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Robin Beaumont et Erminia Chiara Calabrese



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Introduction

Robin Beaumont et Erminia Chiara Calabrese

- 1 Among the many scholarly and popular discourses that proliferated with the advent of the third millennium and which took on new intensity, particularly since 2012, on the confessional polarization of the Arab world and intensification of transnational conflict between Sunni and Shia Islam, a certain geohistorical narrative appears to be emerging at the regional and particularly Middle Eastern level which would symmetrically oppose the fragmentation of Sunni Islam to the rise of a unified Shiite power. Where, in Sunni societies political and religious authorities faced with the multiplication of competing ideological proposals¹ would enter a phase of "eclipse" (Amos, 2010), in Shia society, political Islam led by the Iranian regional hegemon, finds itself supported by an historical, organized and coherent movement, reflected in the military victories in Iraq and Syria of the Islamic Republic and partisan movements considered as extensions of its political militia.
- 2 This reading of the new regional order is fully consistent with analyses, produced after the fall of Saddam Hussein in 2003, of an "awakening" or "Shiite renewal" (Nasr, 2006); After centuries of political minimization, the Shiites of the former Arab provinces of the Ottoman Empire seized the opportunity to establish themselves as historical actors on the national and regional scenes, under the guidance of the Iranian sponsor. Developments provoked by the transformation, beginning in 2012-2013, of a Syrian revolutionary moment into an internationalized and confessionalized war would thus constitute an acceleration of this movement of entry into the history of a branch of Islam which, with a few (notable) historical exceptions, would have been confined in a "quiescent" attitude toward power. The geopolitical translation of this "awakening" would be the construction of an "arc" or "Shiite crescent", extending from Lebanon to Iran and beyond to Afghanistan and Pakistan, via Syria, Iraq, Yemen, Bahrain and eastern Saudi Arabia (Louër, 2009). In other words, where the Islamic religious reference would give rise in Sunni societies of the Arab world to all kinds of competing political practices, to the point of plunging these societies into ideological and political chaos, Shia political Islam would find itself embodied in a single expression, dominated

and directed by the Iranian power.² While this type of reading is generally the work of analysts unfamiliar with the reality of the terrain they evoke, or inclined to approach the mobilization of Islamist actors solely through the religious factor rather than through the materiality of their practices, we find only limited research efforts to tone it down.

- 3 Not that the question of relevance or limits for such approaches to regional confessional polarization has not been the subject of abundant and rich reflections (Marshal, Zenmi, 2012; Haddad, 2017): they point in particular to the poverty of a grid of interpretation that would act as a "steamroller" (Picard, 2018) under which "divergences, rivalries and regional specificities within these human groups" would disappear (Corm, 2017: 39), i.e. all socio-political realities for which it has been shown that their explanation could not be reduced to a matter of religious variables (Amel, 1988; Burgat, 2006; Picard, 2006).³ Yet, deconstruction of the supposed homogeneity of Shia political Islam, for its part, remains largely to be undertaken. This issue of the REMMM (Review of Muslim and Mediterranean Worlds) intends to question the ways in which religious reference to Twelver Shiism is mobilized as a political resource in the Middle East in this first quarter of the 21st century, and in this way, to report on field work performed as nearly as possible to their subject population, on "political Shiisms" redeemed in the diversity of their full national and local expression.
- 4 We know the difficulties that arise through the use of the category "political Islam" (or "Islamism"), which "tends to become a catch-all category to designate very diverse phenomena [...] often including an anxiogenic and dramatic dimension".⁴ Overly restrictive when used to refer to a founding principle of an "Islamic State", and too broad when used to refer to ordinary political ideas or practices arising, one way or another, from the practice of Islam, it sometimes appears that the expression is less useful for scientific understanding than it is for political instrumentalization which obscures the realities it covers. On the other hand, thinking of Political Islam as the political use of the Islamic reference makes it possible to recognize the multiplicity of uses to which such a reference can give rise. By political Shiisms, we mean all political attempts at using the Shia Islam reference. This definition has the advantage of including a wide range of actors: States, institutions, partisan groups, religious leaders, armed movements, etc. It also makes it possible to avoid the presumption of causality for the religious variable in engagement, or more generally, in political action (Lagroye, 2009).

