David Nash

Secularism and Humanism

The nineteenth century is the first century in which definitions circumvented the globe promoting discussion of their helpfulness in describing the universe that humankind found itself within. This impetus is especially exemplified by the growth of unbelief into a movement in the nineteenth century. Form its inception right through to its mutation in the twentieth century it would, throughout, be obsessed with such words and labels. Oftentimes these were attempts to escape from the unhelpfulness of a previous label as much as to forge something innovative and helpful with a new one.

The urge to categorise such thought can be useful for the historian in tracking down the emergence of ideologies of unbelief that reach maturity later in a range of nineteenth century writings. However, we should be aware that the search for such coherent and fully realised beliefs is capable of missing those with ideas that may simply be classed as religiously unorthodox. This line of thinking has been a valuable product of the work of Tim Whitmarsh who has suggested the potential for such explorations of Ancient Greece. (Whitmarsh, 2016) Certainly the later Seventeenth Century and the Eighteenth Century was peopled with individuals who held a variety of views relevant to later Secularism and Humanism. These generally emerge in scattered writings of the period and exhibit scepticism about the Bible, about the authority of scripture, the precise human or divine nature of Jesus Christ, the legitimacy of successive church establishments and the benevolent (or otherwise) nature of Religion broadly defined. These individuals speculated about accepted orthodoxies and found a

small but significant underground readership prepared to discuss this with the likeminded. The writings of individuals like John Toland, Thomas Woolston, Thomas Chubb, Peter Annet and Anthony Collins had created a kaleidoscope of questions about the claims of the Christian religion. These called into question the truth of the resurrection, the power of prophecy, questioned the literal truth of the bible and pursued anti-clerical agendas.

What makes this underground culture relevant to this later period is that a wide spread, but currently largely undetected, unorthodoxy could be evident in the conspicuous number of individuals who flocked to the Jacobin cause in England during the 1790s. These had arguably been inspired by the growth and confidence of beliefs we might now describe as Deist, which initially was confined to respectable individuals who subscribed to such views in private. (Royle, 1974, 23) Such beliefs stripped back the earthly trappings of religion, seeing them as evidence of human folly, antagonistic to the ideals of a creator God and wielded to protect shabby vested interests. Instead deists believed in matter subject to newtonian laws and a supreme being who lay behind this universe, but one who had stepped firmly back from His creation. Such a position dovetailed nicely with the political radicalism of the period which railed against overarching and overpowering institutions such as the monarchy and the church. At times these two could even look as though they actually blurred into one institution, especially under England's common law of blasphemy which stated that religion was 'part and parcel of the laws of England' and to attack one was to attack the other. (Nash, 1999, 32-7) Developments from this evolving culture of criticism constitutes the start of our story in tracing a lineage for modern Secularism and Humanism.

Many historians have noted the popularity of Corresponding Societies that spread news and information about the French Revolution, inspired also by the successful revolution in America in pursuit of individual human rights. One individual who had been closely linked with both

events was Thomas Paine who had taken action to assist both fledgling revolutionary regimes. Paine is arguably the confluence where the stream of anti-establishment political feeling met with the previously discussed submerged undercurrent of religious scepticism and Deism. Paine wrote effectively about both penning a stirringly popular defence of the French Revolution and its politics in his *Rights of Man*. He also wrote an enterprising religious counterpart, entitled *The Age of Reason*, which became a primer for at least two generations of atheists and secularists. In this work Paine advocated a clear materialism and active defence of the pure enlightenment appeal to reason that he felt religious and political repression aimed to derail. This counter revolution, so he argued, had profound repercussions for the enlightenment inspired ideas of freewill, individual rights and free inquiry.

