LES RELIGIONS MENACENT-ELLES LA RÉPUBLIQUE ?

25e colloque de Saint-Jacut
30-31 janvier 2021

Avec notamment
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How not to separate from each other. Do religions really threaten the French republic?

During the World Interfaith Harmony Week 2021, on Saturday and Sunday 30 and 31 of January, the young French of Coexister organized a convention with great scholars (sociologist, historian of religion, law experts), and religious representatives (rabbi, imam, Christian and Buddhist priests) to talk together about how religious can be a lever for social peace and justice. The convention took place in Coexister headquarters in Paris, and was broadcasted on live on Youtube, Facebook and Zoom. More than 300 people attended to each roundtable, mostly students and young people of every backgrounds and beliefs. On Saturday evening, Coexister animated a causal event with games and talks between attendees. The weekend was a success and contributed to build religious harmony in France.

In actual French society, religions do not only have bad press. They are scary. Causes of conflict and violence for some, sources of obscurantism for others, they represent an obstacle to social cohesion for many and a threat to our public security. Religions institutions are not the only ones involved. Indeed, spirituality can itself appear as an anachronism, a sort of vestige of the past, which no longer weight much facing the mechanization of the world and the demands of the consumer society.

What counts today is to be first and foremost a "non-labelled" citizen. For some militants of a falsified *laïcité*, the separation of the state and churches is no longer be satisfied. Neutrality of the state is not enough, they try to "neutralize" also individuals in their differences and singularities. The diversity of religious convictions can still exist, but under the condition that it remains in the intimate, the private, the hidden, as a shameful thing to keep to oneself.

Finally, are our religious or spiritual diversities an obstacle to the social cohesion of our country, a threat to our freedoms? Or can they be an opportunity? What role could a well-understood *laïcité* play in enabling everyone, believer or not, religious or atheist, to contribute to building a more united society? Unity is not uniformity. Other models are possible and desirable, so… how to build interfaith harmony?

From Saturday 30 January 2021 (9.30 am) to Sunday 31 January 2021 (12 noon), 3 roundtables were organized to answer these questions. Videos recording are now on Youtube.

// Saturday 30 January 2021, 9.30am-12pm:

First societal roundtable

animated by Laurent Grzybowski, journalist at La Vie
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JFycNeN9dgo

- Daniel Verba: sociologist, lecturer in sociology at Sorbonne University
- Valentine Zuber: historian, specialist in the history of religious freedom in Western Europe and *laïcité* in France and in the world.
- Lucie Roche, trainer at Convivencia, specializing in the religious management in private companies
- Nicolas Cadène, general rapporteur of the French Republic Observatoire de la Laïcité

// Saturday 30 January 2021, 4.30pm-6.30pm:

Second societal roundtable

animated by Laurent Grzybowski, journalist at La Vie
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=viGJS7oBOOo

- Karima Berger, author of several novels and essays under the sign of the face to face of the Arabic and French cultures and the questioning of her spiritual roots.
- Martine Cohen, sociologist of religions and secularism
- Daniel Lenoir, President of Démocratie&Spiritualité
- Victoria Vilo, young member of the association Coexister, student in society and religious sciences

// Sunday 31 January 2021, 10am-12pm:

Third roundtable "Dialogue of thoughts and Scriptures".

animated by Radia Bakkouch, President of Coexister
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2AbD1n2rDTY

- Mohamed Bajrafil, Muslim theologian
- Floriane Chinsky, rabbi
- Vincent Pilley, Buddhist
- Antoine Guggenheim, Catholic priest, responsible for relations with Muslims in Paris
- Henrick Ribot, young agnostic, member of the association Coexister

Coexister is an independent youth movement, managed by young people for young people from 15 to 35 years-old. Youth is both the fuel and the drive of our movement, a chance for those who want to act without waiting to grow old. It is more than ever necessary to offer a space where they can express themselves fully and freely.

Recognized of public interest by the French Government, Coexister now gathers more than 2,500 members, including 350 volunteers holding responsibilities in about 50 local chapters in France, Belgium, Switzerland, Germany, and the United Kingdom. Our workshops in schools and universities have allowed us to meet 120,000 youngsters, and sensitize them to secularism, freedom of thought and freedom of expression.

Coexister is a member of Religions for Peace since 2010 and United Religions Initiative (URI) since 2014. Last year, during the World Interfaith Harmony Week 2020, on February Wednesday 4th, young members of Coexister united forces to take care of homeless people. We submited our report: https://worldinterfaithharmonyweek.com/view-reports/?report=43254

www.coexister.fr