

U DX118

**Papers relating to Auguste Comte,
Positivism and the
Temple of Humanity, Liverpool**

1854 - 1946

Historical Background:

Isidore Auguste Marie François Xavier Comte was born on 19 January 1798 in Montpellier and is more commonly known as Auguste Comte. Following an education received at the Lycee Joffre and the University of Montpellier, Comte was accepted at the prestigious Ecole Polytechnique in Paris, only for it to close in 1816 for reorganisation. Comte, therefore, continued studying in Montpellier at the medical school.

Soon after, Comte returned to Paris and earned a living through small, odd jobs before becoming the student and secretary of the Comte de Saint-Simon. Comte became heavily influenced by Saint-Simon's utopian socialist philosophy and through him; Comte gained access to Parisian intellectual society, publishing various articles whilst in his employ. Comte later split from Saint-Simon in 1824 and despite his various publications, failed to find an academic post, thus he was forced to depend on sponsors and friends for financial assistance.

In 1825 Comte married Caroline Massin, only to be taken to a mental health hospital in 1826 due to a 'cerebral crisis'. He left the hospital without being fully healed and made a suicide attempt in 1827. Between 1830 and 1842, Comte published his major work, the six volume *The Course in Positive Philosophy*. Comte posited in the *Course* that humanity progresses in three phases (The Law of Three Stages) in its search for 'truth', namely "the Theological, or fictitious; the Metaphysical, or abstract; and the Scientific, or positive." -Comte. This theory was one of the first of social evolutionism. Comte's other focus in the *Course* was the hierarchical classification of the sciences in which he argued that sociology was the greatest of all the sciences (later to be replaced by anthropology). Comte's classification of the sciences remains the most popular to this day and as such Comte is regarded as a founder of the philosophy of science.

Following the breakdown of his marriage in 1842 Comte became close to John Stuart Mill and developed a platonic relationship with Clotilde de Vaux. His love for Vaux, after her death in 1846, bordered on the obsessive and became quasi-religious. During this time Comte created a new 'Religion of Humanity', detailed in his four volume *Systeme de politique positive* (1851-1854) and proposed a new 'positivist calendar'. His religion was never particularly successful although it helped encourage the development of various religious humanist and secular humanist organisations in the later 19th century. Comte's last work was the first volume of *La Synthese Subjective* (1856).

Auguste Comte died on 5 September 1857 in Paris, from stomach cancer. He was buried in Pere Lachaise Cemetery. The apartment at 10 rue Monsieur-le-Prince in Paris' 6th arrondissement, in which Comte lived from 1841 until his death, is now conserved as the Maison d'Auguste Comte.

Although not the inventor of the term 'sociology', Comte is considered the founder of the discipline whilst also developing the doctrine of positivism. He had a significant influence on other social thinkers of the 19th century including John Stuart Mill and George Eliot. Moreover, Comte coined the word altruism. Many of his theories and concepts of sociology and social evolution are now, however, out of date. Even in Comte's lifetime, his

contemporary John Stuart Mill, distinguished between a 'good Comte' (the author of the Course) and a 'bad Comte' (the author of the secular-religious System).

The first meeting of the positivist movement in Liverpool was held in 1879 with only five people in attendance. The first convert in Liverpool was Edmund Jones and the first Positivist teacher was Dr Carson, a social worker. Dr Carson was succeeded by Mr Crompton, director of the Blue Funnel Line, who was in turn succeeded by Sydney Style in 1908 as head of the Church of Humanity. Sydney Style had been born in Salisbury and had previously been a partner in the Liverpool law firm Style, Lindsay and Squarey. Before the Temple of Humanity was built in 1913, meetings were held in a converted stable in Falkland Street. One of Style's colleagues was Otto Baier, who conducted a service to commemorate the golden wedding of Mr and Mrs Style in 1928. Mrs Style wrote at least two books on Positivism including *The Voice of the Nineteenth Century*, *A Woman's Echo* and a biography of Auguste Comte.