Paine's ideas of smashing systems which stood in the way of humankind and its freedoms, alongside his forthright style, would comprise one wing of Secularism and Atheism that arguably lasted to the end of the nineteenth century. Paine's leading follower, Richard Carlile, was a West Country artisan who had been traumatised by watching the bloody events of Peterloo unfold in 1819. Thereafter he was scarcely out of the government's eyeline. Immersing himself in London Radicalism he emerged spouting a mixture of republicanism, enlightenment scepticism and fierce and uncompromising anti-clericalism. This took him past Paine's Deism into Atheism, yet he consciously heightened his search for alternative morality that would save humankind from religion. This would eventually lead him to distance himself from Paine's belief in life after death and the concept of the human soul. (Bush, 2016, 27-8)

Having imbibed the message of Thomas Paine, and not a little of his confrontational style, Richard Carlile set about an energetic campaign of radical and freethought publishing which saw him frequently arrested, prosecuted and imprisoned variously for blasphemy and sedition. This scarcely silenced Carlile since he used the different legal proceedings against him as a

means of publicising and showcasing the tyranny that he objected to. When incarcerated he continued to edit his radical publishing ventures from his prison cell. What was remarkable was that Carlile attracted many vigorous and devoted followers. Individuals who would step in to replace him as publicists and agitators who themselves were prosecuted and imprisoned when they followed in his wake.

Carlile and his followers were a remarkably visible agitation, at least judging by the quantity of pamphlets and periodicals that reported their activities and court cases at great length. Michael Rectenwald credits Carlile and his followers with creating a culture of knowledge acquisition and transfer that had a sustained impact on intellectual radicals, as well providing an underpinning for the intellectual aspirations of artisans - some which would survive in autodidact approaches and attitudes (Rectenwald, 2016, 38). Despite this the relative success they enjoyed as an active agitation must be judged as questionable. This issue highlights a dilemma that faces all historians of this 'movement' - whether to judge its success by the concrete things such a group actively strove for and whether they were successful; or to spend more time searching for a more subtle or ambiguous definition of success in charting an underground culture which such programmes of moral reform inspired.

Although Carlile and his agitation fed into the radicalism of these years, and Carlile himself frequently advocated the republican cause, it is notable that the anti-clerical wing of this was marginalised and dwarfed by constitutional radical agitation. Nonetheless, Carlile and his followers effectively established the blueprint for militant Atheist campaigning attitudes bequeathing this to later century fellow travellers.The similarity of aims advocated, and the approaches adopted by both these early century freethought advocates, have been noted by historians as effectively constituting a Paine/Carlile 'tradition', what Rectenwald calls a 'conflict thesis' between science and religion. (Rectenwald, 2016, 34) This 'tradition' was later

enthusiastically adopted by the central character of later 19th century Secularism, Charles Bradlaugh, who added something of his own character to this - mobilised, as it was, by his brushes with both religious compulsion and moral injustice witnessed and experienced whilst serving in the army in Ireland. Bradlaugh eventually became the dominant figure in the later nineteenth century launching his campaigning organisation, the National Secular Society in 1866, which is still a force for secular campaigning today.

Charles Bradlaugh's attitudes also coalesced around the irrationality of Christian belief. His first pamphlet, allegedly completed when he was sixteen years of age, indicates effectively how doubts about the veracity of Christian teaching might have been widespread amongst youthful readers and artisans in mid century. It also gives a glimpse into the preoccupations of the doubtful and the specific tools they might have used to make such doubts coherent. In this text Bradlaugh draws from the Creed, to which every youth of this period would have been exposed, and begins a dissection of this central text of the practicing Christianity of his day. He notes how espousing 'belief' involves accepting the unknown and unknowable, and likewise the nature of God himself appeared to be promoted as a mystery beyond understanding. In analysing the Fall Bradlaugh found it unacceptable that knowledge and reason had contributed profoundly to the casting out of humankind. Thereafter the pamphlet moves into biblical criticism, which became a mainstay of secularist publicity. This sometimes expanded into three night long debates between secularists and Christian speakers, meetings which frequently played to packed houses throughout London and many other towns and cities. In Braldaugh's initial pamphlet the text noted the conflicted meaning of specific passages (in one section outlining disagreements about the omnipotence of the Almighty). From here the text adopted another popular tactic of questioning the uniqueness and supposed primacy of Christian revelation by comparing it to the doctrines of other religions. Bradlaugh here suggested how the Christian doctrine of the incarnation must surely derive from Hinduism. The Creed's suggestion that Jesus would

