacy is extinguished: Catholicism is extinguished.")[37] To him, not only had the pope lost his spiritual authority, but Italian faith seemed distorted, too. However, he distinguished the Catholic Church and its clergy from the figure of the pope, pinning some of his hopes on the former, but completely rejecting the latter. Thus Mazzini proposed a new religion based on both a renewed faith in God (the motto of his *Giovine Italia* was "God and the people"), and an altered relationship between believers (including priests) and the papacy stripped off from large parts of its authority. That is why he exhorted clergymen to stop obeying the pope blindly and to listen to God's will to prepare a broad social revolution. His vision relied on a new class of patriotic priests, ready to accompany humanity in the transition from the individual era of rights to the "social" era of duties.[38]

Mazzini developed this philosophy in his *Doveri dell'uomo* (Duties of Man, 1860): he rejected the classical liberal principles of the Enlightenment based on the doctrine of individualism, criticizing them as advancing materialism and atheism. In his secular concept of humanity, duties are ethical guidelines to be considered and applied on a daily and personal basis, keeping in mind the consequences of one's actions. This definition of duty was the premise for the Mazzinian notion of republican solidarity and his specific idea of freethought, characterized by a strong religious fervor and a deep sense of spirituality. Authority, for Mazzini, derived directly from God who transferred it to the people without the necessity of intermediaries. This is why Italian historian Gaetano Salvemini defined Mazzini's political system as a "popular theocracy."[39] But even though the concept of God was central to his vision of the future, Mazzini

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by early 1848, Pius IX claimed to stand above national interests and refused to enter into a war with Austria. This totally reversed his popularity in Italy.

36 See Laura Fournier-Finocchiaro, "Le Mythe de la Troisième Rome de Mazzini à Mussolini" in *Le Mythe de Rome en Europe: Modèles et contre-modèles*, ed. Juan-Carlos D'Amico (Caen: Presses Universitaires de Caen, 2012), 213–230.

37 Giuseppe Mazzini, "Intorno all'enciclica di Gregorio XVI, papa: Pensieri ai preti italiani" (1832), in *Scritti editi ed inediti,* 100 vols. (Imola: Tipografia Galeati, 1906–1943) (hereafter *SEI*), 3; 133.

38 Giuseppe Mazzini, "Les Patriotes et le clergé" (1835), in *SEI,* 6; 161–208.

39 Gaetano Salvemini, "Mazzini," in Gaetano Salvemini, *Scritti sul Risorgimento* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1961), 175.

remained deeply anticlerical: he stood up against all kinds of hierarchies, oligarchies, institutions or organizations willing to monopolize power.

In consequence of these attitudes expressed since the 1830s, Mazzini removed the privileged status of Catholicism as the long-established and most influential religion in Italy once he had taken over the leadership of the Roman Republic in 1849. The constitution he adopted asserted the principle of religious indifference in the exercise of civil and political rights. This marked a major change because Catholicism was present everywhere in the Italian society: in the school system, in law, in private law (marriage, divorce), and in the press. Mazzini aimed at altering all these institutions in a secular sense. He continued his struggle for the separation of temporal from spiritual power even after the quick downfall of the Roman Republic and the restoration of the pope by reinforcing his efforts to rally support for the overthrow of papacy:

> Neither pope nor king: only God and the people will open the fields of the future [...]. The dogma of absolute authority, immutable, concentrated in one person or in one determined power, will be replaced by the dogma of progressive authority, of the people's continuous, collective interpretation of God's law.[40]

It was Mazzini's intention to transfer the pope's authority to a council, which would be the equivalent of a constituent assembly, but specifically determined to deal with religious affairs: "Costituente e Concilio: son questi il principe e il papa dell'avvenire." ("Constituent and Council: these are the prince and the pope of the future.")[41] Besides, he sent out further appeals to priests urging them to become agents of a religious renewal and of a transformative purification of the Catholic Church. His vision comprised

> the Holy Church of the future, the Church of free and equal people, the Church which will bless every progress of the spirit of truth, identifying itself with the life of humanity, and which will have no pope but only lay people, believers, and priests, all with specific duties.[42]

Mazzini pursued his mission up to his last booklet published in April 1870, *Dal Concilio a Dio* (From the Council to God), a kind of political-religious testament addressing the cardinals gathered at the First Vatican Council to declare the in-

40 Giuseppe Mazzini, "Dal papa al concilio" (1849), in *SEI*, 39; 190.
41 Ibid., 195.
42 Giuseppe Mazzini, "Sull'enciclica di papa Pio IX agli arcivescovi e vescovi d'Italia: Pensieri ai sacerdoti italiani" (1849), in *SEI*, 39; 281.

fallibility of the pope.[43] In this text, Mazzini emphasized his vision of the "nascent church of the future" and called for a new crusade. His hopes, however, were disappointed by the takeover of Rome in September 1870, when his dream of a Third Rome of the people, the center of his new religion, finally was destroyed. The national unification did not turn out the way Mazzini had longed for (republican, democratic, and self-determined) but rather was dominated by new hegemonic players such as Piedmont. It was not until 1929 that the Kingdom of Italy found an agreement with the Catholic Church in the Lateran Treaty, in which Mussolini approved to compensate the Church financially for the loss of the Papal States, and with this set the relations between the Italian state and the Catholic Church on firm grounds.

Until his death, Mazzini did not give up fighting atheism and individualistic morality which he believed were contemporary diseases caused by people's selfishness. Also, he went on defending his attempt to link politics and religion to enforce the universal morality that he believed would be desired by God. This idea of a renewed, religiously based morality, however, did not at all contradict the objectives of the secularization of state and society strongly pursued by Mazzini and his fellow republicans, including the full and general freedom of conscience, equality for all before the law, the abolition of religious corporations, and the secularization of education that would reduce the influence of the Catholic Church to a minimum.

Mazzini's and Garibaldi's Propositions: Laicism and National Religion

The freethought culture during the Italian Risorgimento, embodied by Garibaldi and Mazzini, did not only target the authority of priests and the pope, abuses of power, or the aspirations of the clergy to rule over civil society. During the process of nation-building, their anticlericalism also took on positive features with the absolute determination to bring about a profound renewal of society and to set its foundations on more equal, more brotherly, but also more moral grounds.

43 The First Vatican Council was convoked to deal with the contemporary problems of the rising influence of rationalism, liberalism, and materialism. The doctrine of papal infallibility was meant to strengthen the pope's authority against modernism. This dogmatic constitution of the Catholic faith generated strong reactions in the context of Italian culture wars.

Within the broad spectrum of Italian anticlericalism,[44] Garibaldi and Mazzini followed their own path, embracing religious expressions which both – at times – even encouraged.

Mazzini's religiosity had a strong affirmative and constructive part: he defined a humanitarian religion, aiming at a form of transcendence, and promoted an altered, yet deep, religious faith. His unitarian project was considered crucial during the Risorgimento to build a new, organic society, and to overcome divergences and rivalries. The same holds true for his prophecy of the Third Rome and of the mission he believed the Italian people was entrusted with to realize it.[45] Mazzini's thought is original and substantial because he invented and implemented for the first time in Italian history – through his Young Italy-movement, his speeches, and articles – a true "civil religion" on secular grounds, an alternative to Roman Catholic faith, even if this new religiosity borrowed from Christianity. In fact, he held beliefs certainly of Christian origin such as community, equality, high morale, and brotherly love, and he used expressions, symbols and a language with clear Christian leanings. His secularity, thus, mirrored the cultural background of nineteenth-century Italy with its strong Catholic tradition; however, he harshly criticized its current forms and proposed a civil religion in a democratically organized society on the basis of Christian values beyond institutions, authorities, and hierarchies.

In these years, a great number of democrats embraced positivism and therefore regarded Mazzini's refusal of scientific atheism and rational materialism as the decisive "weakness" of his doctrine. They realized very clearly that Mazzini's religiosity was not a simple rhetorical instrument to further political goals. Rather, the republican thinker was truly convinced that no political or social program would prevail without a notion of God as the principle of unity at its base. Hence, Mazzini, during the constitutive act of his Young Italy-movement, frankly declared that this new political association was not a sect, not a party, but "credenza e apostolato" ("faith and apostolate"). Also, he wrote to the mother of his

44 Italy's anticlerical movement comprised many stances and positions, from socialist, republican, militant liberal, moderate, freemasonic, up to an artistic nostalgia for paganism. See Verucci, *L'Italia laica*.

45 See Simon Levis Sullam, "Dio e il Popolo: La rivoluzione religiosa di Giuseppe Mazzini," in *Storia d'Italia,* vol. 22: *Il Risorgimento*, ed. Alberto Mario Banti and Paul Ginsborg (Turin: Einaudi, 2007), 401–422; Laura Fournier-Finocchiaro and Jean-Yves Frétigné, "Prophètes et prophétie chez Giuseppe Mazzini," *Laboratoire italien*, 21 (2018), accessed December 15, 2018, http://journals.openedition.org/laboratoireitalien/2172.

friend Jacopo Ruffini in 1836: “noi non siamo che un pensiero religioso incarnato” (“we are nothing else but an embodied religious thought”).[46]

Undoubtedly, Mazzini was aware of the close association of Italian identity with the Roman Catholic Church, which he initially did not consider an enemy of national unification. He even imagined the new Italy and the church walking hand in hand toward the new era of nationalities. In his view, the church was a vital entity as it combined the Christian spiritual message with the long-standing heritage of classical Rome. The Catholic Church, Mazzini underscored, had turned the Rome of the Caesars into the Rome of the Popes; it had also turned Christendom from a religion of personal salvation into a social religion capable of changing the world. In this light it does not come as a surprise that Mazzini accused Protestantism of having taken a step backwards by promoting the expression of faith on an individual base and by depriving those individuals of the social organization power of Catholicism.[47] He considered Catholicism the only power preserving the concept of a public mission that would also perpetuate the tradition of the ancient Roman civilization. In accordance with this interpretation, Mazzini’s project of the Third Rome of the people was designed to maintain the ecumenical spirit of papal Rome. The true obstacle to achieve this goal, to Mazzini, was not the Catholic Church, but papacy and papal absolutism. Against the general trend among Italian democrats and freethinkers to promote a separation of religiosity and politics, Mazzini always upheld the idea of building a new church closely intertwined with the new political community. Nevertheless, his almost evangelical message influenced Italian democrats, even if many of them took different paths after Italy’s unification. It also heavily impacted on Italian socialists, who developed their propaganda for the masses in creating a “surrogate religion” they called – not by accident – “evangelical socialism.”[48]

In Garibaldi’s case, on the other hand, irreligious declarations are absent until 1849. He was loyal to Mazzini’s idea of God and civil religion; and during the Roman Republic, which he supported militarily, he restrained his soldiers from attacking churches and clerics. Even after his defeat, and until the 1860s, he distinguished between good and bad priests. Besides, he participated in religious celebrations in Palermo and Naples, where he emphasized: “I am a Christian, and I speak to Christians: I am a good Christian, I speak to good Christians. I love and venerate the religion of Christ, because Christ came into the

46 Fulvio Conti, *Massoneria e religioni civili: Cultura laica e liturgie politiche fra XVIII e XX secolo* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2008), 259.

47 See Giuseppe Mazzini, “Letter to Palla,” September 1834, in *SEI*, 10; 79.

48 Verucci, “La religione progressiva di Giuseppe Mazzini,” 210.

world to wrest humankind from slavery for which God has not created it."[49] In line with this conviction, Garibaldi married his Brazilian wife Anita religiously and had his children baptized. He also shared the ideals of freemasonry which he had joined in South America and he continued to support, back in Italy, democratic evangelism, based on brotherhood and equality. In April 1862, he even welcomed a group of Lombard priests among his volunteers: "Dear and true priests of Christ, I welcome you brotherly."[50]

But after the Battle of Aspromonte in August 1862, the papal condemnation of liberal priests and the anti-liberal, anti-secular, and directed against religious freedom encyclical *Quanta cura* (With Great Care, 1864) with its appendix, the *Syllabus Errorum*, Garibaldi distanced himself from Mazzini's religious doctrine and adopted openly irreligious and atheistic positions. He no longer cherished hopes that the clergy would be willing to separate from the papacy. Subsequently, he took over the honorary presidency of the *Società del libero pensiero* (the first Italian Freethought Society), founded in Siena in 1864.[51] The Italian freethought movement, decisively shaped by German and French influences, quickly attracted new adherents who organized in societies: 63 of them attended the so-called Anti-Council of Naples in 1869. Garibaldians like the rationalist philosopher and writer Luigi Stefanoni, the founder of the Milanese journal *Il Libero Pensiero* (The Freethinker),[52] formed the backbone of the Italian freethought movement.[53] Well-known authors and democratic politicians collaborated with the journal: Giuseppe Ferrari, Giuseppe Ricciardi, Angelo De Gubernatis, Alessandro Borella and also French and German scientists, exponents of materialistic positivism like Émile Littré (director of the *Revue de philosophie positive*) and Charles Letourneau (secretary of the *Société d'anthropologie de Paris* [Society of Anthropology of Paris]), Ludwig Büchner (founder of the *Deutsche Freidenkerbund* [German Freethinker League]), Jacob Moleschott, Moritz Schiff, Carl Vogt, and the Russian philosopher Aleksandr Ivanovich Herzen. The weekly gave news and reprinted passages of articles from French rationalist and materialist magazines, such as the *Libre Pensée* and *L'Excommunié*, the *Rationaliste* and the *Pensée nouvelle*. The cultural level was generally not very high, but the

49 Pier Giorgio Camaiani, "Valori religiosi e polemica anticlericale della sinistra democratica e del primo socialism," *Rivista di storia e letteratura religiosa* 30, no. 2 (1984): 235.
50 Cited in Isnenghi, *Garibaldi fu ferito,* 114.
51 See Verucci, *L'Italia laica*, 181–182.
52 See Antonio De Lauri, *Scienza, laicità, democrazia: 'Il Libero Pensiero. Giornale dei razionalisti' (1866–1876)* (Milan: Biblion Edizioni, 2014).
53 See Fabio Bertini, *Figli del '48: I ribelli, gli esuli, i lavoratori: Dalla Repubblica universale alla Prima Internazionale* (Rome: Aracne, 2013).

tone was always lively and bellicose, which earned the journal some seizures for offending the religion of the state. In this sense, an article about the First Vatican Council reads:

> The Roman Church, therefore, makes people laugh. This decrepit prostitute still believes in the spring of the years that made her dear to the peoples of Buddha, Moses or Jesus. The great prostitute has become shady, wrinkled, exhausted; and she would like the blood thrown back into her veins [...] Imbecile! An ecumenical council, that is, a council of priests belonging to the Roman caste, would like to place among the dogmas the temporal power of the great Catholic Lama?[54]

In 1879, Garibaldi also accepted the presidency of the *Società atea* (Atheist Society) in Venice and, at the same time, intensified his commitment to freemasonry. Due to these circumstances and attitudes he became a pioneer for a new positivist ideology based on the principles of reason and science.[55]

Their shared opposition to Mazzini's social religion also strengthened the links between the Italian freethought movement and the anarchist branches of the First International. Stefanoni, for instance, criticized the Mazzinian formula "God and people" to be too dogmatic. He rejected Mazzinianism as he felt it would try to introduce a new political conception in Italy without adequate backing by corresponding philosophical tenets. According to Stefanoni, Mazzini deluded himself in believing that the idea of progress derived from the notion of an immutable God and that the principle of freedom and free examination were rooted in religious faith.[56] These convictions brought him, at least in part, close to the otherwise much more fiery theories of Mikhail Alexandrovich Bakunin, the Russian revolutionary anarchist involved in the propagation of atheism in Italy.[57] In general, the Italian freethinkers, no other than anarchist ac-

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54 Aldisio Sammito, "Concilio ecumenico," *Il Libero Pensiero*, October 8, 1868, 236–237.

55 Fulvio Conti, "Il Garibaldi dei massoni: La libera muratoria e il mito dell'eroe (1860–1926)," *Contemporanea* 11, no. 3 (2008): 359–395.

56 See Verucci, *L'Italia laica*, 221.

57 Mikhail Alexandrovich Bakunin's stay in Italy in the mid-1860s left a lasting impression on all those disappointed by the Risorgimento. His influence laid the foundations for the development of internationalist sections. Bakunin accused Mazzini of having founded a new church of which he had proclaimed himself a "high priest." In contrast, he stressed his atheism, claiming the need for materialistic and atheistic analysis to interpret and radically transform society. He was highly appreciated by Stefanoni and, more generally, by the collaborators of *Il Libero Pensiero.*

tivists of the time, were not merely concerned with theoretical debates but oriented toward practical objectives.[58]

Garibaldi, however, still differed from other European freethinkers because he continued to use religious terminology to explain his principles as "religione del vero" ("true religion"), "religione di Dio, della verità e della ragione" ("religion of God, of truth, and of reason"), or even "religione di Cristo" ("religion of Christ") that embarrassed and alienated atheist democrats. In September 1867, in a speech held at the Peace congress in Geneva, he declared: "The religion of God is adopted by the congress and every member should disseminate it."[59] Similarly, in his novel *The Rule of the Monk*, the "Solitario" stated:

> It is in vain that my enemies try to make me out an atheist. I believe in God. I am of the religion of Christ, not the religion of the pope. I do not admit any intermediary between God and man. Priests have merely thrust themselves in, in order to make a trade of religion. They are the enemies of true religion, liberty, and progress; they are the original cause of our slavery and degradation, and in order to subjugate the souls of Italians, they have called in foreigners to enchain their bodies.[60]

Some critics have interpreted those statements as an expression of Garibaldi's deism, or even as a rhetorical strategy to familiarize the masses with the new rationalist credo by using accustomed religious vocabulary. All in all, Garibaldi's choice of words indicate that he took into account the profound roots of traditional Catholic Christianity in the Italian culture and that he understood the necessity to adopt a certain form of religiosity – secularized and civil – in order to propose projects of political reforms. It is also worth noting that, despite his proclaimed anticlericalism, Garibaldi himself was constantly compared to and represented as a Christ-like figure during the Risorgimento.[61]

Thus it seems no contradiction that notwithstanding his religious rhetoric and beliefs Garibaldi strove for the unification of all Italian democrats and promoted secularization: he struggled for the abolition of the Albertine Statute's

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58 In particular, the Italian anarchist Carlo Cafiero was a follower of Mikhail Alexandrovich Bakunin during the second half of the nineteenth century. Historiography has highlighted how the relations between the freethought movement and internationalism soon became tense and how the distance between the two conceptions grew because of personal rivalries of Cafiero and Stefanoni. But both shared practical objectives such as atheism, the irreverence toward religious symbols and rites, and the positivist and materialist cultural formation. All those elements became an integral part of the internationalist movement.

59 Cited in Camaiani, "Valori religiosi e polemica anticlericale," 233.

60 Garibaldi, *The Rule of the Monk*, vol. 2, 91.

61 Alberto Mario Banti, *La nazione del Risorgimento: Parentela, santità e onore alle origini dell'Italia unita* (Turin: Einaudi, 2000), 172–173.

first article,[62] the abolition of the Law of Guarantees of 1871,[63] for lay education, and also for the introduction of cremation which was a harsh attack on Catholic custom and influence.[64] But instead of putting the focus on the contradictory character of his convictions and attitudes, he seems to be best understood in light of his vision of a renewed culture in which religion and social freedom would go hand in hand. Garibaldi was situated at the crossroads of events and changes allowing him to exert a certain influence over the following decades, yet not to such extend that he would have significantly determined the "ideology" of the Italian freethought movement. Rather, he helped shaping the broader anticlerical culture of radical movements in Italy and beyond. His heritage lived on in Italy's socialist party and Italian freemasonry. The first groups of evolutionary socialism resumed the anti-religious and atheistic orientation of Garibaldi's internationalist ideology, permeated with positivist and materialistic ideas. For example, *La Plebe* of Lodi, a newspaper directed by Ettore Bignami, who was the leader of this current, looked with great sympathy to the freethought movement of Stefanoni, and from December 1872 on adopted the name *Giornale Repubblicano – Razionalista – Socialista*. In 1881, the same influence could be traced in the program of the Socialist Revolutionary Party of Romagna, whose leader and inspirer, Andrea Costa, joined freemasonry in 1883, imitating Bignami and representing, until his death in 1910, an important link between the socialists and the exponents of radical and republican democracy.[65]

In the long run, Garibaldi's influential testimonial, comprising anticlerical claims and a certain secular custom in daily life, gained the support of broader social circles, bourgeois and popular, first in Central-Northern Italy and later also in the cities of Southern Italy.

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62 The first article of the Italian Constitution (*Statuto Albertino*) reads: "The Catholic, Apostolic and Roman Religion is the only religion of the State. The other cults now existing are tolerated according to the laws." This is what Garibaldi wished to alter.

63 The Law of Papal Guarantees, passed by the senate and the chamber of the Italian parliament on May 13, 1871, accorded the pope certain honours and privileges similar to those enjoyed by the King of Italy, including the right to send and receive ambassadors. The law intended to avoid further conflicts following the unification and was bluntly criticized by anticlerical politicians of all directions, but particularly from the left. At the same time, it subjected the papacy to a law that the Italian parliament could modify or abrogate at any time.