A comparative approach to the political uses of the Shia religious reference

- 5 The political practices of actors who invoke Twelver Shia references in their actions are certainly not unknown to us.⁵ Beyond work on the conditions under which Shia political Islam emerged from the Islamist matrix beginning in the 1950s in Iraqi holy cities (Abdul-Jabar, 2002; Nakash, 1994; Sankari, 2005), the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Lebanese Hezbollah are the two privileged places for investigation of Shia political Islam. Yet, while the latter has been the subject of welcome and numerous sociological studies,⁶ researchers working on the former mainly focused on the revolutionary moment, and then, on the Khomeini theory of *wilāyat al-faqīh*, its constitutionalization, its reformulations and the resistance it has aroused, with a bias for the study of

political ideas (Fayyad, 2008; Muqallid, 2012) more than their incarnation among individuals and social groups. Above all, these two fields are rather exceptional. Kuwait, Bahrain and the eastern province of Saudi Arabia received attention on these issues over the second half of the 20th century from only a few researchers (Louër, 2008; Matthiesen, 2010, 2015) as did Pakistan (Abu Zahab, 2007; Rieck, 2016). As for Iraq, the advent of a new political era in 2003 admittedly saw the emergence of an important new literature; however, apart from a few works (for example Cole and Keddie, 1986; Nakash, 1994, 2006; Rizvi, 2010; Visser, 2006), some of which place the Shiite political fact within its historical context (notably Abdul-Jabar, 2003; Luizard, 2009, 2014; Ru'uf, 2000), this literature, at least in the matter of interest to us, gave rise to large geopolitical frescoes or texts more related to expert reports than to scientific inquiries. This lack of work in political sociology, and hence of a truly comparative approach, is due, at least in part, to difficulties of access to socio-political environments marked by the violence of authoritarian situations, armed conflict, or situations "neither at war nor at peace" (Richards, 2005; Linhardt, Moreau de Bellaing, 2013).

- 6 What is a "Shiite" mobilization? How are references to Shia Islam expressed in the functioning of institutions that claim to be Shia, both in discourse and in the practices of political actors, activists or simple sympathizers of partisan organizations? How do "shared dogmatic references" (Lamine, 2018) find themselves reconfigured in times of crisis, war or violence? The expansion and institutionalization of the Iraqi or Lebanese Shiite feat of militia, the development of political solidarity between Twelver Shiites and Shiites from more heterodox currents (in particular Alawism and Zaydism) - beyond the mere attempts at doctrinal rapprochement led by clerical elites in the 20th century - constitute ideological and praxeological reformulations that call for the construction of new analytical keys capable of "imagining linkages between religion and politics outside of determinist and essentialist paradigms" (Boëx and Pinto, 2018: 12).
- 7 This issue of REMMM does not claim to provide an exhaustive answer to these questions. It does however, propose to shed light on a few of the political situations whose protagonists have so far received less attention from the social sciences than others, in order to identify a number of analytical benchmarks that we would like to see identified in other fields. We are thus extending an invitation to explore political Shiisms in their contemporary diversity, by bringing together contributions from sociologists, anthropologists and political analysts, from various fields studied on a granular scale: the martyrs' divisions within a Tehran cemetery, a debate broadcast on Iraqi television between supporters of Muqtada al-Sadr and representatives of the "civil current", or the report of villagers from southern Lebanon, troubled by the Syrian conflict, or again, to the Palestinian cause as advocated by Hezbollah, to name only a few.

Production of a Shia political imagination through the experience of violence

- 8 The singularity of the situations discussed in this issue's articles does not mean that they follow strictly parallel, linear and distinct historical trajectories. On the contrary, this issue takes for its genesis the recognition of what might be taken for a space of resonance between the different situations of these political Shiisms. To consider this

space, we propose to rely on the way Jean-François Bayart justifies the expression "Arab world". Rejecting meanings based on supposed cultural, political, linguistic or religious affinities, Bayart suggests understanding the Arab world as an "historical space" arising from the transition from an imperial state model to the nation-state model with the fall of the Ottoman Empire - a "moment of historicity" (Bayart, 2016). The unity of the societies that make up this "Arab world" would thus be less about an essence or about shared properties than about the interdependence of the political spaces (Camau, Geisser, 2003) resulting from this moment of historicity: societies whose socio-political structures are dependent on those of other societies in the Arab world, so that when a major event occurs in one society (from the creation of the State of Israel to the "Arab springs" and the various Gulf wars), it is not simply the foreign policies of other States that are mobilized or modified (as the case would be for States outside of this space), but the societies and political regimes themselves that are affected. We would like to take up this idea again to suggest that "Shia worlds" (Mervin, 2007; Louër, 2008), given the diversity of their own socio-political expressions and temporalities, find, in the period opened by the degeneration of the war in Syria, the prolongation of the Iraqi conflict since 2003 and concomitantly with the conflict in Yemen since 2011 - a historical moment of resonance for these social and political expressions, and of synchronization for these temporalities.