eventually come again to 'judge the quick and the dead' assumed a future state of being for which there was no evidence. Secularism's, by now genteel, anticlericalism appeared here in noting how mention of the Catholic Apostolic Church conjured images of the racks and thumbscrews of the Inquisition for the adolescent Bradlaugh. He concluded that the Creed was '...one of the most ridiculous declarations of faith imaginable.' (Bradlaugh, 1849, 5-8, 10, 12-13)

Two years before his death in 1891 Bradlaugh would take stock of Secularism's achievements, noting that trying to tie Christianity down to the false promises, mistakes and immorality of the Bible was a tactic that had perhaps now outlived its usefulness. But this had happened, so he argued, because the advocates of Christianity had themselves abandoned this as fundamental to their faith. (Bradlaugh, 1889, 5) To Bradlaugh the pointed success of the campaign to undermine the Bible as an authoritative text within Christianity was hard evidence that Secularism had been successful. Thereafter this same pamphlet indicated that forms of modernisation were the keystone of the Secularist and Atheist legacy. This encompassed enabling society to cast off forms of primitive behaviour such as slavery, the abolition of which he directly linked to the power of unbelief working in the mind of individuals such as William Wilberforce. (Bradlaugh, 1889, 7) In a similar vein it was modern enlightened views that had transformed the treatment of the insane - where Christianity had only offered '... penalties rather than the curatives for mental maladies.' Likewise, those who relied upon prayer for the recovery from illness of their loved ones were now, thanks to enlightened secular views dubbed "'peculiar people'". (Bradlaugh, 1889, 12) Secularism had also worked to remove the threat of eternal torment as 'the probable fate of the great majority of the human family.' (Bradlaugh, 1889, 15) The rights of unbelievers had also been gradually recognised by a society that had been forced to confront the idea that they did not represent a threat to morality merely because they were godless. (Bradlaugh, 1889, 15)

These summations indicate that the campaigning thrust of secularism, at least according to Bradlaugh was a quasi-whig enhancement and sustained celebration of human progress, one where particular milestones and victories over obscurantism could readily be identified. These were sometimes ideological, but equally sometimes constituted the more concrete achievement of rights which could be observed, and celebrated as 'gains' taking society away from Christianity and its spurious dominance. Taken together these could be equated with a crude species of secularisation, or at least what probably constituted this phenomenon in the late nineteenth century. This closely complemented Bradlaugh's Liberal individualism which also campaigned, during his brief time as a member of Parliament, against what he saw as illegitimate and damaging vested interests (Nash, 2000, 104).

The logic of this position placed Bradlaugh as staunchly supportive of challenges to the laws that underpinned the Church of England established by law. Alongside removing many of the legal disabilities that were active against unbelievers (such as the swearing of oaths in parliament, the establishment of the right to affirm in court and the right to a secular funeral), this served notice that occasions when the blasphemy laws were challenged would be cast as campaigns on a further front to both promote secular views and to break the power of Christianity. Bradlaugh's writings placed such hazardous but necessary work in a long and liberalising tradition describing what he called heresy as '... always virtuous, and this whether truth or error'. (Bradlaugh, 1882, 5) Irrespective of challenges to religious doctrine Bradlaugh argued all advances in thought led their progenitors to be initially labelled as heretics, a view which he emphatically shared with G. J. Holyoake. For both the value of 'heresy' meant all possible human advances owed so much to such ideological risk takers in many fields of human inquiry. In his words 'the right to speak and the right to print has been partly freed from the fetters forged through long generations of intellectual prostration.' (Bradlaugh, 1882, 7-64). In effect this demonstrates that a struggle for both past and future freedoms was fundamental to

the Bradlaugh stance around how to establish atheism and secularism in a Britain to be persuaded that it should now, of necessity, entertain a more tolerant religious and intellectual climate.