Custodial history:

Found amongst the books of his son, Dr FCW Baier, now in the Brynmor Jones Library, 1976 and 1977 [U DX118/43]

Description:

This collection contains various records relating to Auguste Comte and the Positivist religion in England, in particular in Liverpool. U DX118/1-4 contain English translations of letters written by Auguste Comte to some of his followers. Other items include articles about Positivism and the Religion of Humanity, letters and circulars from Otto Baier in relation to the Temple of Humanity in Liverpool and orders of service for use in the Temple.

Extent: 102 items, 1 volume & 3 bundles

Related material:

Speech by John Stuart Mill [U DX1]

Papers of Thomas Joseph Haslam and Anna Maria Haslam [U DX66]

Access conditions: Access will be granted to any accredited reader

Language: The collection contains items in German, Spanish and French.

U DX118/1	English translations of letters from Auguste Comte to Dr G. Audiffrent Translated and handwritten by Sydney Style, relating to Comte's opinion on medical practice and other related theories such as the synthetic theory of diseases. Many of the letters have been annotated and corrected. 8 items	1854 - 1855
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U DX118/2	Notebook containing fair copies of the translations of letters found at U DX118/1 Handwritten translations with some annotations 1 volume	1854 - 1855
U DX118/3	Handwritten translation of a letter from Auguste Comte to John Fisher Thanking Fisher for his kind letter and relating to Comte's works 1 item	1868
U DX118/4	Handwritten translation of a letter from Auguste Comte to John Metcalf Relating to Metcalf's 'conversion' to Positivism 1 item	1869
U DX118/5	Typed circular from Dr Thomas Carson to the Positivists in Liverpool Relating to the death of Auguste Comte 1 item	25 Aug 1884
U DX118/6	Typed circular from Sydney Style to the Women and Workmen of Liverpool Relating to wages and dissuading violence 1 item	15 Aug 1911
U DX118/7	Letters to Otto Baier Correspondents include: C.H. Desch, K.W. Hodgson, Gertrude and Rudolf Petzold, F.S. Marvin, A.P. Edgar, C.M. White, J.T. Looney and Dora Sulman. Mainly relating to positivism and the Temple of Humanity. A letter in German contains a photograph of Hofkirche in Dresden. 14 items	1930 - 1945
U DX118/8	Post card from F.C.W. Baier to Violet Wood Relating to having a family service. The front picture is of the interior of the Temple of Humanity in Liverpool. 1 item	Mar 1933
U DX118/9	Letters to F.C.W. Baier from his father Otto Baier and another from Jane Style. Relates to general family matters and ideas about Positivism in practice, such as the use of the term Virgin Mother and the position of Jesus. 10 items	1935 - 1940
U DX118/10	Letters from Otto Baier Includes a letter to the Editor of the Birmingham Post relating to Richard Congreve and another relating to an article about science and religion in the News Chronicle. 2 items	1938 - 1941

U DX118/11	Typed letter from Ernest Thurtle, Ministry of Information to T. Edward Harvey MP Relating to the Religious Division of the Ministry. Includes some handwritten notes 1 item	17 Feb 1943
U DX118/12	Form of Service for the 19 Moses 57, Anniversary of the birth of Auguste Comte Includes a detailed order of service including prayers and annotated notes for a 'sermon'. 1 item	1911
U DX118/13	Notes by Otto Baier from a Positivist perspective Includes sections on History, Theocratic History, the Roman Empire, Fetichism and Theocratic Precepts. 1 bundle	c.1914
U DX118/14	Engraving of grave of Auguste Comte 1 item	20th cent.
U DX118/15	Engraving of the library at 10 Rue Monsieur-le-Prince, Paris Shows the room in which La Politique Positive was written 1 item	20th cent.
U DX118/16	Obituary of Sydney Style Newspaper cutting 1 item	20th cent.
U DX118/17	Notices and circulars from Otto Baier and the Temple of Humanity Mainly relating to forthcoming events in the Temple calendar 28 items	1921 - 1946
U DX118/18	Typed speeches and orders of service by [Otto Baier] made at the Temple of Humanity Includes addresses on the position of Jesus in the Positivist Religion and other principles of Positivism 1 bundle	1926 - 1939
U DX118/19	'An Epistle to Positivists and Those who believe in Humanity' by Joseph Walker Typed copy of a critique of Positivism and its apparent lack of progress 1 item	c.1937
U DX118/20	'Insistencia Religiosa a Su Santidad Pio XII' by Luis Lagarrigue Written in Spanish 1 item	20th cent.