- 9 Our purpose here is not to identify, as Bayart did, a new "historical space" that would be a *Shia space* (even if it were drawn in the form of an arc or a crescent). The "Shia worlds" do not cover a distinct territorial reality. Rather, our purpose is to say that the Syrian conflict, in its regional implications, may constitute such a "moment", an historical matrix at the origin of a reconfiguration of this Arab world, or even of other political spaces. This approach has several advantages. Firstly, it avoids the pitfall of a top-down analysis that would only take into consideration the level of political solidarity and alliances. Secondly, it makes it possible to recognize the structuring effect of these systems of representation, without erasing the asperities and idiosyncrasies of their national and local expressions, and without making the conflictual dimension of these representations the necessary point of outcome for the secular confrontation of two competing religious doctrines (Sfeir, 2013).
- 10 We put forward the hypothesis that this alignment of political Shiisms results in the crystallization of a *Shia political imagination*: a common symbolic universe, irrigated by representations drawn from a mythified and patrimonialized history of Shiism; a universe upon which actors draw in various ways to mobilize in differentiated local contexts, but a universe which none-the-less constitutes a shared background of ideas, or, to use the acoustic metaphor, the sounding board where the voices of different political Shiisms resonate, encouraging the emergence of new forms of solidarity, belonging and identification: which produces, as Denis-Constant Martin describes it, a political "we" (Martin, 1994), even beyond the social and doctrinal singularities, notably between Twelver Shiism and minority Alawi or Zaydism currents (Mervin, 2017). If this very last dimension is not addressed in this dossier, which focuses on actors in the Twelver Shia tradition, such rapprochement of the various components of Shia Islam through the constitution of solidarity based on a shared political imagination seems to us to be a particularly worthy avenue of research to be explored in the future.

- 11 Such imagination feeds on the historical experience of Shia societies, both of social, political and demographic domination, and awareness of an exit from this state of domination, now less thought of in terms of the fight against unjust regimes than in terms of resistance to existential enemies, embodied par excellence by the Islamic State: this is the purpose of Nicolas Dot-Pouillard's contribution to this issue, which focuses in particular on questioning, in his reflection on the permeabilities between Arab lefts and political Shiisms, the transition from a lexicon of the "revolution" (*thawra*) to a lexicon of the "resistance" (*muqāwama*).
- 12 This imagination is, above all, constructed in (and through) a context of extreme violence, a feature found in all the articles in this dossier: the experience of this war violence – committed, suffered, or even simply represented – plays a role all the more central because war can be understood in eschatological terms, such as the re-actualization of the battle of Karbala.⁷ The reification of the "Karbala paradigm" (Fischer, 1980) in the context of the conflicts in Syria, Yemen and Iraq, in which many foreign Shiite fighters are taking part, is an essential element in the sacralization of the cause that irrigates this new political imagination. Shiite martyrology is thus widely and frequently invoked in speeches of mobilization such as the iconographic production of references to the characters and places of the great Shiite narrative, with which individuals develop a true "emotional bond" (Thurfjell, 2006), a bond all the stronger because it refers to shared stories and experiences. Among these references, some occupy a prominent place: for example, the mausoleum of Sayyida Zaynab in Syria⁸ (Mervin, 1996; Pinto, 2007) – sister of Imam Hussein whose capture and humiliation by the Caliph Yazid following the battle of Karbala was one of the rhetorical instruments used to rally armed Iraqi and Lebanese groups to fight in Syria in 2012 and 2013. From 2012, the slogan "Zaynab will not be captured a second time" flourished on posters and graphite in the southern suburbs of Beirut; "At your service, O Zaynab" is chanted by mourning crowds in Lebanon, Iraq and Iran at the funerals of Shia fighters killed in Syria.
- 13 A contemporary reading of the founding moments of Shia Islam, as well as the erection of its emblematic figures as models to be defended and imitated, are thus essential elements of the "awareness-raising measures"⁹ put in place to mobilize and justify armed struggle. In deploying such devices (commemorations, celebrations, funerals, audiovisual productions, etc.), the evocation of sacred figures in Shia Islam is prescriptive in nature, dictating moral codes, behaviours and guidelines. In the present dossier, Agnès Devictor shows how, from "sacred defence" invoked by Iran during the war against Iraq (1980-1988) to the war waged against the Islamic State in Syria and Iraq and named by Tehran "defence of holy places", there is a shift in the Iranian film representations of the war, and in particular the way in which the reference to Karbala is used. On two very distant fields, Sepideh Parsapajouh and Khalila Aude Coëffic explain the ways in which the sacralization of a cause through its symbolic connection to Karbala and Shiite martyrology is used respectively by the Iranian State and Lebanese Hezbollah to neutralize its possible dissenting uses; and, conversely, how, in the face of this institutional sacralization, "ordinary"¹⁰ women and men seize the same references, the same symbolic heritage, in order to promote alternative readings and memories, sometimes antagonistic.
- 14 If this universe of meaning mobilizes the memory of a sacred history, it is also nourished by an understanding of the contemporary political situation of the different