64 See Dino Mengozzi, *La morte e l'immortale: La morte laica da Garibaldi a Costa* (Manduria: Lacaita, 2000).

65 See Conti, "Breve storia dell'anticlericalismo."

Conclusion

In conclusion, it seems that the Italian Risorgimento was shaped less by atheist or anti-Christian motifs than by a liberal or "civil" variant of Catholicism with secular leanings. Still, the widespread anticlericalism promoted by the spokesmen of Italian national unification, Mazzini and Garibaldi, had the potential to develop into atheism or irreligious directions.

Some interpreted their anticlericalism as a problematic and "weak" aspect of their thought while others held it would not be radical enough but still too much intertwined with traditional Catholicism. By some margin and in more positive terms, however, Mazzini's and Garibaldi's conviction served as a bridge toward new forms of political and social struggles: political radicalism and idealistic radicalism, including forms of "secularized religion" and "religion of irreligion," as they became apparent in anticlerical rituals and martyrology flourishing throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. New rites of passage were invented, different and alternative to Catholic ones, such as civil baptism, civil marriage, and the republican or socialist funeral. Camillo Prampolini preached the socialist Jesus, depicted in the paintings of the "Christ of the workers" that many workers and peasants hung above their beds,[66] while Giordano Bruno was celebrated as the martyr of freethought in 1889.[67]

By this means, Mazzinian and Garibaldinian anticlericalism lived out in the Italian political and literary culture: both republican and socialist propaganda are imbued with a notion of "civil religion" inspired by Mazzinian thought that draw from evangelical and Christian expressions, terms, and symbols. The spread of Mazzini's *Doveri dell'uomo* as a new gospel and catechism of the Republican Party (that called itself "il partito educatore" ["the education party"]),[68] in this regard, is most emblematic. It rejected individualistic and bourgeois materialism while conveying the principles of Christian spiritualism, ethical commitment, democratic liberalism, but also nationalism.

In literary culture, the poetic anticlericalism and "Satanism" of Italian poet and historian of literature Giosue Carducci mirrors traces of Garibaldi's beliefs,[69]

66 See Camaiani, "Valori religiosi e polemica anticlericale," 241.
67 See Massimo Bucciantini, *Campo dei Fiori: Storia di un monumento maledetto* (Turin: Einaudi, 2015).
68 This is studied in particular by Maurizio Ridolfi, "Il partito educatore: La cultura dei repubblicani italiani fra Otto e Novecento," *Italia Contemporanea* 175 (1989): 25–52.
69 See Laura Fournier-Finocchiaro, *Carducci et la construction de la nation italienne* (Caen: Presses Universitaires de Caen, 2006), 154–158. See also Laura Fournier-Finocchiaro, "Carducci

as does the philosophy of Antonio Gramsci, who ranked Garibaldi's anticlerical novels among the very few expressions of Italian national popular culture. Garibaldi's writings even inspired Benito Mussolini's novel *Claudia Particella, l'amante del cardinale* (The Cardinal's mistress), first published in 1910 and recently republished.[70] The interest in this kind of literature has never weakened: Garibaldi's novels *Clelia* and *Cantoni,* for instance, are still republished and translated nowadays.[71]

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et l'anticléricalisme," in *L'Italie menace: Figures de l'ennemi du 16e au 20e siècle,* ed. Laura Fournier-Finocchiaro (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2004), 67–90.

70 Benito Mussolini, *L'amante del Cardinale: Claudia Particella,* ed. Paolo Orvieto (Rome: Salerno Editrice, 2009).

71 See in French: Giuseppe Garibaldi, *Clelia*, trans. Yves Branca (Paris: Editions Ex Aequo, 2009); Giuseppe Garibaldi, *Cantoni le volontaire*, trans. Tullio Martello (Lyon: La Fosse Aux Ours, 2018).

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Costanza D’Elia

Group Portrait with Freethinker: Jacob Moleschott, Risorgimento Culture, and the Italian Nation-Building Process

Giorni belli della mia vita furono quelli che io spesi a leggere le opere di Carlo Darwin.
(Beautiful were the days of my life I spent reading the works of Charles Darwin.)
Francesco De Sanctis, *Il darwinismo nell’arte* (1883)

Rinnovare gli uomini per rinnovare i sistemi.
(Renewing the people in order to renew the systems.)
Luigi Russo, *Francesco De Sanctis e l’Università di Napoli* (1928)

The term “materialism” does not summarize a well-defined philosophical, nor ideological system, but rather comprises clusters of conceptual positions cutting across different time spans.[1] When it comes to the long nineteenth century up to the First World War, materialism takes on distinct meanings for philosophy, politics, and science, and it intersects with different views, or denials, of religion.[2] These include such heterogeneous stances as atheism, agnosticism, and deism, but also anticlericalism and anti-Catholicism which may lie at the core of attempts to establish a “true religion,” one that carries the promise of being “genuinely Evangelical.”[3] Though present in many European societies, anticlericalism particularly flourished in the Kingdom of Italy (founded in 1861; the unification of the Peninsula put an end to the temporal power of the popes in 1870).[4] It arose from the sharp political, religious, and cultural confrontations between

1 On materialism, see the comprehensive studies of Richard C. Vitzthum, *Materialism: An Affirmative History and Definition* (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 1995); and Martin Küpper, *Materialismus* (Cologne: PapyRossa, 2017).

2 See Annette Wittkau-Horgby, *Materialismus: Entstehung und Wirkung in den Wissenschaften des 19. Jahrhunderts* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1998).

3 On anti-Catholicism and European anticlericalism, see Manuel Borutta, *Antikatholizismus: Deutschland und Italien im Zeitalter der europäischen Kulturkämpfe* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, [2]2011); and Lisa Dittrich, *Antiklerikalismus in Europa: Öffentlichkeit und Säkularisierung in Frankreich, Spanien und Deutschland (1848–1914)* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2014).

4 On political radicalism and anticlericalism in Italy, see Alessandro Galante Garrone, *I radicali in Italia (1849–1925)* (Milan: Garzanti, 1973); and Guido Verucci, *L’Italia laica prima e dopo l’unità 1848–1876: Anticlericalismo, libero pensiero e ateismo nella società italiana* (Rome/Bari: Laterza, 1981).

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Catholic Church-hierarchies and the new, laicist democratic nation state and triggered needs for a "civil religion" to replace its traditional counterpart and its political influence.[5]

In light of such a complex situation, this chapter aims to investigate the case of Jacob Moleschott (1822–1893), a prominent representative of late nineteenth-century scientific materialism. Born in the Netherlands, professor of physiology Moleschott came to Italy in 1861 after having resigned from the University of Heidelberg because of his democratic and atheist convictions and after several years of employment in Zurich. Taking into account the evolving Italian secular culture, this chapter focusses on elements of Moleschott's anti-dualistic, materialist, secular thought and, above all, its reception in Italy, where he actively participated in the scientific, academic, and political life of the newly founded nation state. Though a large number of studies have been conducted on Moleschott,[6] questions regarding his exchange with the intelligentsia of his time (not limited to the natural sciences), and above all his role in the framework of the Italian nation-building process, remain open. This is where the chapter ties in: it studies Moleschott as a vital part of an intellectual, academic, and political network in which Francesco De Sanctis (1817–1883), a famous literary critic, professor of comparative literature, and minister of public education in several Italian governments, was a key player. De Sanctis was responsible for the controversial appointment of the materialist Moleschott as professor of physiology at the University of Turin in the course of the radical reform of the Italian university system initiated after his own appointment as the first minister of public education in the "new Italy." No other than Moleschott, De Sanctis was one of the most "European" figures in the culture of the new Italian state, not least due to his stay in Zurich, where the two had met. Their lives encompassed both the

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5 On modern Italian history, see Christopher Duggan, *The Force of Destiny: A History of Italy since 1796* (London: Penguin Books, 2008). The conflict of state and church is scrutinized in Martin Papenheim, "Roma o morte: Culture Wars in Italy," in *Culture Wars: Secular–Catholic Conflict in Nineteenth-Century Europe*, ed. Christopher Clark and Wolfram Kaiser (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 202–225.

6 The literature on Moleschott is characterized by a significant split between two approaches: history of science and history of philosophy. The works by Giorgio Cosmacini belong to the first group: Giorgio Cosmacini, *Il medico materialista: Vita e pensiero di Jakob Moleschott* (Rome/Bari: Laterza, 2005). For the philosophical approach, see Antimo Negri, *Trittico materialista: Georg Büchner, Jakob Moleschott, Ludwig Büchner* (Rome: Cadmo, 1981); and Alessandro Savorelli, "Jakob Moleschott e la cultura italiana del suo tempo," *Giornale critico della filosofia italiana* 7, no. 3 (2011): 543–554 (a special issue devoted to Moleschott). For a recent comprehensive approach, see Laura Meneghello, *Jacob Moleschott – A Transnational Biography: Science, Politics, and Popularization in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Bielefeld: transcript, 2017).

political and the intellectual. During the process of Italian nation building, De Sanctis was able to translate his cultural wealth into a political project and to implement it effectively. An exceptional freedom to act in the founding phase of the new state allowed him to radically demolish and rebuild the Italian university system. Next to Moleschott and De Sanctis, also Camillo De Meis and Betrando Spaventa were key players in this secularizing process of renewal.[7] Yet tensions arose over topics such as the constitution and the role, as well as the interrelation, of science, religion, and education in the new system. Their opinions diverged mostly with regard to the essence and function of the state. The intertwined network of politics, science, and religion in which they moved offers insight into the making and complexity of the dynamics of secularization and emphasizes its key role in the process of Italian nation building of the late 1800s.

Exiles in Zurich

Moleschott first encountered Italian culture in Zurich. He got acquainted with Francesco De Sanctis, professor from Southern Italy appointed to teach Italian literature at the Polytechnic Institute. In the 1850s, Zurich was an extraordinary melting pot of exiles; most of them were united by their loyalty to the ideals of the Revolutions of 1848–49. Besides Moleschott and De Sanctis, other Italians, such as Filippo De Boni, gathered in Zurich, but also vibrant personalities such as the "revolutionary" Richard Wagner (who, back then, had entered into a relationship with Mathilde Wesendonck that caused a rivalry with De Sanctis), Georg Herwegh and his wife Emma, and even Karl Marx.[8] Among De Sanctis' discussion partners were the Swiss historian Jacob Burckhardt and the philosopher Theodor Vischer. Large parts of the Hegelian Left would come together on the banks of the Limmat; as to Moleschott, he was a devoted reader of Feuerbach, whose ideas had a lasting impact on his thought. De Sanctis' rich corpus of let-

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7 On the Italian educational system and its reforms, see Giuseppe Decollanz, *Storia della scuola e delle istituzioni educative: Dalla Legge Casati alla riforma Moratti* (Rome/Bari: Laterza, 2005).

8 "In quell'illustre città era allora accolto il fiore dell'emigrazione tedesca e francese. C'era Wagner, Mommsen, Vischer, Herwegh, Marx, Köchli, Flocon, Dufraisse, Challemel-Lacour, e talora vi appariva Sue, Arago, Charrras." ("Back then, that illustrious town hosted the elite of German and French emigrants. There were Wagner, Mommsen, Vischer, Herwegh, Marx, Köchli, Flocon, Dufraisse, Challemel-Lacour; every now and then Sue, Arago, Charras would show up.") (Francesco De Sanctis, *Saggio critico sul Petrarca* [1869], ed. Niccolò Gallo [Turin: Einaudi, 1964], 3.)

ters and Moleschott's autobiography allow insight in these Swiss years which the latter remembered fondly,[9] whilst for the Italian they proved rather difficult.

De Sanctis arrived in Zurich after a series of disillusions: the first was the failure of the revolution which hit him particularly hard as his most promising student, Luigi La Vista, died on the barricades. After going into hiding in Calabria and being imprisoned at Castel dell'Ovo, where he mastered German and translated Hegel's *Wissenschaft der Logik* (Science of Logic, 1812–1816), Rosenkranz's *Handbuch einer allgemeinen Geschichte der Poesie* (Handbook of a General History of Poetry, 1833), and the first part of Goethe's *Faust: Eine Tragödie* (Faust: A Tragedy, 1808), De Sanctis moved to Turin in 1853. In a reactionary environment, he reunited with some of his close friends: Angelo Camillo De Meis and Bertrando Spaventa, who were both patriotic revolutionaries imbued with Hegelianism. The exiles had a hard time in the Savoy capital; even such a prominent intellectual and jurist like the Neapolitan Marquess Pasquale Stanislao Mancini was faced with difficulties on his way to a professorship of international law. But whereas a Catholic, moderate liberal, and freemason like Terenzio Mamiani finally managed to become professor of philosophy of history, De Sanctis was kept out of the running and had to earn his living by teaching at a girls' boarding school. In early 1856, he proudly refused the allowance that the Savoy government granted to political refugees and accepted an invitation to teach in Zurich.

This exile meant a painful trauma, but also a starting point for a cultural renewal for De Sanctis, who already as a young professor in Naples had soaked up as much as he could of what reached the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies culturally, from Romantic poetry to historical novels, German philosophy, and Hegel. This mixture of influences stirred up hopes for freedom and political unity, although Hegelian philosophy was already outdated beyond the Alps. De Sanctis' relationships during his years in Switzerland were intellectually very fruitful but not always satisfying on a personal level, as he confessed in a letter to one of his friends: "And here, Camillo, no one cares about me. My days of friendships are over; compliments, smiles, handshakes – these are my friendships here. I haven't entered into closer relationship with anyone yet. [...] Have you received Moleschott's book?"[10]

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9 Jacob Moleschott, *Für meine Freunde: Lebens-Erinnerungen* (Giessen: Emil Roth, 1894), 275–289. On De Sanctis: 302–305.

10 Francesco De Sanctis, *Epistolario (1836–1858)*, ed. Giovanni Ferretti and Muzio Mazzocchi Alemanni (Turin: Einaudi, 1965), letter to Angelo Camillo De Meis, July 19, 1856, 109. If not indicated otherwise, all translations are the author's.

As regards famous personalities, he sometimes was shy on a personal level, yet never on intellectual grounds: "The renowned Vischer [...] gave me three enormous volumes on aesthetics to which he is to add another two! It will take me five years to read them all."[11] De Sanctis' intellectual freedom becomes apparent in his philosophical masterpiece, *Schopenhauer e Leopardi: Dialogo fra A. e D.* (Schopenhauer and Leopardi, a Dialogue Between A. and D.), written in Zurich in 1858,[12] in which he radically and ironically criticized Schopenhauer, a philosopher appreciated by Moleschott.

Unlike De Sanctis, Moleschott was already famous by the time he had reached Zurich, owed in part to his resignation from the University of Heidelberg following his conflict with the Baden government over his atheist and materialist teachings. After a period of self-employment in the Netherlands, he sought a freer climate in Zurich. De Sanctis was struck by Moleschott's exceedingly self-confident manner as he revealed in a letter to his close friend Camillo De Meis, a physician himself:

> I've met Moleschott, a physiologist like you, a young man of thirty: what a difference in character! A vain man, he tells everyone of his resignation: a frivolous gossip, pompous, lacking in enthusiasm, with no reverence for science. And yet he is already famous, and you remain obscure! What a charlatan! He had his opening speech – which he still has to deliver – announced in all the bookshops in Germany! He is a German Mancini, and he will go far.[13]

Soon after, De Sanctis accused Moleschott for not having openly declared his materialism, and for not having the courage to defend his views in public:

> Yesterday Moleschott read his famous speech; the hall was packed. He had to respond to his enemies, who accused him of materialism. And he lacked the courage to hurl a "yes" in their faces. He had spoken to me about it days earlier, and I told him, "Science is free; be direct. Are you aware that your persecution has brought you some of your fame, and if people know of you in Italy, you owe it not to your work but to the theologians who refuse to leave you in peace?" He lacked the courage, because he has no faith in science, because he thinks only of success and his career: I saw through him when I spoke to Camillo about him. He claimed that he acknowledged the soul, but within the body, not outside of it. "You're a pantheist, then!" people around him said. But shortly thereafter, when it came down to the consequences, he revealed himself to be a materialist. A poor compromise between one's interest and one's conscience![14]

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11 Ibid., letter to Angelo Camillo De Meis, April 14, 1856, 20.

12 See Francesco de Sanctis, *Saggi critici* vol. II, ed. Luigi Russo (Bari: Laterza, 1979), 136–186.

13 De Sanctis, *Epistolario (1856–1858)*, letter to Angelo Camillo De Meis, April 14, 1856, 19.

14 Ibid., letter to Diomede Marvasi, June 17, 1856, 88.

However, De Sanctis' judgment reveals his acquaintance with Moleschott, who attended his lessons in Italian literature: "I have a large group gathering at the Polytechnic, some twenty people including Hardmeyer, Sieber, and Moleschott."[15] In comparison to these impressions, Moleschott's memories of De Sanctis are much warmer.

In any case, the scope of Moleschott's and De Sanctis' relationship is much more profound than their initial encounter might suggest. Meeting De Sanctis led to a great turning point in Moleschott's life: his move to Italy, which permitted him a dual career in academia and politics. To De Sanctis, on the other hand, the consequences were primarily of intellectual nature. Moleschott seems to have played a role in distancing De Sanctis from Hegelianism, and in sharpening his awareness of the conflicting relation between religion and politics. Besides, Moleschott's writings proofed influential on De Sanctis and the development of his key-concept of "life" with its philosophical, civic, and pedagogical elements, as will be shown in the following.

Moleschott's impact on the Italian process of nation building, thus, was twofold and went well beyond his direct political commitment as a senator of the Italian parliament (he was appointed on November 16, 1876). He gained influence through his academic teaching and intellectual instruction by which he reached a wide academic and lay public; and through his personal relation with one of the primary architects of the new Italy, Francesco De Sanctis. As a matter of fact, Moleschott's influence was of vital relevance for De Sanctis' dissociation from Hegelianism he – like many other intellectuals of his time – was attached to due to his contacts with modern German culture. While he remained substantially loyal to Leopardi's skeptical critique and to Mazzini's democratic radicalism throughout his life, De Sanctis distanced himself from Hegelianism in Zurich in order to come to grips with the failure of the revolution. Not least thanks to Moleschott (but also to Burckhardt, and to Mathilde Wesendonck's circle),[16] he realized that he had relied on the German philosopher as his loadstar without considering the time-bound nature and the authoritarian bias of his writings. Thus De Sanctis concluded: "I have never been Hegelian at any cost. Of course, it is not servility to hold on to a system one believes to be true; we have to serve the truth. […] I am tired of the absolute, of ontology,

15 Francesco De Sanctis, *Epistolario (1859–1860)*, ed. Giuseppe Talamo (Turin: Einaudi, 1965), letter to Teodoro Frizzoni, January 2, 1859, 6.
16 See Sergio Landucci, *Cultura e ideologia in Francesco De Sanctis* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1964), 159–169.

and of a priori. Hegel has done me a lot of good, but also a lot of evil. He has withered my soul. […] Today, his philosophy seems unbearable to me."[17]

Subsequently, De Sanctis rejected Hegel's dogmatism, his deductive reasoning, and the systematic architecture of his thought more and more – a decision which distanced him considerably from his Italian friends. In the following subsection, the consequences of this split will be further analyzed. Meanwhile, De Sanctis could ill afford medical treatment by Moleschott: "Ogni parola che esce dalla preziosa bocca del Moleschott costa due franchi." ("Each word from Moleschott's precious mouth costs two Francs.")[18]

The Anti-Hegelian Turn and the Secularization of Knowledge

One of De Sanctis' first official acts as the first minister of public education in the unified Italy was the appointment of Moleschott to the chair of physiology at the University of Turin, the capital of Italy until 1865. Its legal premise was the Savoy "Casati Law" (November 1859), which deprived the Catholic Church of all its power in the field of education and allowed direct appointments to professorships on the basis of calls without further competition. After the national unification, this law, together with the entire Savoy legislation, was extended to the whole Peninsula. De Sanctis' choice did not go unopposed but provoked resistance among local university professors, as did his political program and appointments elsewhere in Italy.[19] Public education was one of the crucial factors in the construction of the modern Italian nation state, and next to church property the most important battlefield of state authorities, intellectuals, and scientists with the Catholic Church. De Sanctis intended to modernize the decried musty, backward-looking atmosphere of Italian universities whatever the cost. It seemed all too much burdened with the clericalism of the academic staff which had lost its most outstanding members after 1848. His efforts were not primarily aimed at nationalizing the Italian university system, where public education, in the decades prior to the unification, had coexisted with much more lively

17 De Sanctis, *Epistolario (1856–1859)*, letter to Angelo Camillo De Meis, September 20, 1857, 442.
18 Ibid.
19 On the Casati Law, see Maria Cristina Morandini, "Da Boncompagni a Casati: La costruzione del sistema scolastico nazionale," in *Scuola e società nell'Italia unita*, ed. Luciano Pazzaglia and Roberto Sani (Brescia: Editrice La Scuola, 2001), 9–46.

private schools such as De Sanctis' First School in Naples. Rather, it was about initiating a clear-cut and far-reaching political turn: those persecuted by the old regimes, such as Luigi Settembrini in Naples, and "heretics" like Moleschott, rejected by the Baden government, from now on were given the absolute priority.[20] For De Sanctis, first morality had to be renewed, and then culture. With the creative freedom to set up new institutions and overthrow old elites, freshly unified Italy was a unique experimental field for applying a new, secular, and "positive" imprint on education.