In this respect the Bradlaugh wing of secularism retained a strong metropolitan presence. A phenomenon fed by Bradlaugh's own campaigns for national recognition, and his long running campaign to enter Parliament which he eventually did in 1886 after a five and a half year struggle. When we add this to his episodic proximity to legal proceedings then he starts to appear as the ideological heir to Richard Carlile. Both espoused a belief in the idea that humankind could be liberated from forms of tyranny whether these be the thraldom of religion or the thraldom of poverty forced on the unfortunate through their inability to control their own fertility. This version of neo-Malthusianism was effectively common to both men and regularly appeared in aspects of their campaigning. This notably cystlised in the Knowlton pamphlet trial of 1877 in which Bradlaugh alongside Annie Besant stood trial for publishing a birth control pamphlet, *The Fruits of Philosophy*, espousing the twin motives of free speech and the right of individuals to contraceptive knowledge otherwise hidden from them. Although convicted the judge exonerate them from malevolent motives surrounding their actions.

Another tributary of more obviously rationalist thought that had a lasting effect upon nineteenth century Freethought and its development were the enlightenment ideas which coalesced around utopianism. In England (and Scotland) this meant the ideas (and to a lesser extent the sporadic movements) of Robert Owen. Driven by antipathy to the 'Old Immoral World' (of which religion appeared to be a cornerstone) Owen argued vociferously for rationalist alternatives. His utopian 'New Moral World', in various guises, sought to remove and destroy nefarious influences upon the potentially perfectable development of human society and the human character. Religion was identified as one of these negative influences and, instead Owen strove for perfectability

upon earth. As one commentator put this Owen responded to the 'botched response' that

religion had produced when confronted with the industrial revolution and its maladies. This had

focussed upon unrealised salvation in distant (or even illusory) future lives - eschewing the

chance to help with immediate material conditions for those who suffered in this world. (Davis,

2011, 106) 'Thus religious expression was excluded from all his communitarian experiments

and this, alongside with the idea of a state of perfection within creation led Royle to suggest that

Owen was effectively an orthordox eighteenth century deist born slightly too late. (Royle, 1974,

59).

In the turmoil of the 1820s Owen's ideas were painstakingly reworked by others who sought

social, economic and religious solutions to the problems that afflicted a society coming to terms

with aspects of industrialisation and the end of a wartime economy. One facet of Owen's work

relevant to our story was the creation of a network of social missionaries who spread his own

'gospel'. In this he went beyond the severe class rhetoric of Carlile hoping to address the

influential in the country to surrender their positions of power and control over social relations in

favour of a benign surrender to Owen's principles. This quasi-social gospel was to be spread

through a branch system with lectures and pamphlets which would, allegedly, assist many to

see religion as superstition and error, rather than the outright tyrannical force that had

dominated the minds of Carlile and his adherents. Between 1839 and 1841 it is estimated that

as many as two and half million tracts were circulated and 1,500 lectures given each year in

pursuit of this cause. (Royle, 1974, 62) Notably this movement also overlapped with the Chartist

movement, and the Coalition of aims this represented adds to the confusion about the precise

level of support that Owenite rationalist ideas had throughout the country. Robert Owen himself

was always more interested in the explosive potential of his utopianism than the less glamorous

Impact that he would have upon single individuals. that his attention was drawn away from the

missionary scheme in favour of utopian communitarianism. The effect of this latter experiment

was fleeting and after it Owen's own absence from the scene left this wing of freethought and rationalist activity in some considerable disarray. Eventually, arising from this, but with many of these emphases intact, was the alternative to the Paine/Carlile tradition. An example of this different lineage of thought is provided by the ex-Owenites' reaction to the publication of the Knowlton pamphlet. Many shunned the chance to support this stand for free speech disliking its moral tone and objecting to its malthusian assumption that resources were finite and family limitation was most effective way out of poverty. Ex-owenites would have declared that sharing the full fruits of wealth amongst all was a more lasting and moral, if still utopian, solution.