"Shia worlds". The Shia political imagination is first and foremost a geopolitical imagination, informed by a certain vision of global and regional power relations, and, consequently, by the definition of another (the "*dā' ishī*", the "*wahhabī*", the "*takfirī*", etc.). Political imagination, however, does not need an effective encounter with this "other" to be shared: it can perfectly (and, we dare say, even better) function because it is nourished by discourse on a disembodied and essentialized figure, reduced to a few physical and psychological traits. This is what Vincent Geisser shows, in a reflection mirroring the rest of the dossier, which, by focusing on an imaginary world with Shia political Islam as its object and no longer as a production environment, identifies the formation of a "Shia-free anti-Shiism" among certain French Sunni Muslims. The latter, who have rarely ever come into direct contact with Shia Muslims, nevertheless conceive a set of representations that feed the figure of an "imaginary Shia", and leads them to define themselves as Sunnis where the question of religious affiliation has never before given rise to an identity debate.

National contexts, partisan ideologies, individual beliefs

- 15 Articulation of the political representations of the different "Shia worlds" does not mean homogenization of the actors of Shia political Islam, any more than it would an alignment of these societies on a single ideology or on similar political practices of power or opposition, but the formation of a shared political imagination where national contexts, party ideologies and individual histories and beliefs are inserted and articulated. To say that an actor contributes to, or is a part of Shia political Islam says nothing about his political beliefs, the modes of mobilization he practices or in which he fits, the modalities of his engagement or his relationship to power. Political Shiism should not be confused with a single and homogeneous *praxis* or ideology: it is a universe of meaning (re)constructed and disseminated today in a context of violence by a set of actors and channels that contributes to its globalization and the development of solidarities that consolidate a feeling of belonging; a set of representations on the world and on the relationship of Shia Muslims to this world, each of whom makes a collective and/or personal use specific to the situation in which he finds himself, hence the flexibility of the uses of these sacred figures (Hertz, 1970). In short, a *culture*, in the same way that a "political culture" is identified in other partisan organizations, particularly as they were within the French and Italian Communist Parties, where identification "was not merely an internalization of norms, values, beliefs and behaviours, but the result of active work" by partisan organizations (Lazar, 1994: 17) and, we would add, by their audiences.
- 16 Analysis of the make-up of the Shia symbolic heritage is only meaningful if it is associated with the study of the conditions in which this symbolic heritage is produced, mobilized, lived and thought out. Such political imagination cannot be understood as merely the result of the passive reception of an institutional discourse: rather, it is the product of a joint construction within a partisan organization by committed individuals (Dubar, 1994: 231; Mischi, 2010: 273), including, on the part of the latter, exercises in reinterpretation and the negotiation of meanings proposed "from above"; all operations that contribute to the constitution of a "structure of meaning" (Passy, Giugni, 2001). Thus, the ideology of "resistance" (to the Israeli State) developed and

disseminated by Lebanese Hezbollah must be understood to reflect the imagination within which its supporters now place their action, and a reformulation within the broader framework of the "existential war"¹¹ that they evoke today to talk about the party's commitment on the Syrian fronts. In Iraq as in Lebanon, where this dossier's respective coordinators work, the eschatological narrative of the war against the Islamic State and the victorious rewriting of Karbala are consistent, for example, without contradiction, with the fighter's imperative concern to defend national borders and sovereignty, his community and his relatives (Calabrese, 2016 b).