In 1878, De Sanctis, once again minister of public education, proposed to Moleschott to work at the University of Naples. In the end, though, the Dutch scientist, with De Sanctis' support, decided to go to Rome.[21] Yet Naples' science and medicine were anything but backward. Key players such as Salvatore Tommasi, whom Moleschott commemorated in a speech held in the Senate in 1888,[22] had rejected Hegelianism that for longer periods had shaped Italian natural sciences with its deductive schematics and a marked theological dogmatism. In the 1860s, the process of secularizing science consolidated in the cry: "Keine Metaphysik mehr!" ("No more metaphysics!")[23] Dogmatized Hegelianism as well as mannerism were left behind in favor of a twofold epistemological shift: the detachment of science from any traditional form of philosophy, and the struggle for unity and connectedness of all the sciences on the basis of the experimental method. This very "secularization of knowledge" meant freedom from any metaphysical backlash, combined with an explicit acceptance of Darwinism and an implicit acceptance of scientific materialism. These were also the positions adopted by Moleschott, who added with this to an already existing Italian movement of intellectual refreshment so far labelled as "naturalism."

But how was Moleschott received in Italy? In the 1860s, his name recurs along with that of Darwin and the term "naturalism." The zoologist Filippo De Filippi, who was a convinced Darwinist, published an article which promptly informed the Italian public about Moleschott's arrival and fully backed De Sanctis'

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20 For an analysis of the university reform in the years after unification, with particular attention to Naples, see Luigi Russo, *Francesco De Sanctis e la cultura napoletana (1860–1885)* (Venice: La Nuova Italia Editrice, 1928), chapters I–VI.

21 See Carla De Pascale and Alessandro Savorelli, "L'archivio di Jakob Moleschott (con documenti inediti e lettere di F. De Sanctis, S. Tommasi, A. C. De Meis)," *Giornale critico della filosofia Italiana*, no. 6 (1986): 216–248; here 242.

22 To this purpose, Moleschott retrieved information on Tommasi from Camillo De Meis. (Ibid., 244–248.)

23 Russo, *Francesco De Sanctis*, 166.

decision for the Dutch materialist.[24] Moleschott and the German scientist Moritz (then Maurizio) Schiff, who was appointed professor of physiology in Florence in 1862, were materialists and Darwinists: that was how they were perceived in Italy, where an early summary of Darwin's theories had appeared in the journal *Il Politecnico* as early as 1860.[25] In 1864, Italian Darwinist De Filippi published another article destined to become famous in which he tackled the problem of the origin of the human species: *L'uomo e le scimie* (Man and Monkeys). This essay highly contributed to a Europe-wide debate on the topic, and with good reason: an informed and fervent Darwinist, Di Filippo suggested a possible reconciliation between faith in the Christian God and the descent of humans from primates that was but an anatomic matter of fact and not extended to human superior attributes such as thought and sentiments.[26] Still, Di Filippo criticized Justus von Liebig, German chemist and adversary of Moleschott's teachings on phosphorus being the base of human thought, as a defender of orthodoxy and with that upheld Moleschott's supremacy in the Italian public discourse.

On the Catholic side, however, Moleschott was associated with pantheism, the first and most serious sin listed in the *Syllabus Errorum* (Syllabus of Errors, 1864; one of the key words of those decades). To quote from an article by the Sicilian professor of philosophy Vincenzo Di Giovanni:

> [...] the materialists of our times have pushed frankly and inexorably the premises of pantheism to their extreme consequences, which the conservatives of the Hegelian Right, by now surrendered to the assaults of the Hegelian Left, did not want to foresee. It is well known that German adherents of pantheistic materialism pertain to the latter school. The most prominent among them are Feuerbach, Vogt, Moleschott, and Büchner. They are combatted by Fichte (son), by Ulrici and by Wirth, by Herbart's school, by Lotze, and, among the naturalists, by the famous Liebig, against whom Moleschott has directed his most renowned work.[27]

24 Filippo De Filippi, "La fisiologia ed il professore Moleschott," *Rivista italiana di scienze, lettere ed arti*, October 21, 1861, V. On De Filippi, see Guido Cimino, "Filippo De Filippi," in *Dizionario biografico degli Italiani* 33 (1987), http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/filippo-de-filippi_(Dizionario-Biografico)/, accessed March 15, 2019.

25 See "On the origin etc. Sull'origine delle specie coi mezzi di scelta naturale [...] di Carlo Darwin, Londra 1859," *Il Politecnico* IX (1860): 110 – 112. The anonymous article could have been authored by De Filippi. On Darwinism in Italy, see Fabio Forgione, *Il dibattito sulla variabilità delle specie nella Torino dell'Ottocento* (Milan: Franco Angeli, 2018); in Europe: Eve-Marie Engels, ed., *The Reception of Charles Darwin in Europe* (London/New York: Continuum, 2008).

26 Filippo De Filippi, *L'uomo e le scimie* (Milan: Daelli, 1864).

27 Vincenzo Di Giovanni, "Delle attinenze fra il panteismo e il materialismo nella storia contemporanea della filosofia," *Il campo dei filosofi italiani: Periodico da esercitare i maestri liberamente* 2 (1866): 411.

The articles printed in the topical Italian magazine *Rivista contemporanea nazionale italiana*, to which De Sanctis himself contributed, display the lively and pugnacious variety of arguments exchanged during these years. They clearly illustrate that the new freedom of opinion mattered more than the specificity of positions. This magazine also issued the radical views of Agostino Perini, publicist of Trento who, as a follower of the anthropology of Feuerbach, analyzed religion as a purely human phenomenon maintained by basic human interests. In contrast to the Neo-Kantian mediation of the influential Italian philosopher Felice Tocco, who claimed that coexistence between the new science and the philosophical discourse was possible, Perini denied any form of religious faith or metaphysics.[28]

In this lively cultural atmosphere – a laboratory of secularism – Moleschott gradually became the embodiment of a particular type of intellectual: the scientist-philosopher. During the 1860s, the emancipation of science from any form of dogmatism had manifold philosophical implications which were developed and discussed by several parties. It was precisely the theoretical naivety of a rash empiricism common among academics and in the broader public that fervent Neo-Hegelians – such as the philosopher Bertrando Spaventa, but also Camillo De Meis, De Sanctis' old friend who had disassociated himself ideologically from his teacher ever since the Zurich years – criticized.[29] In the second half of the nineteenth century, each branch of Italian science became a battlefield of materialists and spiritualists, and both sides interpreted Darwin's writings in their own interest. De Sanctis' call of Moleschott to an Italian professorship proved to be forward-thinking: alongside his scientific achievements, the Dutch materialist played a decisive, yet also highly politicized public role as a dispeller of any form of scientific and philosophical obscurantism in the modernizing climate of the Italian Risorgimento.

The Two Religions

In the turbulent context of the 1860s (which for Italy, to use a Freudian term, triggered impulses that until then had been repressed), philosophical and religious

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28 See Agostino Perini. "La religione naturale," *Rivista contemporanea nazionale italiana*, August 1868, 62–75; and Felice Tocco, "Studi sul positivismo," *Rivista contemporanea nazionale italiana*, June 1869, 21–37.

29 See Costanza D'Elia, "La vita e la storia: Incroci desanctisiani sulla scena europea del secondo Ottocento," *Studi desanctisiani: Rivista internazionale di letteratura, politica, società*, no. 4 (2016): 40–43.

trends intermingled. Darwinism, naturalism, and also "materialism" had no clear equivalent on the religious-spiritualist side. Its representatives leaned toward both atheism and a more nuanced deism, yet not without tendencies to reconcile religion and the new scientific views. In these respects the case of the Italian abbot Zanella stood out, who penned an ode to a fossilized shell that certainly did not intend to evoke heterodoxy, but still was interwoven with Darwinian influences circulating in Italy at that particular time. As shown above, "pantheism" was a label applied from the outside to devalue the changes in philosophy and religion. After Vincenzo Gioberti's attempt to reconcile the Catholic Church with the project of unifying Italy in the 1840s (envisaging an Italian confederation under the guidance of the pope), and its entire failure in the course of 1848, the conflict between the Catholic Church and the new Italian nation state became more and more radical in the aftermath of the unification of 1861. The clash reached its peak with the annexation of the Papal State in 1870. In this context the term "pantheism" was dusted off its old fashioned sound by church officials to mark modernity and fight it as a radical evil.

In an essay on *Il panteismo in Italia e il prof. Moleschott* (Pantheism in Italy and Professor Moleschott, 1868) published in the *Rivista Universale*, a Catholic magazine, the prominent physician and public defender of Catholicism Luigi Maschi examined one by one Moleschott's positions in *Der Kreislauf des Lebens: Physiologische Antworten auf Liebig's Chemische Briefe* (The Circle of Life, 1852), published in answer to Justus von Liebig's *Chemische Briefe* (Chemical Letters, 1844).[30] Maschi repeated his main argument against materialism over and over again: reality cannot be reduced to its material, sensual perceptible components. By this, he denounced both the philosophical and anti-religious political implications of Moleschott's theories. Reducing thought "to perceptible events," denying the existence of the soul (which he calls, using a neologism, "ideogenic agent"), and mocking it as "illusory," according to Maschi implied "excluding God from our thought and […] leading others to believe that there is no primary thinking agent to which we must consider nature and art subordinate, and make politics subordinate."[31] On the one hand, Maschi decried Moleschott's thought that could be attributed but to a reproducible sensory perception, a position which made it impossible to derive laws from individual, subjective observations, unless a new metaphysics would be created – leading to an irremediable

30 Luigi Maschi, "Il panteismo in Italia e il prof. Moleschott," *Rivista universale*, November and December 1868, 101–118; 249–265.
31 Ibid., 111.

contradiction. On the other hand, he accused Moleschott of having advocated a new Hegelianism in which nature would be totally equated with ideas:

> Moleschott hides behind the philosophy of experience and then reduces it to gratuitous claims only to replace the facts with his dreams. He recounts his dreams with the seriousness of a teacher; and he instructs his audience as a priest of the Nature-God under the papacy of Hegel, the messiah.[32]

While Moleschott supported the unification of the sciences and rejected any mingling of science with faith, Maschi emphasized that "science does not end where faith begins."[33] Finally, to him, Moleschott's mixing of Hegel and Spinoza originated in a school of thought foreign to Italian tradition:

> Here are the metaphysicians of nihilism, the great men of Germany, whom Wagner insists on transforming into masters of science to be sent out to the nations […] to reduce thought to an aggregate of sensations is to deny mankind's imaginative and ideological agency and to push his dignity down to a state below that of animals. That is what the physiology of Moleschott, the priest of the Nature-God, comes down to.[34]

Moleschott, the new priest: a devoted anti-Darwinist and Catholic like Maschi painted the gloomy picture of a new scientific discourse replacing traditional religion (although advocating a non-pantheistic Hegelianism). He envisaged the possibility that this discourse could become the new creed in the young Italian nation state with its society hungry for novelty after decades of censorship. Yet Maschi, to a certain extent, draw wrong conclusions: secularization was not only a long-awaited – and with the national unity enforced – process from below, but in many fields took on the features of a revolution from above with university reform as one of its most outstanding battlefields.

Without any doubt, Moleschott represented a new type of scientist in Italy: not just a philosopher-scientist, but also a great popularizer.[35] His vision was not necessarily received as atheist – a position adopted only by a small minority in nineteenth-century Italy. Rather, it was a cultural phenomenon within the wide area of the "secularization" process which seems to involve what I propose to call "the two religions."[36] The radical anticlericalism present in parts of the Ital-

32 Ibid.

33 Ibid., 113.

34 Ibid., 118.

35 See Meneghello, *Jacob Moleschott*.

36 See Costanza D'Elia, "'E lasciatelo quel benedetto Leopardi': Il tema delle due religioni fra De Sanctis e Settembrini," *Studi desanctisiani* 2 (2014): 55 – 74.

ian cultural and intellectual scene could resort to atheism or deism, but could also pave the way for a religion based on the Gospel, a renewed faith that aimed at recovering the supposed lost purity of the Christian message, or it could become the starting point for a religion of humanity. The call for a "true" religion could also be connected to a moral and militant renewal launched by philosophers, politicians, and scientists "from above," a trend which in the decades before and after the First World War would merge into nationalized civil religions – consisting of the incorporation of sacral elements into the political sphere – and later into the liturgies of the totalitarianisms.[37]

Compared to the radical atheism of a philosopher like Perini, De Sanctis' position and that of Moleschott were more nuanced. Neither of them participated in such radical and somewhat theatrical enterprises like the Anti-Council held in Naples in 1869, which started on December 9, the day after the opening of the First Vatican Council (and soon was dissolved by police forces).[38] The Anti-Council was an emblem for the central position Italy had acquired in the course of its unification process regarding the transnational network of materialists and anti-clericalists. Together with freethinkers and freemasons – the transitions were fluid – they gathered in Naples to declare publicly for liberalism, for lay schools, freedom of conscience, a civil gospel, science and women's suffrage.[39] The choice of Naples was a provocation within the provocation, given the House of Bourbon's reputation for clericalism and obscurantism which had taken on a European dimension thanks, in part, to the anti-Bourbonian pamphlet published by the British statesman William Edward Gladstone *Two Letters on the State Prosecution of the Neapolitan Government* (1851).[40] If Moleschott was in Italy the herald of the secular doctrine that fueled international materialism, he was politically very far from the militant spirit of the Neapolitan meeting backed by Garibaldi and promoted by the left-wing deputy Giuseppe Ferrari.

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37 On this issue, however, see Kelsen's critique: Hans Kelsen, *Secular Religion: A Polemic against the Misinterpretation of Modern Social Philosophy, Science and Politics as 'New Religions'* (Vienna/New York: Springer, 2011).

38 See Giuseppe Ricciardi, *L'Anti-Concilio di Napoli del 1869* (Naples: Stabilimento Tipografico, 1870).

39 See Lisa Dittrich, "European Connections, Obstacles and the Search for a New Concept of Religion: The Freethinker Movement as an Example for Transnational Anti-Catholicism in the Second Half of the 19th Century," *Journal of Religious History* 39, no 2 (2015): 261–279.

40 William Edward Gladstone, *Two Letters to the Earl of Aberdeen on the State Prosecutions of the Neapolitan Government* (London: John Murray, 1851).

For Karl Marx, materialists like Moleschott, Vogt, and Büchner were merely *kleinbürgerlich* (petty bourgeois) in their ideology.[41] To some degree, this judgment is accurate, in light not so much of Moleschott's theoretical views, but with regard to his political attitude, which was marked by liberalism devoid of excess.[42] Likewise De Sanctis: he was too pragmatic to jump on the colorful bandwagon of the Anti-Council. After all, both circled around what might be called a "religious" core: a very vague one in Moleschott's case. He balanced on the thin line between materialism and pantheism, and revealed a very eclectic if not ecumenical attitude in his advocacy, not of freethinking, but of freedom of thinking. This became evident in the speech he delivered on June 8, 1889, on the occasion of the unveiling of the Giordano Bruno monument in Campo de' Fiori, Rome, which was endowed by freemasons and freethinkers in response to attacks launched by Catholic authorities against their positions:

> Sirs! In this celebration the government is not officially present, yet the government is with us. But if it is not represented officially, we are the delegation of the nation, an effective and official delegation [...]. Moreover, we represent the freedom of thinking. And I say deliberately: freedom of thinking, and not freethinking, as everyone is welcome: believers and philosophers, spiritualists and materialists, atheists and deists, everyone provided that they are idealists, united by the protest against every persecution of the thought, that forms man's conscience, may the persecution come from the pope or from Calvin.[43]

De Sanctis' attitude toward religion is even more nuanced. His adherence to Vincenzo Gioberti and his neo-Catholic stance in the 1840s, to me, seems vastly overestimated.[44] He already grew up in a cultural environment characterized by a "spontaneous" anticlericalism, nourished by the distrust of the educated Southern bourgeoisie toward an often ignorant and corrupt clergy. However, in one of his last writings on Darwin, De Sanctis, to some extent, seemed to be inclined to reconcile Darwinism and religion.[45] This, though, did not mean that, at the end of his life, he would have thought of a late conversion. Rather, De Sanctis

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41 See Arrigo Pacchi, "Introduzione," in *Materialisti dell'Ottocento*, ed. Arrigo Pacchi (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1978), 35; and Negri, *Trittico materialistico.*

42 This is the key argument of Meneghello, *Jacob Moleschott.*

43 Reprinted in Eva Del Soldato, "Jacob Moleschott tra Serveto e Bruno," *Giornale critico della filosofia italiana* 7, no. 3 (2011): 585.

44 See Landucci, *Cultura e ideologia*, 46–58.

45 "L'orgoglio di scienziato non gli ha impedito, in quella meravigliosa catena di esseri da lui concepita, d'inchinarsi innanzi al Primo, innanzi all'Inconoscibile." ("The scientist's pride did not detain him from kneeling down to the First, the Unknowable Being in that marvelous chain of beings that he has conceived.") (Francesco De Sanctis, "Il darwinismo nell'arte [1883]," in *Saggi critici*, vol. 3, ed. Luigi Russo [Bari: Laterza, 1972], 357.)

continued to move in the theoretical and ethical realm of the "two religions": a detested institutional religion for one thing, and a non-dogmatic, non-metaphysical faith which was not necessarily transcendent, but – with certain reservations – came close to Giuseppe Mazzini's civil religion, for the other.[46] Throughout his life, De Sanctis remained true to Mazzini's egalitarian vision which was widely popular in the decades between 1848 and the unification, not, however, to his ideological rigidness, and the marked religious bias of his political views. After all, while De Sanctis was a minister and, therefore, influential on politics and society, Mazzini was forced to move between his exiles in London and Lugano and to live underground during his brief visits to Italy; in 1872, he died in Pisa under the pseudonym of Dr. Brown.

It is feasible to assume that De Sanctis' opinion of Moleschott, which was anything but personal, was dictated above all by his clear rejection of traditional religion – in a time when the anticlerical attitude assumed sometimes violent tunes, as this passage written by a Neapolitan officer and naturalist some years after the foundation of the Italian nation state shows:

> In straying from the footprints left by the wise fathers of Christianity of old, who were at the forefront of human knowledge in their time, and reducing themselves to idle talk and the doctrines of words and absurdities of the barbarous Middle Ages, priests do just endeavor to patch up the strange flagship of St. Thomas Aquinas, splitting its sides further [...] because by faith they mean the acquiescence to absurdities created by their interests.[47]

To sum up, in the context of the "new Italy," manifold forms of anticlericalism emerged that were at times connected to a concept of "useful religion" (that is, of a *religio instrumentum regni*): without God, but populated by deities. In the Pantheon of the new civil religion, the figure of Giordano Bruno stood out. Moleschott was among the leading figures supporting the controversial dedication of a monument to the heretical monk in the heart of Rome. While the glorification of Bruno was sometimes tied to particularly violent tones, as in the poem on the "New Life," written in 1870 on the eve of the Breach of Porta Pia, containing raging verses against the "guilty priest," that is to say, the

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46 On De Sanctis' approach to religion, see Max Holliger, "Francesco De Sanctis: Sein Weltbild und seine Ästhetik" (PhD diss., University of Basel, 1949), 142–149. Giuseppe Mazzini was one of the leading figures of the Italian national unification. He rallied support for republicanism and envisioned a united Europe based on broad democratic participation.

47 Crescenzo Montagna, "Studii geologici ossia Il generale conte Alberto La Marmora e l'antichità dell'uomo," *Rivista contemporanea nazionale italiana*, May 1864, 240.

pope,[48] it became almost obligatory to refer to him. In De Sanctis' network of friends, the philosopher Francesco Fiorentino wrote about Bruno, Bertrando Spaventa published on him in 1867 (the manuscript dated back to 1854/55), as did later his student Felice Tocco.[49] Even De Sanctis himself, shortly before the capture of Rome, payed his tribute to Bruno by devoting ample space to him in his *Storia della letteratura italiana* (History of Italian Literature), which appeared in 1870/71 to celebrate and seal the achievement of national unity thanks to the defeat of the pope-king.

Conclusion – From the System to Life

To conclude this essay, I return to the opening question: what materialism in the Italian secularizing context implied. De Sanctis' interpretation of Bruno and of the modern age – starting with humanism, Machiavelli, and Galileo as the leading figures of a "new science" and ideological founding fathers of the Italian nation – tended toward materialism.[50] But his perception of Moleschott and materialism differed from Mazzini's views: in 1858, during the difficult period in Zurich, De Sanctis devalued materialism which he took as a keyword for an era of decline. To him, it was a derivative of the moral weakness of his age (a lasting topos in Italian culture that he shared with Leopardi). Materialism, thus, seemed a symptom:

> Everything is in decay […]. The spirit dies and the flesh fattens. This is the motto of this second half of the century, and its worthy philosophy is materialism, which now raises its head everywhere, and spreads its fame as the proper response to the new needs.[51]

Some ten years later, however, De Sanctis would declare:

48 See Vincenzo Riccardi di Lantosca, "Vita Novella," *Rivista contemporanea nazionale italiana*, April 1870, 68–73.

49 See Francesco Fiorentino, *Il panteismo di Giordano Bruno* (Naples: Lombardi, 1861); Felice Tocco, *Giordano Bruno: Conferenza* (Florence: Le Monnier, 1886); Felice Tocco, *Le opere inedite di Giordano Bruno* (Florence: Tip. della Regia Università, 1891); and Bertrando Spaventa, "Giordano Bruno (1854)," in *Saggi di critica filosofica, politica e religiosa* (1867), ed. Biago De Giovanni (Naples: La Scuola di Pitagora, 2008), 138–175.