In contrast to Bradlaugh's confrontationalism, this alternative ideological emphasis was that presided over by the ex-owenite George Jacob Holyoake. Although a generation older than Bradlaugh, which places his formative years in the turmoil of 1830s and 1840s, Holyoake was to eventually outlive Bradlaugh and remained as a presence invoked by subsequent generations until the former's death in 1906. Having witnessed a plethora of ideological and campaigning failures which had stemmed from the fragmenting and often abortive Owenite vision, Holyoake was invariably more cautious, lacking the bravado and taste for set piece confrontation beloved of Bradlaugh. He appeared often, to his enemies within the secular movement, to be more conciliatory and in awe of both religious practitioners and the rich and powerful. Sometimes this is cited as an individual part of his character, but other explanations lend themselves. He may have inherited his taste for compromise from the malleability of owenism. Yet equally his artisan autodidacticism would lead him to display deference to a range of authorities that he both read and met. Additionally Holyoake wanted to preserve what he could for Owenism and pragmatism was essential to realise this. Some have taken this further to see Holyoake' eclectic thought and actions as an important ideological link which conveyed scientific method and conclusions to the radical culture of mid century England, whilst blending this with liberal libertarianism and its principles. (Rectenwald, 2016).

Holyoake's taste for compromise attracted followers, more obviously in the provinces, who shared this less confrontational approach. Several of these formed groups in towns and cities, predominantly where light industry flourished. As such they were characterised as having a sect like or congregational structure which was in part a reaction to the less secure and durable circuit of Owenite lecturers - harsh lessons had been learned. This would periodically set them at odds with the national movement presided over by Bradlaugh because these provinces adopted a far more conciliatory attitude to the other religious groups in their midst. (Nash, 1992).

Whilst Holyoake certainly appeared in several debates with Christian apologists he was noted for a more philosophical approach to the problems faced by unbelievers. His mission, shared by those in the provinces, was to provide a species of protection for the rainbow of ideas that constituted criticism, doubt, agnosticism, freethinking and atheism. This seemed necessary in provincial England and Scotland where unbelievers could regularly face severe criticism and worse at the hands of the local religiously zealous. Holyoake's first major campaign after the full scale collapse of Owenism demonstrated this approach. He formed an organisation called the Anti-Persecution Union which expressly aimed to combat all forms of religious prejudice and legal actions against those considered to have displayed unorthodox views. This meant that he regularly found himself prepared to offer support to the religious that were finding themselves indicted and oppressed by other religions, or indeed sometimes by established branches of their own religion that would not tolerate forms of unorthodoxy. The contents of this periodical indicate that Holyoake sought a rapprochement with all religious thinkers, not simply in Britain. He sent letters of support and established fighting funds to aid those imprisoned for transgressions of the local religious establishment. Emphasising his pan-theocratic defence of all forms of religious freedom he declared to the people of Edinburgh:

We ask, is it fitting, is it just, that *any* individual should be denied the right to express what he thinks true; be he either bribed or terrified into silence when conscience bids him speak? (*The Movement and Anti-Persecution Gazette* no. 27 15 June 1844).