- 17 Finally, joint consideration of collective imagination and its effects and formulations on a finer scale suggests an interest in a broader movement in which the social sciences are presently engaged, especially considering the sociology of collective action: rehabilitation of the role of ideas in political and/or armed commitments, by apprehending them "not as mere discourses on reality but as fully recognized practices embedded in strategies with practical consequences".¹²
- 18 The role of ideas; That is to say, in fact, the role of beliefs - whether religious or political. Far from reducing faith and identification with sacred figures to simple strategies, to a "circumstantial language" or to "a clever trick" (Bromberger, 1980: 118) by partisan institutions seeking to manufacture "blind consent", we would like to reaffirm here the sociological importance of taking into account the "existential dimension of belief, as lived and as practiced" (Lamine, 2010: 103), in order to think of belief in its materiality and in relation to the social issues in which it is embedded. In doing so, we become part of a tradition of research that, while taking seriously the role of belief in determining action, seeks to articulate the use of the religious referent to the objective conditions in which it is mobilized - a religious referent understood not only as a "lexicon" (Burgat, 2006), but also as a vector of meaning.
- 19 This approach prevents us from falling into a deadlock of readings that imply a "blindness" of actors who are supposed to have been deprived of any critical capacity simply because of the religious nature of their commitment.¹³ This approach moreover, dispenses with any consideration of the degree of belief, whether of intensity or sincerity: indeed, in order to exist and be efficient, a political imagination founded upon a religious lexicon requires less affinity to a doctrinal corpus from its members than it does an immanent feeling of social belonging or identification - such feelings giving rise to all kinds of representations and practices.

From sacralization to secularization ?

- 20 A final point for which the articles gathered in this dossier invite discussion is the status of the actors involved in constructing such collective imagination. In the social and political history of Shiism, it is the agents of the religious field, elites of the *marja'iya* or *mujtahid-s*, who, through family ties or through ties established in training within the *hawza*, have built vast transnational intellectual, economic and charitable networks (Corboz, 2015; Loüer, 2008; Luizard, 2014; Mervin, 2007). It seems however, that such historical networks, whose influence in the world reflects their age, prestige and significant financial resources, are not the main actors of the historical movement we are trying to present in this dossier. While some of the figures presented in the articles published here represent a certain religious capital, or place their political activity under the nominal authority of leading Shiite clerics, it is worth noting that the

most influential actors of these political Shiisms are now for the most part, laymen:¹⁴ identity entrepreneurs from the militia world, but also non-religious intellectual figures, or even "ordinary" men and women, all of whom participate to varying degrees, in the construction and dissemination of this collective imagination.

- 21 This centrality of non-religious actors in the production of a transnational Shia symbolic repertoire reflects a historical movement well known in the sociology of religions, but little explored with regard to Shia Islam: the appropriation – which proceeds from a double movement of reinterpretation and mobilization – of the religious resource politicized by actors outside or peripheral to the clerical field. In this issue, Benedict Robin-D'Cruz shows us how, beyond the ideological and sociological interrelationships that might reconcile Shia Islamist populism such as Sadrism with the Iraqi Left, the dialogue between these two political currents (and their 2018 electoral alliance) is possible only because there had been a reconfiguration of the balance of power within the Sadrist movement, including a separation between secular and religious elements. Without it being possible to extend the subject to all Muslim societies, Vincent Geisser presents the emergence of new producers of political imagination when he shows that the crystallization of an anti-Shiite sentiment within a certain French Muslim population is not so much about clerics mobilizing theological arguments in a doctrinal response to perceived heterodoxy, but as new interpretations arising among an educated middle class attentive to the discourse of certain geopolitical analysts and at the same time, active in digital communications spaces.
- 22 Such a process is certainly not radically new: firstly, any symbolic reference gives rise to profane, local and popular, individual and collective reinterpretations; secondly, well before 2003, Lebanese Hezbollah offered the example of a partisan organization under Shia political Islam whose political and military leaders did not necessarily come from religious schools or have significant religious capital. Of the seven members of the Hezbollah Advisory Council, the party's supreme body, two are not clerics, just as former party military leaders Imad Mughniyyeh and Mustafa Badreddine were not.
- 23 The current period however, is undoubtedly the first in which this phenomenon takes on such a regional dimension and becomes an integral part of this shared imagination, as evidenced, for example, by the centrality, in the production of war propaganda against the Islamic State, or even in the political iconography of certain movements, of the figure of Qasem Soleimani, Commander of the extraterritorial forces of the Guardians of the Iranian revolution. We can thus formulate the hypothesis, in contemporary political Shiism, of what we might call here, a secularization of political Shiism, which we will define, in an exploratory way, as a dispossession of religious specialists of their monopoly not on "salvation goods" (Weber, 1996: 345 sqq.), but on the production and political mobilization of this symbolic Shiite heritage. In any case, this is one of the avenues on which this dossier would like to invite further reflection.