50 De Sanctis dedicated the first section of chapter XIX (La nuova scienza – The New Science) to Bruno. (Francesco de Sanctis, *Storia della letteratura italiana*, ed. Niccolò Gallo [Milan: Mondadori, (1870–1871) 1991], 644–668.)

51 Francesco De Sanctis, *Lettere dall'esilio*, ed. Benedetto Croce (Bari: Laterza, 1938), 210.

> I hear whispers around me with an air of fear: – The new generation is materialistic. But what do you wonder and be afraid of? What is materialism, not basic and vulgar materialism, but its higher meaning? It is the world that reconciles itself with life, and takes possession of it, and places its ideals there, and, throwing itself into life, partakes in its joys and its bitterness, no more a skeptical and restless observer, but a calm actor and a soldier.[52]

As shown above, it was through the strong backing of De Sanctis that Moleschott became a professor at the University of Turin in 1861. Only some years later, in a broader attack launched against "materialism," it was Mazzini who associated Moleschott with De Sanctis. He noticed an overlap between De Sanctis' adherence to Hegelianism, typical of an "atheist" Neapolitan culture, and materialism. In those same years, Mazzini complained about the success of the atheism of "Comte, Büchner, and Moleschott."[53] After all, Mazzini's critical stand toward atheism and materialism had caused, to some extent, his divergences with Garibaldi, who had joined enthusiastically the 1869 Anti-Council.

Other than Mazzini, De Sanctis, over the years, attributed to "materialism" a sense of positive novelty within the framework of the unified nation: "It is the world reconciling with life." Those are seemingly cryptic words which must be deciphered in light of De Sanctis' writings of the early 1870s. These years were turbulent: on the national level, unification was completed; on an international level, France was again at the center of a revolution (and of its bloody repression). Both processes, along with the German unification, were influenced by the outcome of the Franco-Prussian War. Against this backdrop, between 1870 and 1872, De Sanctis' first and second volume of the *History of Italian Literature* appeared, along with the first collection of critical essays and his lecture *La scienza e la vita* (Science and Life), held on November 16, 1872 on the occasion of the opening of the academic year at the University of Naples. This text has rightly been considered, along with *Schopenhauer and Leopardi*, to be De Sanctis' most philosophical work. However, its meaning has not been thoroughly understood, as it needs to be read in reference to the scientific literature of the time, in particular to Moleschott with his bestseller, *Der Kreislauf des Lebens*.[54] To give just one crucial sentence from De Sanctis' work that displays this influence: "Also in life there is the thought, a latent thought, slow formation of the centuries, which

52 Cited in Landucci, *Cultura e ideologia*, 205.

53 Cited ibid., 205 – 206.

54 Jacob Moleschott, *Der Kreislauf des Lebens: Physiologische Antworten auf Liebig's Chemische Briefe* (Mainz: Victor v. Zabern, 1852). The Italian translation was done by Cesare Lombroso, positivist scientist and founder of criminal anthropology (1869). See Meneghello, *Jacob Moleschott*, 446 – 447.

reproduces itself and passes down along the generations, mingling with generative fluids."[55]

In De Sanctis' view, life is a dynamic element, a moral energy; the quoted passage includes a Darwinian echo as well as traces of Moleschott's doctrine about the inseparability of matter and force. To De Sanctis, life broadly overlaps with "faith," in a non-transcendent sense, taken as the true inner motivation responsible for the character and greatness of nations. The destiny of the unified Italy depended on this: "Science" in itself, knowledge, and culture could not replace the vitality of a people. On this basis, it seemed necessary to "convertire il mondo moderno in mondo nostro" ("convert the modern world into our own world").[56] With this implicit and non-systemic reference to Hegel's philosophy of history ("moderne Welt" – "modern world"), an approach which had distanced De Sanctis from his old friends Spaventa and De Meis already in the Zurich days, he came also close to Moleschott's unorthodox reading of Hegel.

Other than expected, the true hero of Moleschott's Pantheon was not Bruno, but Michael Servetus: the Dutch scientist insisted on having Servetus placed in the bas-relief decorating the pedestal of his statue.[57] Servetus was himself a scientist and was condemned by his church – the one of Calvin – no other than Moleschott was rejected by the Baden state and by German academia for his convictions. This attitude of Moleschott explains a great deal about his relationship with De Sanctis which was not sentimental, but ideological: their lowest common denominator was the refusal of an institutional power that subjugated the people rather than serving it. In their view, the people was not supposed to obey, but to become the actor of moral "life," which could not be replaced by any state system. From a philosophical point of view, the rejection of the orthodox Hegelian "system" implied for each of them the rejection of an absolute state which they grasped as a new deity. To Moleschott and De Sanctis, "civil religion" was to be based on freedom and not on the sacredness of the state. The cases of Moleschott and De Sanctis, whose lives were strictly intertwined since the Zurich days, offers a privileged insight into the "Italian way" of the secularizing process marked by the coincidence of the founding phase of the new state and the spread of new concepts like materialism and Darwinism throughout Europe. The commitment to these currents of thought was particularly swift and to some extent radical: Italy had to regain the time lost in the obscurantist Restoration period, to abandon a belated Hegelianism as an alleged progressive

55 Francesco De Sanctis, "La scienza e la vita (1872)," in *Saggi critici*, vol. 2, 180.
56 De Sanctis, *Storia della letteratura*, 847.
57 See Del Soldato, "Jacob Moleschott," 587; and Meneghello, *Jacob Moleschott*, 340.

and revolutionary ideology, and to absorb a new frame of mind, characterized by the dovetailing of already existing currents of materialism with the fresh approach of Darwinism, the theoretical and moral consequences of which grew far beyond Darwin's assumptions. As De Sanctis noted: "Just as Hegel before him, his [Darwin's] name was the flag of all related doctrines that would arise later: positivism, realism, materialism."[58]

Most of all, Italian secularization manifested in a process of distinction.[59] The independence of science, politics, and religion can be epitomized by the famous motto of Cavour, one of the founding fathers of the new nation: *libera Chiesa in libero Stato* (a free church in a free state). While the Catholic hierarchies adopted an anti-modernist attitude, the modernizing front was characterized by a wide array of combinations of philosophical, political, and scientific discourses; the very paradigm of the "two religions" exemplifies the complexity of this constellation. The intellectual alliance of the Dutch scientist and the Southern humanist contributed significantly to the Italian nation building and added to the international choir of progressive and freethinking voices in a vibrant atmosphere of change.

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58 Francesco De Sanctis, "Il darwinismo nell'arte (1883)," in *Scritti critici* vol. 3, 357.

59 See Detlef Pollack and Gergely Rosta, "Forum Religion und Moderne: Bedingungsfaktoren und Muster religiösen Wandels in der Moderne, Ein multi-paradigmatisches Erklärungsmodell," *Zeitschrift für Theoretische Soziologie* 5 (2016): 214–230.

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Barbara Wagner

Secularity in the New State: The Case of Poland

Since 1795 and throughout the whole nineteenth century, no Polish state had existed. Poland's territories were partitioned among its three powerful neighbors – the Russian Empire, the Habsburg Empire, and the Kingdom of Prussia.[1] Despite the partitions, Polish culture and education continued to develop, as did Polish political life which, depending on the historical constellation and the methods the partitioning powers adopted, was practiced either overt or covert. During the century of foreign rule, Polish people had fought the invaders in various ways such as employing passive economic resistance, honoring national war heroes, deciding for an inner or actual emigration, or celebrating national holidays.[2] They also attended Catholic church services which were conducted in Polish. In those decades, the Polish Catholic Church turned into a stronghold preserving and furthering national identity, custom, and life.[3] Characterized by the idea of a Polish sense of mission and humanity, Polish Catholicism deeply influenced both Polish intellectual life – infusing it with a religious semantic – and the idea of a Polish nation which, in the following years, became almost inseparable from Catholicism. But also agnostics like Joachim Lelewel proved influential with his theory of Polishness and the struggle for freedom and democracy as natural allies.[4] In light of this underground political self-confidence, Poles also organized military resistance: most noticeable were the two uprisings against the Russian Empire in 1830 – 31 and 1863 – 64, both of which, in the end,

1 On Polish history and culture of the nineteenth century, see Piotr Stefan Wandycz, *The Lands of Partitioned Poland, 1795 – 1918* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, [4]1996); and Norman Davies, *God's Playground: A History of Poland*, vol. 2: *1795 to the Present*, [2]2013 (New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

2 See, e. g., Brian Porter-Szűcz, *When Nationalism Began to Hate: Imagining Modern Politics in Nineteenth-Century Poland* (New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 3 – 103.

3 On the intertwined relation of nationalism and Catholicism in nineteenth-century Polish territories, see Zygmunt Zieliński, *Kościół i naród w niewoli* (Lublin: Red. Wydawnictw Katolickiego Uniwersytetu Lubelskiego, 1995); and Brian Porter-Szűcs, *Faith and Fatherland: Catholicism, Modernity, and Poland* (New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

4 On Lelewel, see Maciej Janowski, "Romantic Historiography as a Sociology of Liberty: Joachim Lelewel and his Contemporaries," in *Manufacturing Middle Ages: Entangled History of Medievalism in Nineteenth-Century Europe*, ed. Patrick Geary and Gábor Klaniczay (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2013), 89 – 110.

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turned out bloody and unsuccessful, resulting in the severe punishment of the Polish people by Russian authorities.

Despite, or maybe precisely because they had no nation state of their own, the educated Polish middle-class showed a keen interest in Europe's flourishing social and political movements, particularly radical, national, or democratic ones like the French Revolution or the Italian Risorgimento nourished by Enlightenment, liberalism, Romanticism, and the ideas of autonomy and emancipation.[5] Especially the exiled,[6] but also the remaining Polish intelligentsia in the partitioned territories was influenced by Europe's left-wing culture, philosophy, and literature critical of religion. In the era of the Polish partitions, these foreign influences formed the preconditions for the birth of an original Polish freethought movement.

This chapter aims to trace the development of the organized Polish freethought movement in the early twentieth century. Polish freethinkers started to coordinate their efforts in Paris in July 1906 and, after the First World War, expanded their activities to the new Polish state established in November 1918. The overall history of the relationship between Polish freethinkers and state authorities proved very conflictual: initially, the government allowed for their legal open activity, but later disbanded the freethought organizations. Even though Polish freethought was heavily influenced by both, Western European philosophical thought and freethought organizations in other countries, it also developed its own approach. This resulted partly from the complex national situation in Poland, where ethnic minorities constituted one third of the society and therefore heavily impacted on the predominant Polish national culture shaped by Catholicism.[7] In light of the particular religious situation in Poland with Roman Catholics representing 68 % of the population, secularity, as exemplified by Polish freethinkers, took on a specific character.

Already shortly after 1918, a divergence in views between the leaders of the Polish freethought movement became apparent. Parts of the organized Polish

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5 See Andrzej Walicki, *Philosophy and Romantic Nationalism: The Case of Poland* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1994); Andrzej Walicki, *Poland between East and West: The Controversies of Self-Definition and Modernization in Partitioned Poland* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994); and Adam Zamoyski, *Holy Madness: Romantics, Patriots and Revolutionaries, 1776 – 1871* (London: Phoenix, 1999).

6 On Polish emigration, mainly to France, the United States and – as forced migration – to Siberia, see Sławomir Kalembka, *Wielka Emigracja 1831 – 1863* (Toruń: Wydawnictwo Adam Marszałek, 2003).

7 Ethnic minorities on Polish territories include Ukrainians, Jews, Belarussians, Germans, and numerous other groups.

freethinkers established contact with the Polish labor movement, while the most radical Polish activists were fascinated with communism and admired post-revolutionary Russia. In these regards, Polish secularism and politics seem to have sealed a strategic alliance, as will be shown in the following.

The Early Stages of Organized Polish Freethought

The beginnings of an organized Polish freethought movement can be traced back to France with its large Polish diaspora. A group of Polish activists, who had been forced into exile due to their protests against Russian educational reforms introduced by Alexander Apuchtin in the University of Warsaw during the 1880s, established the first Polish freethought club abroad called *Polska Liga Wolnej Myśli* (Polish League of Freethinkers, PLFT) in July 1906. Its members – mostly academics, writers, and journalists – prided themselves in entertaining distinct political – that is: socialist – views critical of all kinds of doctrines, including religious ones. They combated religious dogmas and emphasized the primacy of a non-religious morality led by rational considerations over a religious morality they supposed would be based on blind obedience. The PLFT's charters borrowed from French and Italian ones and the organization's activists kept close contacts with comparable European groups. Besides their cooperation with several Polish journals, they published in the Parisian *Panteon* magazine. After a while, an organization similar to the PLFT was set up in Warsaw that deepened the connections between French and Polish freethinkers. The PLFT functioned for two years only, and disbanded in 1908.[8]

Interestingly, the PLFT included Polish freemasons in their ranks. Masonry was prohibited by Tsar Alexander I since 1822 throughout Russia, including the Polish territories under Russian rule. Subsequently, many Polish masons emigrated to Western Europe. Members and supporters of Polish masonry like Izabela Zielińska, Józef Zieliński, Stanisław Blanc, Jerzy Kurnatowski, and Józef Wasowski gathered in the PLFT and decided to fund a periodical addressing the intelligentsia to arouse interest in masonry on Polish soil. The creation of the *Myśl Niepodległa* (The Independent Thought) magazine was agreed upon during a meeting of the leading Polish mason Andrzej Niemojewski with Polish freethinking emigrants.[9] This way, the ideas of the tabooed masonry were sup-

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8 On the history of the PLFT, see Michał Szulkin, *Z dziejów ruchu wolnomyślicielskiego w Polsce 1906–1936* (Warsaw: Centralny Ośrodek Doskonalenia Kadr Laickich, 1965), 1–4.

9 On Niemojewski, see Barbara Świtalska-Starzeńska, *Człowiek szalony: Andrzej Niemojewski (1864–1921)* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Naukowe UKSW, 2018), 207–212.

posed to reach the Polish public through the just forming freethought movement.[10] Poet, writer, journalist, and social activist Niemojewski acted as editor-in-chief of the periodical and authored many articles. But his political and social views underwent changes: from 1906 to 1912, two thematic trends prevailed in the articles of *Myśl Niepodległa*, a freemasonic and a freethinking one, connected by the ideas of humanism, rationalism, and the shared value of human freedom. Large parts of the single issues were dedicated to the study of religion, mainly the history of Christian churches, Judaism, Buddhism, and other religions all discussed as social and cultural phenomena. Several dozens of authors contributed to the journal, among them journalists and correspondents, but also writers and scientists. After a few years, though, the enterprise entered a state of crisis because of Niemojewski's about-face. He started to write about the incompatibility of Polish and Jewish interests and included anti-Semitic contents to his publications. This caused a storm of protests among masons and freethinkers like Jan Baudouin de Courtenay, Jan Hempel, or Izabela Moszczeńska who ceased cooperation with the periodical. Thus prior to the First World War the magazine had already changed its character completely. Niemojewski moved away from freethought. After 1918, he wrote aggressively on current politics and supported the right-wing national movement.[11]

"Independent thought" was a term that appeared in the Polish public discourse at the beginning of the twentieth century. "Independent" or "free" thought was both a method of research and a way of life. Adherents of independent thought hoped to conduct their research freely and to popularize their findings fearlessly, provided that there were no dogmas obstructing their convictions. To Polish freethinkers it seemed difficult to detect independent thought among the Polish people as to them Poles were kept in the dark by political and religious authorities. Especially farmers and factory workers, according to this view, were subjected to the needs of the Catholic religion and politics by birth: farmers were expected to be meek and obedient, so they would not leave the Catholic Church to turn toward a new, less oppressing faith. In the same way, factory workers were supposed to be a mere addition to the machines they operated.[12]

Religion in general was regarded as the main adversary of independent thought by Polish freethinkers. However, from the beginning of the twentieth

10 See Ludwik Hass, *Ambicje, rachuby, rzeczywistość: Wolnomularstwo w Europie środkowowschodniej 1905 – 1928* (Warsaw: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1984), 78.
11 See Świtalska-Starzeńska, *Człowiek szalony,* 220 – 253.
12 See Feliks Jabłczyński, "Kto burzy?," *Myśl Niepodległa*, September 1906, 14, accessed December 4, 2018, http://wbc.poznan.pl/dlibra/publication?id=101180&tab=3.

century on, a specific criticism of the Catholic Church prevailed among freethinkers that echoed their anticlericalism and anti-Catholicism.[13] In line with their fellow freethinkers from other countries, Polish freethinkers, too, regarded the Catholic clergy as a sect striving for world dominance. In particular, they accused the Catholic Church for its exuberant political power which it started to accumulate, according to their reading, as early as in the Middle Ages, but later had to share it also with lay authorities. Throughout history, Catholic clerics – to freethinkers – proved very far-sighted and power-craving, including colonial exploitation, which they eagerly joined. In their critique, Polish freethinkers pointed to a strategy they believed the Catholic clergy would have applied continuously to secure its supremacy: whenever gaining new territories by military conquest turned out to be too difficult and expensive, they simply sent out missionaries to achieve the same objective. Polish freethinkers complained that in this struggle for hegemony the clerics fought with money, tendentious literature, and scholastic philosophy which made of philosophy a servant of faith.[14]

While the Warsaw journal *Myśl Niepodległa* introduced such anticlerical topics to the Polish culture, the first Polish freethinker convention was held in Warsaw, attended by 631 men and women, in December 1907. This was a remarkable number considering persecution, censorship, and the overall Catholic national culture conflicting with freethinking attitudes and organization. During the meeting, passionate speeches were delivered that focused on political and religious issues. Major topics discussed in the Warsaw conference comprised the imposition of religion by the ruling powers, forced attendance of religious lessons at schools, and the greed of priests. Catholic priests were presented as shepherds eager to build their own sheepfolds for lambs, or, in other words, for children, to wield power over them from the beginning on. Priests were also accused of carrying out arbitrary excommunications. The resolution passed toward the end of the conference was much more moderate in tone – also compared to the PLFT's declarations – and did not contain direct attacks on Catholicism or the clergy which seems a reaction to the Polish national religious culture and

13 On the European dimensions of freethought and the common anticlericalism in the nineteenth century, see Lisa Dittrich, "European Connections, Obstacles and the Search for a New Concept of Religion: The Freethinker Movement as an Example for Transnational Anti-Catholicism in the Second Half of the 19th Century," *Journal of Religious History* 39, no. 2 (2015): 261–279.

14 See Adam Kurcyusz, "Zabór katolicki," *Myśl Niepodległa*, September 1906, 23, accessed December 4, 2018, http://wbc.poznan.pl/dlibra/publication?id=101180&tab=3.

the threat by Russian authorities.[15] It was composed of four single declarations: the first announced the foundation of a new organization, the *Stowarzyszenie Myśli Wolnej* (Association of Freethought, AFT). It was supposed to be overall apolitical, yet its members could still join political parties. In fact, members obtaining a party membership were highly praised for their excellent critical thinking skills. As a result, the AFT functioned as a meeting place for non-believers with different political views such as liberal and socialist ones. From the outset, the topic of party affiliation repeatedly resurfaced in different contexts, including discussions to limit the AFT to the fight against the clergy and religion and to leave other freethinking and political matters to be solved at free discretion.

The second declaration concerned the relationship of Polish freethinkers to masonry. Unlike previous freethinking enterprises, the AFT denied any ties with freemasons who were considered – in line with the official political assessment – a secret, closed-off association. The AFT, on the other hand, was supposed to be an open, accessible to the public association. In the third declaration it was recognized that the Polish freethought organization was closely connected to freethought movements abroad, and that it would adapt their strategies to Polish specifics and needs. The fourth and final declaration concerned legal issues and was the most radical one. It claimed that the codex imposed by the Russian tsar had to be abolished in favor of the restoration of the previous, Napoleonic law, particularly the right to civil marriage stated in the Articles 165 and 193 of the Napoleonic Code.[16] Polish freethinkers' discussions centered on the internationally aligned national-secular as an equivalent to the national-Catholic, yet at the same time they were oriented toward a global concept of a socially and culturally connected humanity: amongst others, they demanded secular birth certificates, secular funerals, secular divorces, and secular oaths in court. Of course, these changes in favor of civil law were supposed to be carried out on an optional base and were not intended to be forced upon the Polish society in general.

The AFT originally fostered plans to establish additional branches of the organization within the Russian partition territory. After a short-lived political thaw caused by the Russian Revolution of 1905, however, Russian authorities nar-

15 On the resolution, see "Sprawozdanie z pierwszego zgromadzenia wolnych myślicieli polskich," *Myśl Niepodległa*, December 1907, 1671–1692, accessed December 4, 2018, http://wbc.poznan.pl/dlibra/publication/101181?tab=1.