Holyoake's organisational instinct was eventually incorporated into his ideological breakthough creation of the concept of 'Secularism', which he began to publicise at great pace after 1851. This new idea and departure can be considered to be many things. It marked, simultaneously the reaction to organisational failure, and it also wanted to move beyond the pejorative and toxic implications that had congregated around the dismissive term infidelity. (Rectenwald, 2016, 73). As he put it later in 1871 '...nothing can more completely "conceal and disguise" the purposes of Freethought than the old names imposed upon it by its adversaries, which associate with guilt its conscientious conclusions and impute to it as outrages, its acts of self-defence.' (Holyoake, 1871, Chapter II) Yet equally this initiative was potentially an extension of Owenite idealism and a desire to sustain social relationships. Certainly much of the Owenite heritage stuck to the Holyoake wing of freethought in the third quarter of the nineteenth century. The creation of 'Secularism' might also be seen as a step forward in aligning freethought with mid and later century Liberalism, a link which was to flourish as the century progressed.(Royle 1980, 218-245) In essence the ideology of Secularism avoided the confrontation model created by Carlile and did not seek the destruction or removal of religion. A later quotation from the same source implies this latter intention - 'To promote in good faith and good temper the immediate and material welfare of humanity, in accordance with the laws of Nature, is the study and duty of a Secularist, and this is the unity of principle which prevails amid whatever diversity of opinion may subsist in a Secular Society, the bond of union being the common convictions of the duty of advancing the Secular good of this life, of the authority of natural morality, and of the utility of material effort in the work of human improvement.' (Holyoake, 1871, Chapter V). Whilst he shared some of the mid-century exaggerated trust in the power of liberal ideas and institutions

he adopted an approach of 'permeation' which would later be familiar to the Fabians. This meant that he asserted the detached nature of religious revelation from the realities of the universe and of daily life and morals, as such they could be dismissed as irrelevant or as more marginal speculation beyond what could be discerned and demonstrated. This fruitless preoccupation with the unknown was to be replaced by a renewed focus upon the knowable universe, something which greatly explains Holyoakes fondness for harnessing discussion alongside the latest developments in scientific, political, psychological and social theory. For him a great tide of liberal progress would steadily pull society away from its religious roots creating an enforced and unstoppable secularisation of society in which all would consent and conspire. This has awoken recent scholarly attention and has made Holyoake appear a more prescient and modern thinker in the light of twentieth century experiences of secularisation, especially in the era of Charles Taylor's monumental book *The Secular Age*. (Rectenwald, 2016)

But the work of the different wings of the secular movement, as well as the important work of individuals, succeeded in combating a number of injustices and grievances perpetrated upon them by Victorian England.(Royle, 263-94) The right to an atheist funeral was conceded towards the end of the century and the early years of the twentieth saw the recognition that money could be legitimately left to secular organisation for propaganda work. The right to free expression was gradually conceded as it became is central tenet of Liberalism. This was inspired by the mainstream acceptance of the arguments of John Stuart Mill which had earlier come to be the ideological underpinning of the secular movement after 1850. (Royle, 1980; Nash, 1982) Prosecutions for blasphemy, which were a feature of the earlier part of the century, came to be largely marginalised by the end of this same century and recognised as a tool of persecution rather than for the protection of religion and morals. (Nash, 1999)

One other, but later, element of quasi secularist belief that deserves mention is the appearance of Positivism in Britain. This drew upon the ideas of August Comte and represented a turning away from the apparent harshness of undiluted secularism. This advocated a worship of humanity's achievements and had an abstract quality which made it attractive to many in intellectual circles, again in contrast to the class makeup of Secularism which had a predominantly skilled working class following. To some this appeared to be a compromise abandonment of strictly material interpretations of the ,and this was something of a later bifurcation which drew on the arguments the Holyoake and Bradlaugh wings had initiated. Yet, the area's leading historian has noted how its influence as an alternative to either Christianity or more mainstream Secularism was limited. Although obscure and arcane, the essential ideas of Positivism did influence individuals who were highly influential. The lawyer, writer and political activist Frederic Harrison fell under Positivism's spell at Oxford but later dissented from the views of his tutor Richard Congreve. The distinguished twin brothers Vernon and Godfrey Lushington (both lawyers, with the latter having a distinguished career as Permanent Under Secretary of State to the Home Office) were also strong advocates of Positivism. The later century intellectual Gilbert Murray was also a Positivist taking many of its principles into arguments both against and for the Second Boer War and the First World War respectively. Murray eventually became Vice President of the League of Nations in 1916. In this respect positivism had an influence way beyond the extremely small number of adherents that it actually had. (Wright, 1986) It was also important since it offered later century opponents of religion some alternatives which eventually were to prove important for the trajectory of secular ideas and their translation into new idioms in the 20th century.