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NOTES

1. Read for example S. Ghannoushi, "Terrorism and the Crisis of Sunni Islam", The Huffington Post, 19 October 2015.
2. Read for example A. Tokmajyan, "Hezbollah's Military Intervention in Syria, Political choice or religious obligation? " *Approaching Religion* 4 December 2014; M. al-Rabih, "Hezbollah and Iran in Syria", The Washington Institute for Near East policy, 2017; Z. Knaub, "Why is Hezbollah in Syria", *Small Wars Journals*, 2013.
3. For an analysis of the conflict in Syria giving priority to the denominational variable, see Balanche, 2018.
4. "The Karoui report seen by V. Geisser: 'The word "Islamism" is no longer necessarily operational in scientific terms", interview, *Mizane Info*, 2018, online: <http://www.mizane.info/rapport-karoui-v-geisser-le-mot-islamisme-nest-plus-forcement-operatoire/>.
5. The political expressions of certain minority currents of Shiism have, for their part, been the subject of important political science work. This is particularly the case for Zaydites in Yemen (see for example Bonnefoy, 2008; Dorlian, 2013; Brandt, 2017).
6. To name a sampling of recent works in a very rich literature, Abu Rida, 2012; Calabrese, 2016a; Chaib, 2009; Daher, 2014; Mervin, 2008.
7. A founding moment in the history of Shia Islam and, in particular, its martyrology, the Battle of Karbala was the scene of the death of the central figure of Hussein in 680 and marked the historic defeat of the Imam against the Caliphate as a political model for the Muslim community.
8. An important place of pilgrimage in the Shia world, located in the suburbs of Damascus.
9. By this we mean "all the material supports, the arrangement of objects, the staging, that the actors studied deploy in order to elicit emotional reactions that predispose those who experience them to support the defended cause" (Traïni, Siméant, 2009: 13).
10. By this expression, we mean, with Erik Neveu, the "protagonists not consecrated by instituted memory or media scenes" (Neveu, 2008).

11. To use Chiara Calabrese's expression from her Lebanese Hezbollah respondents, who describe their involvement in the war in Syria as *ḥarb al-wujūd* (Calabrese, 2016 b).

12. Read the call for contributions for the conference "*Des idées et des partis. Pour une histoire sociale des idées en milieu partisan*", (ideas and parties: toward a social history of ideas in a partisan context), organized in 2017 as part of the AFSP HiSoPo /Laboratoire Triangle (UMR 5206)/ Sciences Po Paris: https://ideespartis2017.sciencesconf.org/data/pages/AAC_Des_idees_et_des_partis_1.pdf project group.

13. These approaches, with regard to Islamist commitments, have given rise to numerous critical analyses in recent years (Asad, 2017; Blom, 2011; Lamine, 2018). This idea can also be found in works on the engagement of French communists. As B. Pudal and C. Pennetier wrote, "this 'thesis' of 'blindness' inherent to the power of illusion, is indeed frequently associated with the idea that the 'need' to believe in a better future, of men in general, and militants even more, combined with their lack of critical thinking, predisposed them to be victims of communist propaganda" (Pudal, Pennetier, 2017: 27).

14. By layman, we mean, as a certain usage in French requires, a social actor without a statutory religious function; a usage that makes it useful to distinguish this term from that of "secular", which refers to laicity as a legal concept of the relationship between public power and religious fact as it was formulated in France.

AUTEURS

ROBIN BEAUMONT

CéSor (Centre d'études en sciences sociales du religieux) / EHESS, Paris, France

ERMINIA CHIARA CALABRESE

CéSor (Centre d'études en sciences sociales du religieux) / EHESS, Paris, France