16 The Polish version of the Napoleonic Code of 1807 included articles on civil marriages with all their secularist consequences and implications. In 1836, the law was abolished by the Russian tsar. During the freethinker convention in December 1907, voices were raised to reinstall the Napoleonic Code which met the demands of Polish freethinkers to a much greater extent than Russian law.

rowed the already limited political freedoms even further. The tsarist police restricted the ways in which people could organize public gatherings and refused to legitimize the AFT. Russian officials persecuted liberal activists and the most well-known Polish freethinkers such as Izabela Moszczeńska and Romuald Minkiewicz.[17] Moszczeńska, an educational activist and committed feminist, was arrested during the Revolution of 1905 after having participated in a school strike. In 1907, she contributed to the first Polish freethinker convention in Warsaw. Just like Moszczeńska, also Minkiewicz was imprisoned during the revolution because of his political activities in the socialist movement. He was already known for his anti-religious views back then.

Secularity in the Polish territories, after all, was difficult to uphold against the occupying powers and the Catholic Church with its social, political, and cultural influence as well as its prerogative of interpretation concerning the national discourse. Polish secularists had to adapt their strategies to these circumstances: their public appearance was moderate even though their claims were far-reaching. Freethinkers were forced to relocate their journal abroad and they depended on impulses from their non-Polish companions, as will be shown in the following.

A Catechism of Polish Freethought – and its Counterpart

Polish freethinkers took their inspirations from books available in the Polish territories: either from original Polish texts (at the beginning of the twentieth century texts by Andrzej Niemojewski were most relevant, followed by the works of the philosopher Teofil Jaśkiewicz) or foreign classics in circulation, published in English or translated into Polish. An author with a huge impact on Polish freethinkers was the Irish historian, essayist, and political theorist William Lecky. The Polish edition of his work in two volumes *History of the Rise and Influence of the Spirit of Rationalism in Europe* (1865) was based on the eighteenth English edition.[18] Its title, *Dzieje wolnej myśli w Europie* (The History of Freethought in

17 On Izabela Moszczeńska, see Jan Rzepecki, "Moszczeńska, Iza," in *Polski Słownik Biograficzny* XXII/1/92 (Wroclaw: Polska Akademia Nauk Ossolineum, 1977), 82. On Romuald Minkiewicz, see Michał Szulkin, "Romuald Minkiewicz uczony i wolnomyśliciel," in *Instytut Biologii Doświadczalnej im. Marcelego Nenckiego Historia i Teraźniejszość*, vol. 3: *Wspomnienia i Refleksje* (Warsaw: Instytut Biologii Doświadczalnej im. Marcelego Nenckiego PAN, 2008), 58, accessed December 4, 2018, http://rcin.org.pl/Content/4150/WA488_17335_18966_Kuznicki-T3-Insthist.

18 William Edward Hartpole Lecky, *History of the Rise and Influence of the Spirit of Rationalism in Europe*, vol. 1 (New York: D. Appleton, 1919).

Europe, 1908), clearly differed from the English original. Apart from this rather free adaption, Maria Feldmanowa, the translator of the book and wife of Wilhelm Feldman, its editor, stuck closely to the original tone and content.[19] Wilhelm Feldman, a publicist and art historian, was born into a family of Orthodox Jews and supported Jewish acculturation in Poland.

In his work on the influence of rationalism on society during the past 300 years, William Lecky had emphasized the difference between faith in the Catholic Church and what he claimed to be real faith in God. Reading this highly sophisticated and scientific book proved difficult for the average Polish recipient. A preserved volume from a private collection of the early twentieth century shows much underlining in the more general parts dealing with whole Europe. They were obviously more important to the reader than historical descriptions of specific European countries. Currently, this copy is held by the library of the Historical Institute of the University of Warsaw. This example points to a certain need for easier texts written in a more comprehensible way to reach the average readership of the early twentieth century. For this purpose, criticism of religion was presented in form of short fictional dialogues composed of questions and answers. They were published in *Myśl Niepodległa*[20] and later compiled in a booklet titled *Katechizm* (Catechism, 1908) – suggesting the beginning of a new "anti-religion" of freethought. After necessary simplifications, cuts, and stylistic changes, the following eight points summarize the general ideas of this volume:

1. Q: Who are you?
   A: A human being.
   Q: What is your most important duty?
   A: To think with my own mind and feel with my own heart.

2. Q: Where do the church teachings lead to?
   A: The church teachings lead to extreme pessimism, since they imply that men go to hell at the end of their lives.
   Q: How should a ruler, who destines millions of people to hell and burning, be considered?
   A: Such a ruler should be considered cruel or insane.

19 William Edward Hartpole Lecky, *Dzieje wolnej myśli w Europie*, trans. Maria Feldmanowa (Lodz: M. Stifter, A. Strauch, 1908).
20 See Andrzej Niemojewski, "Katechizm wolnego myśliciela," *Myśl Niepodległa*, January 1908, 1–15, accessed December 4, 2018, https://wbc.poznan.pl/dlibra/publication/101237/edition/115360.

3. Q: Can knowledge be dependent? Can knowledge be conditional and biased?
   A: Yes, because the church has a hold on philosophy, and even calls it a servant of theology. The church burned people at stakes. Due to this influence, humanity suffered tremendously and lived in the dark.
   Q: Was it only the Catholic clergy that did this?
   A: No, pastors and rabbis did the same. But now the power of clergy, rabbis and pastors is limited.
   Q: What limited their power?
   A: Civilizational progress.
   Q: And where is still a stronghold of this power of clerics, rabbis, and pastors?
   A: This stronghold is in human ignorance.

4. Q: What do the priests need obedient people for?
   A: The priests always prefer rich and influential people. And the rich demand that rural schools teach different knowledge than the universities. The rich don't want other people to know the truth, because then they will stop to be obedient.

5. Q: How can people avoid learning in schools where the church decides on the syllabus?
   A: By establishing public universities and by demanding reforms of the public schools.

6. Q: What do people need independent science and knowledge for?
   A: Independent knowledge is necessary to learn about the world in a scientific way, not a theological one.
   Q: What does the scientific worldview show?
   A: The scientific worldview shows that people were created by nature and that they later created the social organizations they needed.
   Q: What does result from the scientific worldview?
   A: The belief that humanity should be independent.

7. Q: Should the rich share their wealth with the poor?
   A: Nobody demands it from them, since the rich don't have enough wealth to feed everyone who is hungry and clothe everyone who is naked. However, the rich should share their knowledge with others. This will motivate the poor to work and produce goods necessary to live.

8. Q: Would the people be better off if they were self-governed? Would the people govern better without their rulers and governments?
   A: No, the simple people may govern even worse. The masses aren't capable of self-governance, because they are neither enlightened nor educated. Their ignorance is like a knife that humanity drives into its own heart.[21]

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21 Andrzej Niemojewski, *Katechizm wolnego myśliciela* (Warsaw: L. Biliński i W. Maślankiewicz, 1908), 1–21.

No other than the freethinkers, also their adversaries, that is, the defenders of a religious worldview, missionaries of faith, and, more precisely, Catholic clerics fighting atheism, referred to classical European works for their purposes. They translated into Polish a book of the famous French Roman Catholic writer and publisher Ernest Hello. He authored numerous volumes and articles on questions of philosophy, theology, and literature. His book *Philosophie et athéisme* (Philosophy and Atheism, 1888)[22] was published in two parts a few years after his death. The initial part consisted of texts released for the first time, whereas the second part contained a reprint of an already available publication titled *M. Renan, l'Allemagne et l'athéisme au XIX siècle* (M. Renan, Germany and Atheism in the Nineteenth Century, 1859).[23] The Polish translation of the book, *Filozofia i ateizm*, was part of the publishing series *Biblioteka dzieł chrześcijańskich* (The Library of Christian works), promoted by the Polish Catholic clergy. The Polish readers of Hello's book were told how a lack of faith had destroyed art and philosophy in the past. Nonetheless, they are not lost for good but about to return into the waiting arms of the powerful and united Christianity, following the example of the prodigal son. Sin divided humanity, as Hello emphasized, but the Catholic Church opposed sins and centrifugal movements with prayers and sacraments. Hello stressed that prayers and the reception of sacraments were repeatable actions. They worked like a magnet that attracts good and banishes evil. When an individual shut itself off from thoughts of salvation, it inevitably would lose the unity of its own self. Sects and heresies were nothing new, Hello clarified, but the Catholic Church always fought her enemies and she always defeated them.[24]

These diametrically opposing approaches to institutionalized religion, secularization, and to the role of faith in nineteenth-century Poland mirror a clash of different worldviews: rational-scientific on the side of freethinkers, defensive of Christian positions on the side of Catholics, who responded to the freethought movement, as narrow as it might have been. Yet Catholics applied the same strategies as freethinkers and thus moved in the same "modern" patterns as their adversaries: both acted in a broad transnational network, but also within a specific national culture, and both relied on translations of bestselling books from abroad to strengthen their respective positions.

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22 Ernest Hello, *Philosophie et athéisme* (Paris: Librairie Poussièlgue Frerès, 1888).

23 Ernest Hello, *M. Renan, 1'Allemagne et l'athéisme au XIX siècle* (Paris: Charles Douniol Libraire, 1859).

24 Ernest Hello, *Filozofia i ateizm* (Warsaw: Ks. Zygmunt Chełmicki, 1909), 7–49.

Freethinkers and the New State

After the First World War, Poland regained independence. Generations of Poles had dreamed of living in their own, sovereign country, but it was only in 1918 that this dream finally came true. However, building the Polish nation state was not easy with both inner struggles and persisting border conflicts. The Second Polish Republic was a multicultural, religiously diverse country. In 1921, the year in which the first democratic constitution and parliamentarianism was enacted, the demographic statistics showed 63.8% Roman Catholics, 11.2% Greek Catholics, 10.5% Orthodox Christians, 10.5% Jews, 3.7% Protestants, and 0.3% others.[25] The new constitution promised to grant various rights and personal freedoms to each citizen. All Polish citizens were equal regardless of their income, origin, or religion; freedom of conscience and religion were secured, and forced participation in religious activities was henceforth forbidden. Still, the Catholic Church upheld its influential position with her own set of rights guaranteed by the constitution.

Even though Polish freethinkers such as Jan Baudouin de Courtenay, Dawid Jabłoński, or Teofil Jaśkiewicz appreciated the newly gained national sovereignty, they claimed that the country was not fully independent yet and that there was no real freedom in the new state. While three of the partitioning powers were defeated and had left Poland, the fourth one – the Catholic clergy – was still active, they bemoaned. Freethinkers were convinced that the recapture of their country was only superficial; the minds of the Polish people, to them, seemed still occupied. From this, Polish freethinkers draw the conclusion that it would be impossible to be a good Pole and a good Catholic at the same time, because convinced Catholics would put their faith over their national identity. Thus the freethinkers prepared to continue fighting the "fourth partitioning power" assuming that the Vatican secretly would rule the country with the help of priests – "Poles in cassocks" – whom they blamed to be national traitors: "Odzyskaliśmy wprawdzie prawa narodu do politycznego bytu, lecz mózg, wolę i intelekt Wyzwolonej [...] ogarnął z całą zachłannością i bezwzględnością [...] czwarty jej zaborca, despota i okupant: kler katolicki." ("Admittedly, we have regained the nation's right to political existence, but the brain, will, and intellect of the liberated [...] has been overtaken, with all the greed and ruthlessness [...] by its fourth partitionist, tyrant and invader: the Catholic clergy.")[26]

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25 For the statistics, see Franciszek Kubiczek, *Zarys historii Polski w liczbach: Społeczeństwo i gospodarka* (Warsaw: Główny Urząd Statystyczny, 2012), 152.
26 "Nasze zadania i cele," *Wolnomyśliciel Polski*, June 1928, 1–4.

Interestingly, Polish freethinkers did not stop at Catholic priests but extended their critique to other religions as well. Their reasons, though, remained the same: the clergy, regardless of confession, faith, or religion, would degrade society morally and materially; it would further superstition, gullibility, and religious addiction. According to freethinkers, farmers and workers did not require priests or rabbis; rather they blamed the Polish intelligentsia, with secondary or higher education, for their tolerance toward the clergy facilitating the silent deception of the people. Poland was a republic, but it was a democratic country only in theory, freethinkers criticized. This dissatisfying situation was the fault of the Polish people that allowed the backsliding of Poland's social development. What Poland needed was a revolution, like the one in France, but without bloodshed, they suggested. Poland's leading freethinkers such as Jan Baudouin de Courtenay, Romuald Minkiewicz, or Zdzisław Mierzyński were convinced that propaganda contents and agitation should be adapted to different groups of recipients, their expectations, needs, their social positions, cultures, and languages. Eventually they hoped to address two different social groups with their message: the educated Polish middle class and the large, yet heterogeneous, social strata of Polish farmers and workers.

The propaganda targeting the educated classes took on the following characteristic and invoking pattern: you, an educated and intelligent person, should think whether you actually need a priest or a rabbi. What do you receive from clerics? Since you are a member of the intelligentsia, the clergy impedes your professional duties. If you are a teacher, then the clergy obstructs your teaching duties as it were clerics who mobilized the dazed mob against you. Each parish is a center of inquisition, backward thinking, and a refuge for medieval fanaticism. You obtained an average or higher education, why should you tolerate the clergy?[27] The propaganda addressing farmers and workers was supposed to make this target group aware of the uselessness of clerics, too. To them freethinkers explicated that the clerics would fully depend on them, not the other way round, since the clerics lived on their expense. Besides, clerics would not support ordinary people in their hard and poorly paid work but instead take away their money to live comfortably and idly. In freethinker propaganda brochures, farmers and workers were confronted with rhetorical questions on whether the clergy actually helped them to feed their families, to support them once their strength weakened, or in times of illness and in old age.[28]

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27 Paraphrazed from Teofil Jaśkiewicz, *Czy kler jest nam potrzebny* (Warsaw: Wolnomyśliciel Polski, 1928), 4.
28 Ibid., 1–3.

After the First World War, Polish freethinkers widened their geographical horizons and started to look for role models not only among their European neighbors but also in North America. An obvious – and highly idealized – example of a tolerant culture seemed the United States. Polish freethinkers admired the separation of church and state and the particular liberal conditions of religious life so difficult to implement in Europe. They praised the United States for not supporting any church in particular and for not hindering the development of cults and religious organizations which could be set up simply by submitting an appropriate declaration to a state office. What struck Polish freethinkers the most was that, in the United States, every religious group maintained its place of worship and its officiants with its own money, and that religious congregations were allowed to build a shared place of worship, where services of various religions could be held according to a schedule. By contrast, they particularly bemoaned the "arrogant" Christians and Jews refusing to cooperate with other churches and cults they considered dissenters from their exclusive and solely true faith.

Polish freethinkers highly appreciated the "sheer independent thought" and its American adherents gathered in the American Secular Union.[29] From the European point of view, the Union had to be praised for taking action against the return of religion into the state life of the United States, especially for their efforts to remove all religious schools and posts, and to introduce a ban on showing the Bible in schools. The American Secular Union directed their demands concerning education to the US president and the governors of various federal states. It became the role model of an organization defending the secular constitution of its state.[30] Thus, in 1920 and modelled after the American Secular Union, the *Stowarzyszenie Wolnomyśliceli Polskich* (Association of Polish Freethinkers, APF) was created with its own monthly magazine and 1,200 registered members (in 1922). Among APF's many well-known and critical intellectuals, three should be mentioned in particular: first, the polyglot linguist Jan Baudouin de Courtenay,[31] a student of Ernst Haeckel and later lecturer at a number of Polish and Russian universities. In 1918, he became a professor at the University of Warsaw, and, in 1922, was nominated candidate for the presidency of Poland by the political parties of national minorities. De Courtenay held the view that the precondition

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29 On freethinkers and their associations in America, see Susan Jacoby, *Freethinkers: A History of American Secularism* (New York: Henry Holt, 2004).

30 See Józef Landau, *Szkice przeciwwyznaniowe* (Warsaw: Stowarzyszenie Wolnomyślicieli Polskich, 1928), 44–50.

31 On Baudouin de Courtenay, see Kazimierz Nitsch, "Baudouin de Courtenay, Jan," in *Polski Słownik Biograficzny* I (Warsaw/Cracow/Lodz: Polska Akademia Umiejętności, 1935), 359–362.

for a stable peace would be the equality of all religions. Although he promoted freedom of religion and was a nonbeliever himself, he understood the human need for faith and thus advocated liberal views. The second renowned member of the APF was the biologist and physiologist Romuald Minkiewicz,[32] a member of the Polish Socialist Party, and a versatile and talented publicist and writer. As a university professor, he gave lectures on medicine, philosophy, geography, and history. His rational, scientific worldview was based on the results he obtained during his work on his thesis. He believed that scholars had to respect the findings of their studies, and that those results, in turn, would force a particular morality on them. Just as De Courtenay, Minkiewicz adopted a critical attitude toward communism and the Soviet model of fighting religion. He refrained from associating freethinking with atheism. In general, the APF leaders argued mainly about the situation in the Soviet Union. De Courtenay could not accept the devastation of religions by Soviet freethinkers and did not approve of all the ridicule the Orthodox Church had been receiving. The Soviet religion of dead communists, to him, seemed even worse.

Philosopher and member of the Communist Party Jan Hempel,[33] another well-known leading voice of the APF, took different political views and opinions on the Soviet Union. Throughout his publications, he emphasized the social roots of religion and postulated the expansion of Marxism. Following these convictions, he strove to connect the APF to the large revolutionary power base of the labor movement because he considered it a futile enterprise to address the bourgeoisie and the intelligentsia with freethinking slogans. During his journey to the Soviet Union, he received impressions different from those of many other travelers. Hempel was fascinated with the Soviet Union and enjoyed the empty buildings of Orthodox churches as well as the fading religious devotion of the Russian people. His observations suggested that Russian peasants felt indifferent toward the erasure of churches and the fate of priests removed from power.[34]

In 1922, APF members decided to establish an exemplary, non-denominational community. The idea dated back to the convention of 1907 where it was first mentioned. Little later, volunteers were enlisted, and the freethinking

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32 See Szulkin, “Romuald Minkiewicz,” 57–65.

33 See Feliks Tych, “Hempel Jan,” in *Polski Słownik Biograficzny* IX (Wrocław/Warsaw/Cracow: Polska Akademia Nauk Ossolineum, 1960–1961), 382.

34 On the APF, see Barbara Jakubowska (Wagner), *Uzależnieni wolnomyśliciele: Stowarzyszenie Myśli Wolnej w Polsce 1945–1951* (Warsaw: Uniwersytet Warszawski, 2002), 14.

press printed their names.[35] Still, it was quite an unrealistic plan. In the newly founded Polish nation state of the twentieth century, however, expectations for a successful implementation of a non-denominational community were high. A list of non-denominational volunteers was set up, consisting mainly of APF activists. Plans were made to establish joint facilities for "corporeal and spiritual exercises," non-denominational schools, workshops for employment purposes, funeral homes, and cemeteries. Also children, enlisted by their parents, could become members of the community. It was supposed to be run by a council and administered by local officials in Warsaw. Right from the start, though, this whole enterprise was doomed to fail because the Polish ministry responsible for religious affairs declined the registration of the community by pointing out that the existing law would not allow creating such new associations. Freethinkers, thus, could not establish and legalize their community, but at the same time they also were forbidden to leave their current church and remain – as atheists, agnostics, humanists, socialists, communists or nothing of the sort – simply without religious affiliation. In 1923, David Jabłoński, an activist of the APF, made an attempt to change this situation. He wrote a letter to the Jewish community of Warsaw asking to be unlisted from its registers. Next, he approached the municipal office in Warsaw requesting a certificate that would state his retreat from any religious collective. Naturally, this request was denied and also appealing to the Ministry of Internal Affairs and to the Ministry of Justice brought no changes.[36] This episode clearly emphasizes the hardships freethinkers in Poland had to face and it illustrates the sheer impossibility to set up a non-denominational community in a society with large proportions of minorities, but with a predominant Catholic imprint closely linked to the idea of the Polish nation – and its state. Every Polish citizen was obliged to be registered as part of a religious group, otherwise he could not properly identify as there were no birth, marriage, or death records aside the ones ran by religious communities in these days. This practice clearly went against the constitution, but no political lobby was able to enforce changes and alter the law.

35 See "Wolna gmina," *Myśl Niepodległa*, no. 49, January 1909, 36–37; and "Wolna gmina," *Myśl Niepodległa*, no. 50, January 1909, 83–84, accessed December 4, 2018, http://www.wbc.poznan.pl/dlibra/publication/101182?tab=1.

36 See Jakubowska (Wagner), *Uzależnieni wolnomyśliciele*, 17–18.

Practices of Freethought

Over the course of time, new issues concerning the participation of Polish freethinkers in social life came up. Ways of spending holidays and Sundays in a non-religious way required some thought. According to the freethinking ideology, Sunday was a holiday, but not a religious one. Rather, it was considered a holiday of rest, that is, a break in everyday work necessary to regain mental and physical strength. Another issue referred to the celebration of Christian holidays such as Christmas and Easter by atheists. Freethinkers tried to solve this problem by declaring that these holidays neither were a Polish tradition nor of Christian origin but pagan holidays established to venerate celestial bodies, the sun, the moon, the rebirth of nature, or to commemorate the dead, to which Christianity later simply added new meaning. Apart from these elaborations, Polish freethinkers quickly decided that any further negation of the need to rest and of the charm surrounding religious holidays would not further their goals. Participation in religious festivities, thus, was not neglected, though freethinkers continued to openly distinguish religious elements from pagan traditions preceding Christianity. Following this reasoning, adorning a Christmas tree for the holidays was accepted, as was buying a celebratory cake for Easter, or preparing and eating hard-boiled eggs, since these customs originated in pagan times.

