Santa Clara University
Scholar Commons

History   College of Arts & Sciences

1-17-2019

The Romantic Socialist Origins of Humanitariamism

Naomi J. Andrews
Santa Clara University, nandrews@scu.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarcommons.scu.edu/history
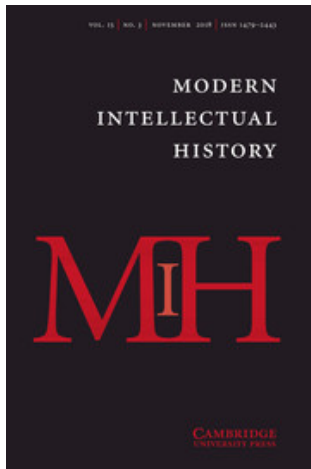
Part of the History Commons

Recommended Citation

Cambridge Core Share

THE ROMANTIC SOCIALIST ORIGINS OF HUMANITARIANISM

Modern Intellectual History

NAOMI J. ANDREWS

[Read this article for free](#)

Summary

"Humanitarian" (*humanitaire*) came into use in French contemporaneously with the emergence of romantic socialism, and in the context of the rebuilding of post-revolutionary French society and its overseas empire beginning in the 1830s. This article excavates this early idea of humanitarianism, documenting an alternative genealogy for the term and its significance that has been overlooked by scholars of both socialism and humanitarianism. This humanitarianism identified a collective humanity as the source of its own salvation, rather than an external, well-meaning benefactor. Unlike liberal models of advocacy, which invoked individualized actors and recipients of their care, socialists privileged solidarity within their community and rejected the foundational logic of liberal individualism. In tracing this history, this article considers its importance for contemporary debates about humanitarianism's imperial power dynamics.

How does Cambridge Core Share work?