U DX118/21	Poem written by [Mrs Style] entitled 'So spake I to mankind' In praise of Humanity 1 item	20th cent.
U DX118/22	Copy of Egyptian hieroglyphic alphabet 1 item	20th cent.
U DX118/23	Words and music for 'Love Divine, All Love Excelling' Tune from [Gnadauer Choralbuch] 1735 and words from E. Wesley (1707-1788) 1 item	20th cent.
U DX118/24	Poem entitled 'New Year's Ode' Adapted from Raoul Gineste, to be recited by the Children of the Sunday School 1 item	20th cent.
U DX118/25	Notes on 'First-Time Grandad's Jubilate re. Clari - Renate' Includes short verses of poetry 1 bundle	20th cent.
U DX118/26	Copy of the play 'The World and the Child' Typed copy of the 15th century religious play 1 item	20th cent.
U DX118/27	'Des englischen Dichters Gruss an die andern Duetschen' ['Some verses to some Germans'] by John Masefield, Poet Laureate Written in German 1 item	20th cent.
U DX118/28	Translation of an article entitled 'Violence' by Luis Lagarrigue Originally published in Spanish in 'The Nation' of Santiago, Chile. A Positivist response to the violence in Chile and the attempts to establish a totalitarian dictatorship 1 item	1938
U DX118/29	Form of Service, Founder's Day (Church of Humanity) Celebration at Anfield Cemetery Highly annotated with several handwritten notes, includes passages about past members of the Church now buried in Anfield Cemetery 1 item	22 May 1938
U DX118/30	Typed list of Positivist publications Includes books and periodicals 1 item	Jan 1894

U DX118/31	Typed list of Positivist publications Includes works by Dr Richard Congreve, Malcolm Quin and Auguste Comte 1 item	Jun 1897
U DX118/32	Prospectus and preface to 'Auguste Comte, Conservateur. Extraits de son oeuvre finale' Written in French 1 item	1898
U DX118/33	Typed list entitled 'The Positivist Library for the Nineteenth Century' Includes sections on poetry, science and history 1 item	19th cent.
U DX118/34	Typed copy of the 'Index to the Catechism of Positivist Religion' 1 item	19th cent.
U DX118/35	Notice for book on Auguste Comte by Dr. G. Audiffrent Written in French 1 item	19th cent.
U DX118/36	Copy of an article entitled 'Le Positivisme' by Pierre Ducasse Published in the journal L'Humanité. Written in French 1 item	20th cent.
U DX118/37	Charts, tables and calendar relating to Positivism Includes posters on 'The First Philosophy', the 'System of Sociolatriy or Social Worship', the 'Theoretical Hierarchy of Human Conceptions', 'Positive Classifications of the Eighteen Internal Functions of the Brain' and the 'Positivist Calendar'. 5 items	20th cent.
U DX118/38	Printed order of service for the Golden Wedding of Sydney and Jane Style Celebrated at the Temple of Humanity 2 items	16 Sep 1928
U DX118/39	Printed order of service for marriage 1 item	20th cent.
U DX118/40	Printed pamphlet 'Science and Religious Unity: A Letter Addressed to an Anglican Clergyman' by Malcolm Quin 1 item	29 Aug 1935

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| U DX118/41 | Printed pamphlet 'The Church of Humanity-Emergent: A Letter Addressed to Mr Malcolm Quin' by Otto Baier
Written in response to the pamphlet found at U DX118/40
1 item | Dec 1935 |
| U DX118/42 | Printed pamphlet 'An Italian Man's Letter addressed to a Liverpool Woman' Men of Good Will by Otto Baier
1 item | Jun 1936 |
| U DX118/43 | Notes by Dr F.C.W. Baier, written in German.
Includes notes relating to 'Die neuere deutsche Lyrik' by August Closs and 'Vrastmunt' by Erik Rooth, extract relating to 'Frast' from 'Deutsches Worterbuch' by J. Grenin
3 items | 20th cent. |