> Therefore, in our opinion, someone who lights a symbolic Christmas tree on the day of the winter solstice [...] on the eternal holiday of the victorious sun [...], buys himself an Easter cake in a confectionary, and hard-boils eggs, doesn't necessarily have to be considered a religionist.[37]

Nevertheless, to build a solid ideological base of freethinking, the mere negation of the old dogmas and traditions, or the sheer criticism of religion were not sufficient. New ideas for new customs had to be developed. Poland's freethinkers, however, could not limit themselves to propagating new concepts because their idea of secularization was based on anticlericalism and thus on a negating tendency. Anticlericalism was their driving force and they developed more creative means than just writing and publishing articles on the topic. Plans were made to create their own body of literature propagating non-religious beliefs with books entitled *Ilustrowana encyklopedia wolnomyślicielska* (Illustrated Encyclopedia of

37 "O świętach i świętowaniu," *Wolnomyśliciel Polski*, April 1931, 193–199.

Freethought, 1929).[38] This encyclopedia did not offer an exhaustive presentation of the subject, but a readable account composed of short narrations in form of lectures providing a multitude of information on the struggle with religion, and the benefits of a secular ideology. It also referenced classical literature of Western Europe. Besides, a whole chapter was dedicated to cremation, justifying its logic and advantages and promoting the building of crematories. It should be noted that despite their bold efforts, Polish freethinkers did not manage to obtain permission for the instalment of a cemetery for atheists or the building of a crematory in Warsaw. Throughout the 1920s, they had constantly claimed these two issues in their secular propaganda. Public talks and lectures were organized for medicine students and physicians to promote cremation, a novelty opposing the funeral traditions of all major religions in Poland. The arguments in favor of burning the human remains were hygienic and sanitary, mostly, but also economic and spatial ones, as well as the applicability of cremation across cultures and religions. Cremation, in the view of freethinkers, not only quickened the process of returning the body to the ground, but it was also a prehistoric and therefore non-Christian custom common among Slavic people.

Besides secular practices, the book offered a glimpse into the future. In this imagined age of freethought, superstitions and arrogance would have disappeared together with the use of national languages in transnational encounters. The authors stated that national languages would only limit social connections and thus should be replaced by the international auxiliary language Esperanto. This new language was considered to be a tool of human liberation removing age-old barriers that bar the way to international understanding, tolerance, and brotherhood. To reinforce this claim, the encyclopedia was printed with two titles and two front pages – one in Polish, and one in Esperanto. (Fig. 1)

Publications of Polish freethinkers were poor in terms of artwork and usually did not include photographs. Images appeared rarely and if they did, then in small size only. The title of the *Ilustrowana encyklopedia* promised otherwise but the book maintained this tradition with only a few black and white pictures, photographs, and small drawings, among them an image of the crematory in Zurich. One of those illustrations was a caricature showing the officiants of the three main monotheist religions. (Fig. 2)

The APF did not unanimously approve the organizational strategy of Polish freethought. A conflict between liberals and radicals arose: the liberals openly accepted the social and political system in Poland. Even though they demanded

38 For the Encyclopedia of Freethought, see Henryk Halpern and Antoni Zbikowski, eds, *Ilustrowana encyklopedia wolnomyślicielska* (Lublin: Wolnomyśliciel, 1929).

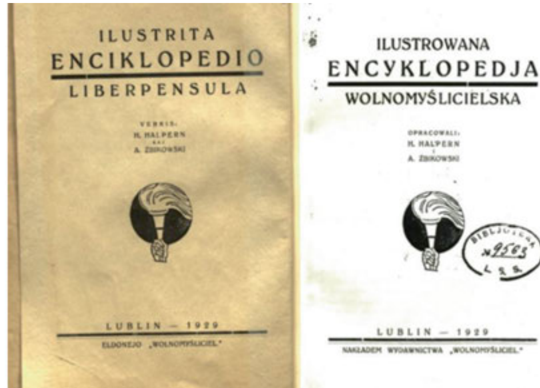

Figure 1: Halpern and Zbikowski, *Ilustrowana encyklopedia*, front cover.

Figure 2: Halpern and Zbikowski, *Ilustrowana encyklopedia,* 59.

a secular country and the elimination of the clergy, especially the Roman Catholic one, they did not go so far to call for political violence, protests, or demonstrations potentially harmful to the people. Discussion was their main means of confrontation to uncover religious beliefs as complete nonsense. Still, liberal Polish freethinkers did not support the religious struggles and mass apostasies taking place in the Soviet Union. The radicals, on the other hand, demanded that the APF should promote leaving church and gather the apostates. They also attempted to spread awareness among Polish workers for their exploiters, both the capitalists and church officials, as for radical freethinkers, religion covered capitalism. The radicals also voted against time-consuming ideas such as transforming the APF into a number of non-denominational communities in Poland. Their role model was the Soviet Union and they pursued the concept to create a secular country at all costs and by all means. On these issues the two fractions clashed in the 1920s. Liberal freethinkers such as Baudouin de Courtenay,

Jabłoński, Józef Landau, and Minkiewicz, together with scholars, artists, and writers, engaged in discussions and political lectures presenting freethinking as distanced as possible from politics. Contrary to this, radicals like Hempel, or Zygmunt Mierzyński were fascinated with the vision of a secular, proletarian state. This position was also adopted by politicians with left-wing views, by the leaders of the Polish labor movement, and by the Polish and Jewish trade unions. The most radical freethinkers took Marxist views and, in line with this, believed religion would be a tool of stupefying the masses. They praised atheism and faithlessness and familiarized the Polish public with the Russian term *безбожник* (*bezbożnik*, heathen, faithless). In line with this, radical freethinkers prided themselves in being called heathens and fought all religions and nationalism simultaneously, since they considered these concepts henchmen of capitalism and enemies of workers' international unity. With the help of the freethought movement they hoped to spread scientific socialism and class struggle and to start a revolution leading to a class-free society, united by a shared, secular culture. Their promotion of a material-scientific worldview was the equivalent to the liberal initiative of leaving the church.

To promote secularization, the radicals built their ideology on many general slogans and abstract terms borrowed from scientific materialism and they created a pantheon of "thinkers and fighters," including deceased heroes, to furnish their movement with credibility. Those famous individuals figured as exemplary role models for the young generation of radicals. In particular, Polish radical freethinkers authored biographies in a simple, sometimes even infantile way filled with quotations of Marx, addressing Polish workers and acquainting them with the international avant-garde of political, cultural, and scientific radicals. In the following, a ranking of the most important figures of the radical freethinkers' pantheon is paraphrased from Władysław Poniecki's *Myśliciele i bojownicy* (Thinker and Fighter, 1935), each with a short biography echoing the original tone of the publication.

1) Karl Marx – a titan of human thought, a genius appreciated even by his enemies. He was a social philosopher, revolutionary and atheist who treated religion as opium of the people.

2) Friedrich Engels – followed the same life path as Marx and came to the same conclusions.

3) Ferdinand Lassalle – a great orator who was able to win workers over and organized them in cooperatives. His beliefs were different from Marx's despite Lassalle considering himself a Marxist.

4) Paul Lafargue – one of the most talented Marxist pioneers. He was a writer and an atheist detesting class distinctions and pomp. Lafargue criticized capitalist morality as a poor parody of Christian morality.

5) Ludwig Feuerbach – did not believe in freedom as long as human beings are slaves of religious superstitions.

6) Charles Darwin – prosecuted in the most brutal way by the clergy after publishing his work. His theory of evolution became a basis of human knowledge and freed people from superstition. All religions considered him an enemy and condemned him.

7) August Bebel – a leader of German democracy, a distinguished socialist writer, and adversary of the clergy and its ignorance.

8) Vladimir Lenin – known all over the world. His opponents loathed him endlessly, while his supporters set high expectations in him. He destroyed the tsardom and the ruling dynasty, and he woke up Russia that will not fall asleep again.

9) Denis Diderot – his philosophy was based on materialism and atheism. He started to fight the church with his skepticism.

10) Louis Auguste Blanqui – was convinced that only the bourgeoisie knew and fulfilled their needs, while simple working people did not. He argued that the republican government should provide the people with free education.[39]

This sort of radicalism attracted curiosity among the intelligentsia and the academic youth, but also among the supporters of socialism, communism, and among members of Poland's worker parties, all of which demanded a secular country. Toward the 1920s and 1930s, the ideological fight relied more and more on original texts written by Polish authors. Polish publicists defending the religious nation state from secularization warned their readers of atheism which they believed could easily turn into a new, "utilitarian" religion. This new conviction could encourage breaking laws and making morality conditional and adaptable to the changing human needs. The freethinking radicals were presented as a threat to national security, as agents of foreign states who would infiltrate young nations with their ideas pictured as pure reflections of Bolshevist doctrines. Urgent warnings were issued – for example that secularization would lead to the destruction of families and the erosion of marriages which finally would cause anarchy in state and society.[40] These arguments launched by Catho-

39 Władysław Poniecki, *Myśliciele i bojownicy* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Wolność, 1935), 7–69.
40 See Mieczysław Skrudlik, *Bezbożnictwo w Polsce* (Katowice: Księgarnia i drukarnia katolicka, 1935), 114–118.

lics and clerical writers, though, were common among the adversaries of freethought and not a Polish specific. In any case, hostility toward the nation as well as fraternizing with the Soviet Union were serious accusations persecuted by the police; blasphemy was additionally punished by parish priests who would publicly condemn anyone criticizing religion within their jurisdiction.[41]

Under these circumstances, freethinkers in Poland continued to face difficulties and hardships. Besides, their partly public alliance with Soviet Russia – the successor of the much despised former partition power – proved not helpful for their attempts to attract larger numbers of followers. Also, the internationally and nationally well-organized Catholic Church pulled its weight to fight freethinkers in the parishes, in the media, and in politics. Freethinking in Poland, consequently, remained the position of a minority.

Conclusion

For Polish freethinkers, ideological matters ranked first. They imagined a future secular Polish society and state in which the clergy no longer would interfere with politics. Even though their attacks were directed mainly against Catholic priests and Jewish religious officials, they fought the privileges of all denominations and religions.

Romuald Minkiewicz, one of the leading Polish freethinkers, in his articles in the journal *Freethought*, called on all citizens irrespective of religious or national differences to participate in the freethought movement. He held the view that the power of the Christian churches and the persistent nationalism would diminish and finally disappear in the future. To work toward the realization of this vision, Polish freethinkers engaged in activities such as public lectures and discussion evenings dedicated to the debate of freedom as a mandatory requirement to achieve the equality of all citizens regardless of their origin, gender, or religion.[42]

The Polish freethinkers' understanding of secularization did not take into account the problem of national minorities separately. Rather, Polish and Jewish freethinkers cooperated in the branches of the Polish freethought movement and fostered the general, yet little discussed conviction that atheism would be the solution to national disputes. This somewhat apolitical stance mirrored the

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41 See Michał Staszewski, *Kościół wobec wolnomyślicielstwa i różnowierstwa w Polsce 1918–1932 (w świetle procesów karnych na tle religijnym)* (Warsaw: Centralny Ośrodek Doskonalenia Kadr Laickich, 1965).

42 See Barbara Wachowska, "Polski Związek Myśli Wolnej," *Acta Universitatis Lodziensis: Folia Historica*, no. 43 (1991): 59–64.

social and intellectual roots of the movement and pointed to the distance of its members to state authorities. Due to this distance, they did not feel the need to take a stand on the complicated Polish nationality problems, especially on the conflicts between the Poles and the Ukrainians, the largest national minority in Poland.

After the Second World War, the Polish freethought movement continued its existence under the protectorate of communists, who were ruling in Poland in accordance with Stalin's directives from Moscow. It was a movement devoid of any greater intellectual background or impact. Religion, now, was supposed to be replaced by the doctrine of Marxism-Leninism. After a few years, in 1951, the communists withdrew their support for the Polish Freethought Association. Another organization, the Association of Atheists and Freethinkers, which operated in Poland since 1957, engaged in the laicization of society. It propagated a secular culture and a materialistic worldview. But little later, secularization became a rather exclusive goal of the politics and ideology of the totalitarian state. After 1989 and the collapse of communism several, usually small organizations, which were not even publicly operating, enriched the freethinking spectrum. Attempts were made to unite the movement and lively discussions over a long list of topics related to secularization in the twenty-first century took place.

The modern lay movement in Poland took up on the historical freethinking activists and their struggles to push through their ideas in the newly found Polish nation state. In 2007, people celebrated the hundredth anniversary of the 1907 freethinking convention in Warsaw. They admired and commemorated the courage of the historical Polish freethinkers and especially recollected their dream of an independent country with a basic democratic order. Back then, democracy was associated with tolerance and the separation of church and state[43] – a timeless, yet fragile truth.

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43 See Zdzisław Słowik, "Dziedzictwo myśli niepodległej," *Res Humana* 91, no. 6 (2007): 7.

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Anton Jansson

Friends and Foes: Two Secularisms in late Nineteenth-Century Sweden

On Sunday morning, November 9, 1890, an impressive congregation of around 1,100 people met at Mosebacke in the Swedish capital of Stockholm to listen to edifying orations on religion. But it was not, as could have been expected given the time of the meeting, a Sunday service where a priest delivered a sermon. Rather, the speakers elaborated on religion from an external perspective, on religion as a problem. And more than a sermon, it was a debate between some of the most notorious and radical freethinkers of that time. In the center of events were Viktor Lennstrand (1861–1895) and Hjalmar Branting (1860–1925), who one year earlier both had served time in prison for blasphemy. Lennstrand and Branting were freethinkers and starkly opposed to the existing state church, but they still differed widely in their secularisms.[1]

Toward the end of the Sunday meeting a vote among the audience was taken between two resolutions, one basically proposing Branting's position on secularism, the other Lennstrand's. The clearest dividing line between their respective resolutions, in which they both took a stand for the scientific enlightenment of the people, was whether freethinkers needed to unite and form an independent movement or not. Lennstrand's stance was that they should, while Branting stood for the social democratic idea that secularism should be a subordinate issue to the political activity of the labor movement. Their different positions thus concerned politics, tactics, and organization, but also were grounded in two different ways of conceiving religion and secularity.

I here define secularism as a combination of a political project targeting the separation of church and state (thus advancing a secular state) and an immanent worldview.[2] It should be noted that in the period considered here, the word *se-*

1 The research on Swedish freethought and secularism during late nineteenth century is limited. The meeting at Mosebacke is mentioned in the intellectual biographies of its two main characters. Ture Nerman, *Hjalmar Branting – fritänkaren* (Stockholm: Tiden, 1960), 109–116; and Pär Alexandersson, *Förnekelsens förbannelse: Viktor Lennstrand som förkunnare och blasfemiker* (Uppsala: Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis, 2014), 163–169. For further works on Swedish secularism of the time, see Lennart Ståhle, *Organisationer för svensk religionskritik 1880–1910* (Stockholm: Religionssociologiska institutet, 1979); and Inga Sanner, *Att älska sin nästa såsom sig själv: Om moraliska utopier under 1800-talet* (Stockholm: Carlsson, 1995).

2 Thus coming close to how José Casanova defines secularism as a "world-view and ideology." José Casanova, "The Secular, Secularizations, Secularisms," in *Rethinking Secularism*, ed. Craig J.

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kularism (secularism) had not been established in the Swedish language.[3] The conceptual framework is complex, but those who supported secularism in the sense suggested here would have been labeled as being involved in *fritänkande* or *fritänkeri* (freethought), *materialism* (materialism), or even *ateism* (atheism).

In this chapter, I will discuss the two main ways of envisioning and performing secularism during the high point of Swedish nineteenth-century freethought, the decade around 1890. These years saw the organization of the Swedish labor movement and in general the so-called *folkrörelser* (popular movements), which will be further presented below. These organizations are contextually important for understanding the two secularisms of the period and their mutual relation. The socialist Hjalmar Branting and the "utilist" Viktor Lennstrand are representatives of those two modes of Swedish secularism. Both were public figures, friends and collaborators, but over fierce debates on secularism they also became foes and competitors.

This chapter also aims to contribute to ongoing discussions on the plurality of secularisms.[4] In a global perspective, there are a variety of national cases, of which Sweden constitutes an interesting example, not least because of the plurality of secularisms within Sweden itself at the heyday of nineteenth-century freethought. This period is also important to consider as a decisive historical background for the secularity and secular identity of Sweden up to our contemporary age. To this larger setting of the chapter I will return in the concluding remarks.

Before reaching this conclusion, in which I will discuss the legacies of Lennstrand and Branting, the chapter will address the following topics: first, I will introduce the context of the 1880s, focusing on the popular movements of Sweden which were forming at that time. After that, I will concentrate on Branting and Lennstrand and their main activities. I will then discuss secularism in the context of the popular movements, including its entanglements with and similar-

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Calhoun, Mark Juergensmeyer and Jonathan VanAntwerpen (New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 54. For a discussion of the complex and variously defined concept of secularism, see also Phil Zuckerman and John R. Shook, "Introduction: The Study of Secularism," in *The Oxford Handbook of Secularism*, ed. Phil Zuckerman and John R. Shook (New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 2–7. See also Monika Wohlrab-Sahr and Marian Burchardt, "Multiple Secularities: Toward a Cultural Sociology of Secular Modernities," *Comparative Sociology* 11, no. 6 (2012): 880–883.

3 If used at all, the term denoted the British secularist movement. See, e.g., Otto Thomson, "Tidstecken i England," *Fritänkaren* 1, no. 1 (1889): 6.

4 See Wohlrab-Sahr and Burchardt, "Multiple Secularities"; and Todd Weir, "Germany and the New Global History of Secularism: Questioning the Postcolonial Genealogy," *The Germanic Review: Literature, Culture, Theory* 90, no. 1 (2015): 6–20.

ities to the larger movements. Finally, I will return to the debate introduced above, to deepen the understanding of the dividing line between Branting and Lennstrand.

Popular Movements and Cultural Radicalism in Sweden around the 1880s

Starting in the mid nineteenth century, but especially from the 1870s onwards, Sweden saw a rapid industrialization accompanied by urbanization and the formation of a new working class. Swedish society in the late nineteenth century was highly unequal with the old regime persisting in many ways.[5] Politically, however, there had been some liberalizing reforms. In 1866, the Diet of the Estates was replaced by a new parliament, and successive adjustments of the religious legislation weakened the bonds between state, citizens, and the Lutheran state church dominating the country since the Protestant Reformation. Subsequently, the so-called *folkrörelser*, popular movements, emerged, which had a lasting influence on twentieth-century politics and society in Sweden.[6] There were three large popular movements: the revival or free church movement, the temperance movement, and the labor movement, developing in that order.[7]

There had been smaller revival movements and attempts to establish free religious organizations earlier, but after the liberalization of religious legislation – for instance allowing the foundation of independent congregations – the revival

5 For a recent synthesis of Swedish history in this era, see Bo Stråth, *Sveriges historia: 1830–1920* (Stockholm: Norstedt, 2012). On industrialization and economic history in particular, see chapters 5 and 6 of Lars Magnusson, *An Economic History of Sweden* (London: Routledge, 2000). On the inequality of Sweden and the persistence of the old regime, see Erik Bengtsson, "The Swedish *Sonderweg* in Question: Democratization and Inequality in Comparative Perspective, c. 1750–1920," *Past & Present* 244, no. 1 (2020): 123–161.

6 I use the term popular movements rather than social movements. "Popular movement" comes closer to how those organizations were conceived as people's movements (*folkrörelser*), both at the time and afterwards. This is also standard in research literature, see, e.g., Bengtsson, "The Swedish *Sonderweg* in Question"; Sven Lundkvist, "The Popular Movements in Swedish Society, 1850–1920," *Scandinavian Journal of History* 5, no. 1–4 (1980): 219–238. See also John Chalcraft, "Popular Movements in the Middle East and North Africa," in *The History of Social Movements in Global Perspective: A Survey*, ed. Stefan Berger and Holger Nehring (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 1–35.

7 Other movements may also be reckoned as part of the general trend: most prominently, the women's rights movement may be regarded as a popular movement, albeit on a somewhat smaller scale.

movement grew in size and set up firm organizations.[8] Some revivalists formally stayed within the framework of the Lutheran state church, but the main legacy of the revival was the free churches which established themselves outside of the state church. This was done by an import of denominations such as Methodism and Baptism, but also by the evolution of indigenous variants, such as the Mission Covenant Church, which was to become the largest free church of Sweden.[9]

The temperance movement had some modest predecessors earlier in the nineteenth century but likewise mushroomed in the 1880s. The introduction of the Independent Order of Good Templars (IOGT) in Sweden in 1879 was one of the reasons, but also other temperance organizations flourished. Their objective was to counter the excessive consumption of alcohol – a major social problem in the country during this period. Over time, the teetotalers became politically influential, and in 1922 Sweden came close to prohibition, when, in a national referendum, 49% voted in favor of prohibiting alcohol. On a more general level it should be noted that the teetotalers were no isolated phenomenon but had connections to and overlaps with the other movements. At first, they were close mainly to the free churches, in the early twentieth century, though, increasingly to the labor movement.[10]

The Swedish labor movement in its modern and socialist form was born in the 1880s, even though membership did not seriously rise until closer to the turn of the century. Agitators such as the tailor August Palm, who had traveled as a journeyman in Europe and had been influenced by Ferdinand Lassalle and other socialists, gained influence. Socialist newspapers were launched, and workers started to organize in unions. The *Landsorganisationen* (Swedish Trade Union Confederation, LO), which was to become very influential, was established in 1898, almost a decade after the *Sveriges socialdemokratiska arbetareparti* (Swedish Social Democratic Party), founded in 1889. These two organizations were very close, and came to dominate Swedish politics in the twentieth century, when the social democrats held power between 1936 and 1976. Swedish social democrats were influenced by their German counterparts early on, and while

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8 The easing of religious legislation happened successively. See Oloph Bexell, *Sveriges kyrkohistoria: 7, Folkväckelsens och kyrkoförnyelsens tid* (Stockholm: Verbum, 2003), 38–39; 45–47; 93–98.

9 See Sven Lundkvist, *Folkrörelserna i det svenska samhället 1850–1920* (Stockholm: Sober, 1977), 47–50; and Sven Lundkvist, *Tron och gärningarna: Svenska missionsförbundets bakgrund och utveckling till omkring 1970* (Uppsala: Svenska institutet för missionsforskning, 2003).

10 See Samuel Edquist, *Nyktra svenskar: Godtemplarrörelsen och den nationella identiteten 1879–1918* (Uppsala: Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis, 2001); and Lundkvist, *Folkrörelserna i det svenska samhället*, 50–52.

they initially cultivated a revolutionary rhetoric, they successively moved in a more reformist direction.[11]

While there were certainly tensions and disagreements between the movements, especially between the free churches and the labor movement, looking at the movements from a historical perspective, it is possible to see many commonalities – which is also how they are generally viewed in historiography.[12] They collectively organized around discontents with the religious, social, and political situation of their day. Put into action, they mobilized the masses, particularly the lower classes deprived of political and economic influence. The movements pursued collective goals, advocated new norm systems for the individual, and worked for the construction of a reformed society based on equality and self-determination. They held meetings with speeches by charismatic leaders and collective singing. Also, they are often said to have provided democratic training, since they were generally self-run, democratic in their structures, and eager to offer means and opportunities for education.[13] A common goal, apart from temperance, was extended or even universal suffrage. It is estimated that by 1920 a third of the Swedish population was actively organized in at least one of the popular movements. Their impact was strengthened further by their organization in existing political forms.[14] In 1911 and 1917, for instance, around two thirds of the members of the second chamber of the Swedish parliament, mainly liberals and social democrats, were teetotalers. In 1911, approximately 20 % of the parliamentarians were members of a free church.[15] As mentioned above, after universal suffrage had been granted in 1919, social democracy, the main political wing of the labor movement, became the dominant political party in Sweden.

The 1880s not only witnessed the birth and explosion of the popular movements, but also a general cultural upheaval, similar to developments in other

11 See ibid., 52–55; Gullan Gidlund, "From Popular Movement to Political Party: Development of the Social Democratic Labor Party Organization," in *Creating Social Democracy: A Century of the Social Democratic Labor Party in Sweden*, ed. Klaus Misgeld, Karl Molin and Klas Åmark (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1992), 97–130; and Mary Hilson, *Political Change and the Rise of Labour in Comparative Perspective: Britain and Sweden, 1890–1920* (Lund: Nordic Academic Press, 2006), 28–58.

12 The main historiographical endeavor concerning the popular movements was a large research program concluded in the late 1970s and summarized in Lundkvist, *Folkrörelserna i det svenska samhället*. For an English summary, see Lundkvist, "The Popular Movements."

13 Lundkvist, *Folkrörelserna i det svenska samhället*, 55–59; 153–161; 192–212.

14 Ibid., 218. For a recent discussion of their political impact (focusing on the labor movement which was exceptionally organized in international comparison), see Bengtsson, "The Swedish *Sonderweg* in Question."

15 Lundkvist, *Folkrörelserna i det svenska samhället*, 175–179; 230–233.

European societies at that time. In literature, authors dubbed themselves the "young Sweden," furthering a self-image of being new and modern, aiming at a radical break with the past.[16] Particularly Sweden's university towns hosted currents of intellectual cultural radicalism which included protests against the state church and monarchy, demands for freedom of expression, and even sexual enlightenment and reform.[17]

Hjalmar Branting: Socialist and Freethinker

Karl Hjalmar Branting was born in 1860 into a bourgeois upper-class family in Stockholm. His mother was a noblewoman and his father worked as a professor and director of the Royal Central Gymnastics Institute. Branting went to school with the future Swedish King Gustaf V and the future liberal Prime Minister Karl Staaff, with whom he later also studied at Uppsala University. Despite his roots in the upper-class he came to sympathize with the emerging labor movement, and became famous for being not only the first social democrat in the Swedish parliament (in 1897), but also the first Swedish social democratic Prime Minister (from 1920 on), holding that office for three short terms, the last one until his death in 1925. He was also awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1921 for his activity in the League of Nations.[18]

The young Hjalmar Branting of the 1880s was a cultural radical. For instance, he was one of the drivers of the influential student club *Verdandi*, founded in Uppsala in 1882, which organized lectures and published books on science, culture, and politics with a progressive bent.[19] But more than a general radical, Branting turned into an engaged socialist, and, by 1886, became the leading figure of Swedish social democracy. One of Branting's early programmatic speeches, later more or less canonized by the Swedish labor movement, was held in the industrial town of Gävle in 1886. In this speech, he expressed his Marxist-leaning socialist worldview and political program. Branting presented

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16 See Per Arne Tjäder, *"Det unga Sverige": Åttitalsrörelse och genombrottsepok* (Lund: Arkiv för studier i arbetarrörelsens historia, 1982).

17 Tore Frängsmyr, *Svensk idéhistoria: Bildning och vetenskap under tusen år: Del 2, 1809 – 2000* (Stockholm: Natur och kultur, 2000), 143 – 147.

18 Biographically, the most comprehensive work on Branting is Olle Svenning, *Hövdingen – Hjalmar Branting: En biografi* (Stockholm: Bonnier, 2014). In 1960, the social democrat and freethinker Ture Nerman published a book on Branting focusing on his activity as a freethinker: Nerman, *Hjalmar Branting – fritänkaren.*

19 *Verdandi* is Old Norse, meaning roughly "in the making," or "happening."

a historical-materialist account of how the large-scale mode of modern production created inequality and misery burdening the workers. This system would increasingly tear humanity apart into two blocs, the capitalists and the proletariat, until the proletarians ultimately would revolt and become the gravediggers of capitalism.[20] Both here and in later programmatic texts, Branting outlined short-term as well as long-term political goals: universal suffrage was a short-term goal and a means for the long-term "fullständiga frigörelse från all träldom, politisk, ekonomisk, social och andlig" ("total emancipation from all servitude, political, economic, social, and spiritual").[21] This, according to Branting, would come about by the expropriation of private capital.[22]

The political content of Branting's speech intermingled with his freethought attitude he shared with many early socialists. The equitable society which the socialists were fighting for, to him, was

> the new, coming kingdom, which for us freethinkers and materialists has arrived as a certain, demonstrable expectation instead of the fairy-tale about a heaven on the other side of the grave, which still is the sheet anchor for so many unhappy people in the storms of their lives. We socialists want to show the people that it is in their own hands to create here on earth a happier and, above all, more certain existence than the heaven of the priests, from which no one has returned to tell whether it exists.[23]

Branting was a convinced freethinker and materialist, and especially during the 1880s also an avid secularist. Early in his life, he read Ludwig Büchner, Auguste Comte, John Stuart Mill, and David Friedrich Strauss, intellectuals, who countered established Christianity in different ways.[24] Branting also was one of the

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20 Hjalmar Branting, *Hvarför arbetarerörelsen måste bli socialistisk: Föredrag hållet första gången på inbjudan af Gefle arbetareklubb 24 okt 1886* [Why the labor movement must become socialist: Lecture held first of invitation by the Gävle labor club] (Stockholm: Social-Demokraten, 1887). For a similar account, see also Hjalmar Branting, *Socialismen: En historisk framställning* [Socialism: An historical account] (Stockholm: Bonnier, 1892). For the main source material, the texts by Branting and Lennstrand, I provide English translations of the titles in the notes.
21 Branting, *Hvarför arbetarerörelsen*, 28. Unless otherwise indicated, all translations are the author's.
22 A decade later, in a programmatic text, the short-term goals were more specific: eight-hour work day, abolition of child labor, and rest on Sundays. The language, then, was somewhat more reformist, but the ultimate goals remained the same: the abolition of class society, and the socialization of capital. Hjalmar Branting, *En vidräkning med det moderna samhället* [An indictment of modern society] (Östersund: Jämtlandsposten, 1897).
23 Branting, *Hvarför arbetarerörelsen*, 23.
24 For further information on the intellectual formation of Branting's freethinking conviction, see Nerman, *Hjalmar Branting – fritänkaren*, 9 – 14.

founding members of the *Föreningen för religionsfrihet* (Association for Freedom of Religion) and part of its steering committee between its establishment in 1884 and 1889.[25] The purpose of this association was to propagate for the separation of church and state. Branting himself left the Lutheran state church in 1884, and as the only legal possibility to leave the state church at that time was by converting to another state-approved denomination, he set out to join a Methodist congregation.[26] This let him claim, in an angry, satirical article in 1888, that he actually had printed evidence of his "förnekelse av den rena evangeliska läran" ("denial of the pure, evangelical teachings").[27] He even went to jail for his freethought activity – not because of anything that came from his own mouth or pen, but for republishing in his newspaper an anti-religious text for which a Malmö socialist had previously ended up in prison. In 1889, Branting served three months for blasphemy.

Viktor Lennstrand: Atheist and Utilist

Viktor Emanuel Lennstrand, born in 1861, grew up in Gävle, at that time an important industrial town by the Baltic Sea, north of Stockholm. During his adolescence, he was a zealous Christian intending to become a missionary in Africa.[28] With his father being an artisan, his upbringing may be described as middle-class without attachment to the bourgeois elite of the town. After a religious crisis during his years as a student in Uppsala, Lennstrand declared himself an atheist in the mid-1880s. He was no central figure in the cultural radical circles

25 Ibid., 15–86. The liberal physician Anton Nyström acted as chairman of the association. In 1879, he had founded a Comte-inspired *Positivistiska samfundet* (Positivist Society) intending to provide an alternative to existing Christianity. Nyström and Branting were the two most prominent members and agitators of the Association for Freedom of Religion in the 1880s.

26 Ture Nerman, *Hjalmar Branting: Kulturpublicisten* (Stockholm: Tiden, 1958), 71–73.

27 Hjalmar Branting, "Vårt åtal [Our prosecution]," in *Tal och skrifter* III: *Kampen för demokratin* I, ed. Hjalmar Branting and Zeth Höglund (Stockholm: Tiden, 1927), 53. Many of the texts I refer to in this chapter, by both Branting and Lennstrand, were published in different places; first in newspapers and journals and later as pamphlets, in books, or collected volumes. In this essay, I prioritize references to later book versions, since these are more readily accessible. The original years of the texts from Branting's collected writings are given in the bibliography.

28 For an excellent, comprehensive, recently published biography of Lennstrand, see Alexandersson, *Förnekelsens förbannelse*. The biographical details given in this chapter build on Alexandersson's work. Earlier research focusing on Lennstrand is scarce, but there are a few interesting portraits: William Öhrman, "Viktor E. Lennstrand, en anti-Waldenström," *Kyrkohistorisk årsskrift* 74 (1974): 115–147; and Sanner, *Att älska sin nästa*, chapter 4.

of Uppsala. Yet through time he got to know and cooperate with some of the leading radicals, such as Branting and Knut Wicksell, a freethinker and later world-famous economist. From 1887, Lennstrand agitated publicly against Christianity and quickly built a reputation as the most notorious freethinker of Sweden. His career turned out to be short and intense; he died young of illness in 1895. By that time, he had managed to agitate in large parts of Sweden, spend time in prison, publish a number of pamphlets and tracts, and start an organization for freethinkers with two attached journals.

During his short lifetime, Lennstrand acquainted himself with and introduced to the Swedish public, figures and basic writings from the broad international canon of freethinkers, secularists, materialists, and critics of religion.[29] His speeches and pamphlets often comprised historical criticism of the Bible and of God, coupled with references to natural sciences, which, according to Lennstrand, disproved literal interpretations of the Holy Scripture. Besides, he frequently bemoaned the moral and intellectual destructiveness of Christian preaching and emphasized the values and aims of freethought he believed would prepare the ground for love, justice, morality, and felicity in much more substantial ways than the respective Christian teachings.[30] One of the thinkers who inspired him was John Stuart Mill: Lennstrand propagated a utilitarian-colored notion that humanity should aim for the highest possible felicity in this world.[31] Utilitarianism also played a role in providing the name for Lennstrand's secularism. He called his new teaching utilism, short for utilitarianism. In 1888, he founded the *Utilistiska samfundet* (Utilist Society), a sort of free-

29 In a sense, Lennstrand is the one Swede who came closest to this international congregation of prominent freethinkers. *The Freethinker* portrayed him repeatedly, and he is included in early overviews of freethought history: Samuel P. Putnam, *400 Years of Freethought* (New York: The Truth Seeker Company, 1894), 619–624; John Mackinnon Robertson, *A History of Freethought in the Nineteenth Century*, vol. 2 (London: Dawsons of Pall Mall, 1969), 487. In both of these works, Branting is mentioned in passing.

30 See, e. g., Viktor Lennstrand, *Hvad jag sagt och hvad jag icke sagt: Föredrag hållet å Hörsalen i Örebro den 30 maj 1888* [What I have said and what I have not said: Lecture held in the lecture hall in Örebro] (Stockholm: s.l., 1888); Viktor Lennstrand, *De fyra evangelierna, deras uppkomst och historiska värde: Föredrag, hållet på Svenska teatern den 14 april 1889* [The four gospels, their origin and historical value: Lecture held at the Swedish theater] (Stockholm: s.l., 1889); Viktor Lennstrand, *Det åtalade föredraget om "Gud"* [The prosecuted lecture about "God"] (Stockholm: s.l., 1889); and Viktor Lennstrand, *Hvarför uppträder jag mot kristendomen?* [Why do I stand up against Christianity?] (Stockholm: s.l., 1890).

31 This, for instance, becomes clear in the text written under the pseudonym Kettil Okristen, "Hvad en fritänkare tror på," *Tänk Sjelf! Utilistiskt flygblad* 1, no. 1 (1891): 1. Lennstrand claimed that Mill had an outstanding "sharpness of thought, depth, clarity, and honesty." Lennstrand, *Hvad jag sagt*, 10.

thought congregation. I will return to this society below, at this point it should only be noticed that it was an organization centered on Lennstrand's activity, with a base in Stockholm complemented by a varying amount of local branches in the rest of Sweden.

A vital part and central node of the Utilist Society was its journal, *Fritänkaren* (The Freethinker), issued for the first time in 1889. The choice of its title seems natural, as it echoes both the main term around which critics of religion in Sweden rallied, and the British publication *The Freethinker*, which was an inspiration for *Fritänkaren*. The Swedish journal often published translated material from the British organ, but also from the U.S. freethought journals *The Truth Seeker* and *Boston Investigator*, as well as texts by leading freethinkers of the Anglosphere such as George William Foote and Robert Ingersoll. Apart from reports on the activities of the Utilist Society, polemics of Lennstrand, and news from around the world, *Fritänkaren* voiced critique against Christianity, regarding both topical Swedish themes and more general issues. Satirical articles about "God's providence" (with reports on catastrophes and evils), the inconsistencies of the Bible, and the immorality of priests were common, as were portraits of notable international freethinkers. More constructive appeals to moral edification and future felicity often found their expression in poems and song lyrics which were printed in almost every issue.[32]

Freethought was at that time necessarily connected to a more or less radical bent, and that applied to Lennstrand, too. For instance, he connected freethought with republicanism and universal suffrage. In 1891, on the occasion of a French state visit to Sweden, he noted:

> Our time has surpassed the stupidity of this faith and the Christian fatheadedness. We have found that this entire fairytale about God's government "by the grace of God" is untrue. We do not see anything godly or supernatural in the king. The blood of the Bourbons was not, as the Frenchmen once thought, blue, nor was the blood of any other king either. They are human beings just like us and the state is just an organization of the people. The great

32 This characterization is based on my own reading of the journal. It came out from the summer of 1889 to December 1894, although in the last year it was much more sporadically published than in earlier years, when it was issued about twice a month. There was also another version of *Fritänkaren* in circulation, namely *Tänk Sjelf!* (Think for yourself). It was initially conceived as a one-off publication for the South of Sweden, but came to be a regular publication as the title was held to be less controversial in the countryside than *Fritänkaren*. See "Notiser," *Fritänkaren* 3, no. 17 (1891): 136; and Lennstrand, "Meddelande [Message]," *Fritänkaren* 3, no. 19: 153. Lennstrand was not formally the editor of the journals, but he was their most prominent author, and it is clear that they were organs for his preaching.

> motto of our time is thus: of the people and by the people. It should itself choose its leading men, enact its own laws and decide over its own destiny.[33]

In addition, Lennstrand claimed that the fulfillment of liberty, justice, and enlightenment required the republic as its basic prerequisite. Just like Branting, he advocated for the quick introduction of universal suffrage he believed would be the first step toward the emancipation and formation of the people, leading inevitably to ever-increasing liberty and reason.[34]

The socialist ideology was never very profoundly developed by Lennstrand, neither at the center of his personal interest nor his public propaganda. He publicly underlined how utilism was *not* a socialist movement.[35] At times, however, he also expressed his adoration for the socialist ideology, was generally close to the labor movement, and cooperated with its members.[36] This particular affiliation reveals that Lennstrand's utilism was closely connected to the rise of the popular movements, yet it was not the only connecting point, as will be shown in the following section.

Secularism in the Context of the Popular Movements

The popular movements are vital for understanding the social change during this era, therefore key also to assess secularism, including the differences of Branting's and Lennstrand's secularisms. While the Association for the Freedom of Religion, in which Branting was engaged, had more modest aspirations of influencing politics and opinion on the issue of church and state, Lennstrand explicitly nourished hopes of forming a mass movement of utilism. He expressed his conviction repeatedly, such as in one article in *Fritänkaren*, where he claimed the journal would be the means to "skapa en stark, enig och sjelfständig fritänkarorganisation och ateistisk folkrörelse som motvigt mot de alltmera tillväxande läsarsekterna och kristna arméerna" ("create a strong, united and independent freethought organization and atheist popular movement, as a

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33 Viktor Lennstrand, *Republiken, allmänna rösträtten och fritänkeriet* [The republic, the universal suffrage, and freethinking] (Stockholm: s.l., 1891), 3.

34 Ibid., 4–5.

35 Viktor Lennstrand, "Är utilismen socialistisk? [Is utilism socialist?]," *Social-Demokraten*, November 24, 1888.

36 Not least after his first prison sentence, he seems to have been tilted toward socialism more explicitly. Alexandersson, *Förnekelsens förbannelse*, 299.

counterweight to the ever growing reader sects and Christian armies").[37] More privately, in his correspondence with friends, he outlined how he wanted to model his own movement on the successful free church movements.[38]

Judging by what I have highlighted as the hallmarks of the three main Swedish popular movements, Lennstrand's Utilist Society certainly ticked in most of the boxes. His association was an attempt to collectively organize around the discontent with the old regime, in this case specifically the church and organized Christianity. Lennstrand's movement targeted the lower classes, and tried to assemble the broader strands of the population, rather than being an exclusive club for the social or intellectual elite. He wanted to create a new norm system and fostered hopes for what he believed would be a better, reformed society without traditional religion. Similar to the other movements, the utilists held regular meetings with singing and speeches, and Lennstrand toured the country to spread pamphlets, to preach, and to found local chapters of the society, which were to be run democratically.

Despite its high aspirations and the personal engagement of its charismatic leader, utilism failed to become a popular movement, in the sense of gaining a large following over time. Its negatively framed message – against Christianity – was not enough to set a mass movement in motion. Membership never exceeded 2,000, a figure stated by the organization itself.[39] Utilism died with its founder, and never became a movement with the strength to evolve independently of its leader. Lennstrand's biographer Pär Alexandersson, therefore, has aptly described utilism as a "one-man popular movement."[40]

Secularism in the late nineteenth century was not only incidentally a phenomenon emerging simultaneously with the popular movements; it is strongly entangled with them, also apart from Lennstrand's visions. While decidedly less successful than Lennstrand's attempt, there were also other freethought organizations similar to the popular movements of that time.[41] Even though no large-scale study of the connections between the free churches and organized secularism in Sweden exists, it is clear that they had an important, mutually constitutive relation. First of all, proponents of secularism like Branting and Lenn-

37 Viktor Lennstrand, "Till Fritänkarens vänner och prenumeranter! [To friends and subscribers of Fritänkaren!]," *Fritänkaren* 2, no. 24 (1890): 185. Sweden's revivalist Christians were often called *läsare* (readers) because of their avid reading, both of the Bible and Christian literature of tracts, journals and newspapers.

38 Öhrman, "Viktor E. Lennstrand," 133; Alexandersson, *Förnekelsens förbannelse*, 101–112.

39 See Ståhle, *Organisationer för svensk religionskritik*, 15.

40 Alexandersson, *Förnekelsens förbannelse*, 220.

41 Ståhle, *Organisationer för svensk religionskritik*.

strand, and the often zealously born-again Christians of the free churches revealed similar interests in their opposition toward the existing Lutheran state church. This becomes evident in the strongly anticlerical monthly magazine *Ärkeängeln* (The Archangel) which included information about Lennstrand and defended him and other freethinkers, but, at the same time, gave voice to free church representatives and their fierce critique of the state church.[42] When the Association for Freedom of Religion was founded, apart from notorious freethinkers, there were also Methodists and Baptists involved (even though they quickly seemed to have withdrawn from the organization).[43] Enmity was, however, the main trend. Prominent freethinkers such as Lennstrand, Branting, and Anton Nyström were strongly opposed to the free churches, and lambasted revivalist Christians for being superstitious, irrational, or even lunatic.[44] On a meta-level, these conflicts proved identificatory for both sides: the revivalist Christians were a vital part of the necessary enemy image for the freethinkers. The threat of growing secularism, on the other hand, welded together the adherents of the free church movement.

Secularism, finally, was an important aspect of the labor movement and the socialist ideology it adopted during the 1880s. Not only Branting, but also other leading social democrats were prosecuted for blasphemy.[45] But the exact profile and role of secularism within the Swedish social democracy was somewhat contended, and the secularism which came to dominate was in conflict with other forms of secularism, most notably the one proposed by Viktor Lennstrand. This will become even clearer when we now return to the 1890 debate of Branting and Lennstrand.

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42 *Ärkeängeln* however, was only published for one year (1890).

43 Nerman, *Hjalmar Branting – fritänkaren*, 17–27.

44 Anton Nyström was a physician, and as such relied on scientific argumentation to back up his claims that revivalist Christianity created insanity. Anton Nyström, *Samhälliga tidsfrågor: En följd af folkskrifter, 5, Om läseri och sinnesrubbning* (Stockholm: Positivistiska missionen, 1880). The utilist journal *Fritänkaren* regularly printed articles on how religious brooding caused people to become depressed or crazy. See also Branting on the madness of different Christian denominations: Hjalmar Branting, "Steyerns nya munkorgslagar [Steyern's new laws of muzzle]," in *Tal och skrifter* III: *Kampen för demokratin* I, ed. Hjalmar Branting and Zeth Höglund (Stockholm: Tiden, 1927), 45.

45 Alexandersson, *Förnekelsens förbannelse*, 333.

A Clash of Secularisms: Materialism or Rationalism

The secularism-debate launched on November 9, 1890 – briefly described in the introduction of this chapter – was not unprecedented, but in many ways continued or condensed what had been uttered earlier, mainly in newspapers: Lennstrand had faced critique by social democrats on many occasions. Also Branting, in 1888, had published a text entitled *Vän eller fiende?* (Friend or foe?), in which he pondered on whether the utilists were companions or enemies of the labor movement. A week before the debate of November 9, Lennstrand had given a speech in the same location, Mosebacke, stating his view on the importance of utilism for the labor movement. Branting replied briefly on this in his newspaper, but in greater detail during the debate.[46]

A main point of disagreement between the two freethinkers was the necessity of an independent anti-Christian popular movement. The term *folkrörelse* – popular movement – is not a historiographical term coined in retrospect, but was very much how the labor movement understood itself at that time. And for the leading social democrats, the social democratic labor movement was the only legitimate popular movement: Branting, in the debate, explicitly stated that the utilists could not be allowed to become a popular movement; it was his opinion that "the only *popular movement* which is legitimate is the social democratic one."[47] In his text from 1888, Branting had not really seen utilism as necessarily a foe, or a threat, at least not as long as utilitism remained a special interest for the most engaged, but if utilitists would start to rally the masses, "*then* there is a danger."[48] Workers, according to Branting, did not have the time and energy to be engaged in too many activities at once. A utilist movement focusing on propaganda against religion would, in that case, be a competitor, not a friend. That is why Branting continued to underscore that "*the class organization of the*

46 Hjalmar Branting, "Utilismens behövlighet som särskild rörelse [The necessity of utilism as a specific movement]," in *Tal och skrifter* I: *Socialistisk samhällssyn* I, ed. Hjalmar Branting and Zeth Höglund (Stockholm: Tiden, 1926), 141–143.

47 Viktor Lennstrand and Hjalmar Branting, *Socialism och utilism: Föredrag af Viktor E. Lennstrand och hrr Brantings och Lennstrands anföranden vid diskussionen å Mosebacke söndagen den 9 nov. 1890* [Socialism and utilism: Lectures by Viktor E. Lennstrand and Mr Branting's and Lennstrand's speeches at the debate at Mosebacke, Sunday, November 9, 1890] (Stockholm: Utilistiska propagandans skrifter, 1890), 19.

48 Hjalmar Branting, "Vän eller fiende? [Friend or foe?]," in *Tal och skrifter* I: *Socialistisk samhällssyn* I, ed. Hjalmar Branting and Zeth Höglund (Stockholm: Tiden, 1926), 139.

workers must not be harmed by any association for specific causes."[49] Another reason why this was wrong was that, although socialism, according to Branting and his fellows, was really materialist and thus incongruent with any kind of positive religion, there were still many religious workers. The labor movement, therefore, had to tread carefully so as not to alienate its members by a too harsh critique of their religious convictions. While this seemed mainly an argument against an all too radical anti-religious propaganda *within* social democracy, it also related to utilism as an independent movement: in the countryside, Branting argued, priests used a highly stylized negative picture of utilism for polemics to dissuade "stupid readers" from any kind of reform movement.[50]

Lennstrand centered his reply on the continuing power of organized Christianity, pointing out, in a long tirade, the high numbers of existing churches, priests and free church pastors, children in Sunday schools, and the strong financial resources of both the state and the free churches. To him it seemed all too obvious that this condition ought to be countered immediately. And why should the social democrats focus on the insignificant Utilist Society, which held two lectures for every 250 Christian lectures, only in Stockholm? An argument between socialists and utilists, following Lennstrand, would only hinder the fight for enlightenment, and strengthen the Christian churches.[51] Utilism was absolutely necessary as a movement to fight the supposed bad influence of Christianity on the people, Lennstrand claimed in his resolution, which was voted down in favor of Branting's at the end of the meeting.[52]

In his speech given a week earlier, Lennstrand had advocated even stronger for enlightenment and the necessity of utilism as a movement. To him, utilism's categorization was indubitable: "en folkrörelse är det" ("it is a popular movement"), Lennstrand stated and claimed that it had been so since the founding of his society.[53] And there was a need for it. History taught, Lennstrand asserted, that every reform or revolution must first be prepared by enlightenment, by changing people's minds. He emphasized that the French Revolution was preceded by a period with the very name of the Enlightenment. No wonder the Spanish Revolution had failed, he continued, because the priests had dominated over opinions and prevented any preparatory movement to waken up the peo-

49 Ibid. See also Hjalmar Branting, "Socialdemokrati och utilism [Social democracy and utilism]," in *Tal och skrifter* I: *Socialistisk samhällssyn* I, ed. Hjalmar Branting and Zeth Höglund (Stockholm: Tiden, 1926), 145.

50 Lennstrand and Branting, *Socialism och utilism*, 20.

51 Ibid., 22–24.

52 Nerman, *Hjalmar Branting – fritänkaren*, 115–116.

53 Lennstrand and Branting, *Socialism och utilism*, 5.

ple.[54] "Vi utilister vilja just utföra detta nödvändiga förberedelsearbete. Vi angripa den kristna religionen, hvilken är det stora klippblock som ligger för framtidens port." ("We utilists want to perform precisely this necessary preparatory work. We attack the Christian religion, which is the boulder that is blocking the gate to the future.")[55]

This declaration could, in a way, be seen as a question of organization and tactics. The same holds true for Branting's claim that focusing on religion – or rather the critique of religion – might be counter-productive. Offenses against Christianity could stir up religious interests; therefore, the best thing would be not to quarrel.[56] An indifferent attitude toward religion, in Branting's view, was also a way of fighting it. This ties in with the fact that the disagreement between the socialists and utilists did not stop at tactics and organization, but also includes their disparate ways of conceiving religion and secularity.

Branting's claim that creating religious indifference would be the best way to counter religion was rooted in his general materialist Marxist worldview. He left no doubt about his conviction that material or economic relations were the foundation of the entire "superstructure" of society: "If one wants to change religion profoundly, one should ensure that its conditions are changed, or in other words, simply: The belief in an afterlife receives a death-blow only when this life is made rich and worth living."[57] This often repeated view clearly echoes Karl Marx's famous presupposition that the vale of tears in this world needs to be changed in order to eradicate the dazing opium of the people.[58]

Lennstrand, on the other hand, did not take religion as a mere secondary phenomenon. He was clear about the socialists' position: "Their opinion is a mistake. Religion is not one of the *superstructures* of this society, but one of its *foundations*. And as long as Christianity is believed and preached, *this* society will stand steadfast."[59] To Lennstrand, religion was not attached to or depending

54 Ibid., 7–8.
55 Ibid., 7.
56 Branting, "Vän eller fiende?," 138.
57 Ibid., 135.
58 Karl Marx, "Zur Kritik der Hegelschen Rechtsphilosophie: Einleitung," in *Werke*, vol. 1, ed. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels (Berlin: Dietz, 1956), 378–391. For similar arguments of Branting, see Lennstrand and Branting, *Socialism och utilism*, 19–20; Branting, "Utilismens behövlighet som särskild rörelse"; Branting, "Socialdemokrati och utilism"; Hjalmar Branting, "Religionen en privatsak [Religion, a private matter]," in *Tal och skrifter* VIII: *Stridsfrågor inom arbetarrörelsen*, ed. Hjalmar Branting and Zeth Höglund (Stockholm: Tiden, 1929), 84–88; and Hjalmar Branting, "Viktor E. Lennstrand," in *Tal och skrifter* X: *Stridskamrater och vänner*, ed. Hjalmar Branting and Zeth Höglund (Stockholm: Tiden, 1929), 27–34.
59 Lennstrand and Branting, *Socialism och utilism*, 6.

on economic conditions, but proved a basic tenet of humanity, although one which could be changed.

Both were aware of their disagreement. Branting repeatedly reflected on the two possible ways of fighting religion: the materialist one, or, as he sometimes called it, the historical one, which asked for the causes of religion and hoped to change them, and the rationalist one, which strove to expose errors in the Christian message and to convince people of its falsity.[60] Lennstrand would agree with Branting's description, but point out the importance of the latter. It was his belief that to engage with the "lunacy" of religion and ultimately get rid of it was the same thing – improving the world – as the socialists do when they engage with social inequalities.[61]

Branting and other social democrats called utilism a "sect" and consequently, with Lennstrand's insistence on rational argumentation about religion, to them, he seemed in a sense himself a theologian. From a social democratic perspective, the utilists only proved that they had not yet entered a higher cultural stage. Branting felt that the utilist critique of the Holy Scripture was a confession of "not having grown up and surpassed the Bible, as they [the utilists] want to use the Bible to kill itself, not by positing it as just one book among millions of others."[62]

The *raison d'être* of utilism, thus, was entirely to counter religion, a very clear and direct expression of secularism. The social democrats were also secularists, in being anticlerical and often also anti-religious, in wanting to separate state and church, and in providing an alternative worldview. According to Branting, historical materialism and religion were basically opposed. He himself called socialism a "worldview" which was "incompatible" with religion.[63] However, both in worldview and tactics, Branting and his fellow social democrats still posited religion as being of secondary importance, since the realization of socialism was superordinate. Thus the Swedish social democrats followed their German forerunners, and declared religion a *Privatsache*, a private matter.[64] This let them po-

60 Branting, "Utilismens behövlighet som särskild rörelse."

61 Lennstrand and Branting, *Socialism och utilism*, 11.

62 Branting, "Vän eller fiende?," 133.

63 Ibid., 137. This position did not change after the clash between Branting and the socialists with Lennstrand and the utilists. See Hjalmar Branting's views (in 1893), "Religionsfrihet [Freedom of religion]," in *Tal och skrifter* III: *Kampen för demokratin* I, ed. Hjalmar Branting and Zeth Höglund (Stockholm: Tiden, 1927), 27–34.

64 See Sebastian Prüfer, *Sozialismus statt Religion: Die deutsche Sozialdemokratie vor der religiösen Frage, 1863–1890* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2002), 192–199. For further information on German social democracy and freethought, see Todd Weir, *Secularism and Religion*

sition themselves sharply against the state church and the religious influence over schools and education, and at the same time advocate religious tolerance, within as well as outside their own party and movement. Declaring religion a private matter was Branting's conviction before and after the debate with Lennstrand. It was strengthened even more when Branting attended a meeting of the German social democrats in Halle in 1890, where he heard Wilhelm Liebknecht defending this parole.[65]

As mentioned before, Branting's materialist resolution won out when the audience voted on November 9, 1890, and it may be said that Branting succeeded in the long run as well. The chapter will conclude by taking into account this *longue durée*, and the legacies of the two Swedish secularisms.

Conclusion: The Legacy of Lennstrand's and Branting's Secularisms

Having served his blasphemy sentence, Hjalmar Branting left the Långholmen prison in Stockholm on October 28, 1889. The newspaper *Dagens Nyheter* reported from the scenery of his release from prison: around a thousand people had gathered together, and when Branting passed the crowd in his coach there were celebratory exclamations and "loud hoorays." Afterwards, he attended an overcrowded party which went on until the late hours.[66] On the very same day, Viktor Lennstrand also passed the prison gates, but in the opposite direction, starting his second imprisonment for blasphemy under much less noticed circumstances.[67] The fates of the two freethinkers on this particular day may in a sense serve as an analogy for their legacies: Branting hailed in public as a popular leader, well remembered and honored; Lennstrand alone, confined to isolation, and comparatively forgotten.

In a concrete and direct sense, Lennstrand's influence and legacy has been weak. Utilism died with him, and no other secularist organization has gained major influence in twentieth-century Sweden. Today, there exists a prominent

in Nineteenth-Century Germany: The Rise of the Fourth Confession (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 158–172.

65 Hjalmar Branting, "Socialdemokratin i Tyskland [Social democracy in Germany]," *Social-Demokraten*, October 27, 1890, n.p.; Branting, "Religionen en privatsak"; Branting, "Religionsfrihet"; and Branting, "Vän eller fiende?," 137.

66 "Hjalmar Brantings frigifvande," *Dagens Nyheter*, October 29, 1889, n.p.

67 Lennstrand had served his first sentence in Malmö. (Alexandersson, *Förnekelsens förbannelse*, 293–298; 316.)

Swedish association for secular humanism, *Humanisterna*, but even though Lennstrand has been occasionally mentioned in this journal, his memory remains peripheral.[68] In historiography, he has not been entirely forgotten, but it took more than a century after his death for a sound scholarly biography to appear.[69] Outside research focusing on religion and freethought, he does not attract much attention. It is telling that Lennstrand was not even mentioned in the latest comprehensive synthesis of the history of Sweden covering the turn of the last century, although, for a few years, he was one of the most famous personalities in Sweden.[70] In a way this is understandable given his minor immediate influence. But it would be possible to consider a more indirect legacy of Lennstrand's secularism, even though it is harder to measure. He was one of those who, by a radical critique of Christianity, widened the possibilities for utterances and lifestyles which defied the Christian religion, and, with that, prepared the way for further secularist claims in the public sphere in the twentieth century.[71]

Hjalmar Branting's personal legacy has certainly been much more lasting than Lennstrand's due to his leading role in social democracy which came to dominate Swedish politics in the twentieth century. His activity as a freethinker has been appreciated in later periods as well. Branting and the Association for the Freedom of Religion were also repeatedly mentioned as an inspiration for the 1950s–60s League for the Freedom of Religion.[72] And the secularism of Branting, or rather the social democratic secularism which he prominently represented, has to be considered when discussing the state of secularity in Sweden today.

While this is not the place to discuss in detail why Sweden ranks among the least believing countries in the world, some reflections may be added.[73] Socio-

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68 See, e.g., Gerhard Köppen, "Ur fritänkeriets svenska historia," *HEF-EKO*, no. 56 (1988): 13 – 15; and Håkan Blomqvist, "Föregångarna och framtiden," *Humanisten: Tidskrift för kultur- och livsåskådningsdebatt* 7, no. 2 (2001): 44 – 45. There are other Swedish freethinkers who have been more central to the identity of *Humanisterna*, primarily professor of philosophy Ingemar Hedenius. See Anton Jansson, "'A Swedish Voltaire': The Life and Afterlife of Ingemar Hedenius, 20th-Century Atheist," *Secularism and Nonreligion* 7, art. 4 (2018): 1 – 10.

69 Alexandersson, *Förnekelsens förbannelse*.

70 Stråth, *Sveriges historia: 1830 – 1920*.

71 See, e.g., Sven Thidevall, *Kampen om samhällsreligionen: Dagens nyheters djävulskampanj 1909* (Skellefteå: Artos Academic, 2016).

72 The author and social democratic politician Ture Nerman was one of the leaders of this later organization. Nerman wrote a book about Branting as a freethinker, to which I refer in this chapter. Branting also appeared in the journal of the 1950s organization. See "Friskare toner på 80-talet," *Fri tanke* 5, no. 2 (1958): 5 – 8.

73 Measuring secularity and non-belief is tricky. Based on the percentage of self-declared nonbelievers, Sweden is one of the most atheist or secular in the world. Phil Zuckerman, "Atheism:

logical explanations for Swedish secularity include the high levels of social security and the inclusion of women in the workplace, supported by the social democratic welfare state.[74] The ideological impulse of social democracy should also be taken into account. Historian of socialism Sebastian Prüfer has pointed out that, even though the idea that socialism constitutes a "new religion" is exaggerated, it is still possible to claim that socialism, including social democracy, has been an alternative to traditional religion. This is because socialism provides an immanent worldview explaining the conditions of humanity and offers solutions to social problems. Prüfer calls this "socialism instead of religion."[75] Concerning self-identity and worldview, this holds true also for the Swedish social democracy of the twentieth century.

It is not that Swedish social democrats were always aggressively and explicitly pushing secularism. The relation between social democracy and religion in Sweden has been complex and changing, and there have of course been differing opinions on the issue within the social democratic party. What can be said is that while the Swedish Social Democratic Party has retained freedom of religion as a central value and some sort of formulation of the desire to separate state and church among their central objectives, this was not always prioritized during the long period when the social democrats held government power and were able to greatly reform and influence Swedish society. The Church of Sweden did not lose its status as state church until the year 2000.[76]

Starting from the late nineteenth century, a general trend of moderation toward or even accommodation of the church in the social democratic project

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Contemporary Numbers and Patterns," in *The Cambridge Companion to Atheism*, ed. Michael Martin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 47–66. For a nuanced discussion of the complexity of Swedish secularity and secularization, see chapter 1 in David Thurfjell, *Det gudlösa folket: De postkristna svenskarna och religionen* (Stockholm: Molin & Sorgenfrei, 2015).

74 Phil Zuckerman, "Why are Danes and Swedes so Irreligious?," *Nordic Journal of Religion & Society* 22, no. 1 (2009): 55–69; Pippa Norris and Ronald Inglehart, *Sacred and Secular: Religion and Politics Worldwide*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011). Interestingly, the social security thesis echoes Branting's Marxist position that the abolition of material hardships would change the superstructural construction of religion.

75 Prüfer, *Sozialismus statt Religion*, 330–337. This is a somewhat weaker claim than the notion that socialism (and other modern ideologies) constitute a new "political religion" or "secular religion" – an idea spread through the works of, among many others, Eric Voegelin and Emilio Gentile.

76 From the first party programs of 1897 – and for over half a century – the abolition of the state church was stipulated. Later, from 1960 on, this was reframed to regulate the relation between state and church according to the principle of the freedom of religion. See Klaus Misgeld, ed., *Socialdemokratins program: 1897 till 1990* (Stockholm: Arbetarrörelsens arkiv och bibliotek, 2001).

seems to have been prevalent.[77] This has been described as a secular development by "consensus" rather than "confrontation."[78] Against this backdrop it may be stated that Branting's position has won out: a basic secularism which, however, is less prioritized and politicized than the material and social issues, and possible to compromise around. It is conceivable that Sweden, therefore, has displayed a comparatively large indifference to Christianity. Of course, these are tentative reflections, but no exploration of secularity in Sweden should entirely omit social democracy, its history and legacy. In these respects, the study of the secularisms of the nineteenth century, as well as the popular movements and religion, continues to be indispensable.

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77 See Karen M. Anderson, "The Church as Nation? The Role of Religion in the Development of the Swedish Welfare State," in *Religion, Class Coalitions, and Welfare States*, ed. Kees van Kersbergen and Philip Manow (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 210 – 235. Further studies of the relation between state, social democracy, and church include: Sören Ekström, *Makten över kyrkan: Om Svenska kyrkan, folket och staten* (Stockholm: Verbum, 2000); Urban Claesson, *Folkhemmets kyrka: Harald Hallén och folkkyrkans genombrott: En studie av socialdemokrati, kyrka och nationsbygge med särskild hänsyn till perioden 1905 – 1933* (Uppsala: Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis, 2004); and Tobias Harding, "The Dawn of the Secular State? Heritage and Identity in Swedish Church and State Debates 1920 – 1939," *International Journal of Cultural Policy* 22, no. 4 (2016): 631 – 647.

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II Organized Freethought in National, International, and Transnational Entanglements