The end of the 19th century also saw the growth of what would become the modern humanist movement in Britain. Prior to this Humanism had the same connotations of vagueness and seeking of spiritual fulfillment that had put die-hard 19th century secularists off the Positivist

movement. Eventually it merged with Ethicism, a series of ideas which again sought a new

answer to explaining the ethics and motivations for human behaviour beyond theological

explanations. This was a new ideological emphasis which had arrived from America, pioneered

by Felix Adler and Stanton Coit. The essentially came together in South Place Ethical Society

which had its base in Conway Hall (located in Red Lion Square, Holborn, London). (Tribe, 1967)

This had a congregational like atmosphere but equally attracted important figures, such as J.A.

Hobson and J.M. Robertson who were to prove influential in taking such ideas into public

circulation in the twentieth century.

Bibliography

Michael Laccohee Bush, (2016) *The Friends and Following of Richard Carlile: A Study of Infidel Republicanism in Early Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Diss, Twopenny Press)

Charles Bradlaugh, (1849) *A Few Words on the Christian's Creed* (London, Robert Forder, 1891 reprint)

Charles Bradlaugh, (1882) *Heresy: Its Utility and Morality A Plea and a Justification* (London, Freethought Publishing Company)

Charles Bradlaugh, (1889) *Humanity's Gain from Unbelief* (London, Freethought Publishing Company)

Robert A Davis, (2011) 'Robert Owen and Religion' in eds. Noel Thompson and Chris Williams *Robert Owen and his Legacy* (Cardiff, University of Wales Press)

George Jacob Holyoake (1871) *The Principles of Secularism* (London)

The Movement and Anti-Persecution Gazette no. 27 15 June 1844

David Nash (1999) *Blasphemy in Modern Britain 1789 to the Present* (Aldershot, Ashgate)

David Nash (1992) *Secularism, Art and Freedom* (London, Pinter)

David Nash, (2000), 'Charles Bradlaugh, India and the many chameleon destinations of republicanism' in eds David Nash and Antony Taylor, *Republicanism in Victorian Society* pp 106-24 (Stroud, Sutton)

Michael Rectenwald, (2016) *Nineteenth-Century British Secularism* (Basingstoke, Palgrave)

Edward Royle (1974) *Victorian Infidels* (Manchester, Manchester University Press: Rowman and Littlefield).

Edward Royle (1980) *Radicals, Secularists and Republicans* (Manchester, Manchester University Press: Rowman and Littlefield).

David Tribe (1967) *One Hundred Years of Freethought* (London, Elek Books).

Tim Whitmarsh (2016) *Battling the Gods: Atheism in the Ancient World* (London, Faber and Faber).

T.R. Wright, (1986) *The Religion of Humanity: The Impact of Comteian Positivism on Victorian Britain* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press)

Further Reading

Michael Laccohee Bush, (2016) *The Friends and Following of Richard Carlile: A Study of Infidel Republicanism in Early Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Diss, Twopenny Press). Wide ranging study of the first of nineteenth century English Secularism's prime movers, written by a mature scholar who has worked on the relevant material for many years

David Nash (1999) *Blasphemy in Modern Britain 1789 to the Present* (Aldershot, Ashgate). In depth study of the phenomenon of blasphemy which carries the story into the twentieth century

David Nash (1992) *Secularism, Art and Freedom* (London, Pinter). First, and still only in depth study of a local secular society that sheds more light upon the Holyoake wing of Secularism and its local manifestations.

Michael Rectenwald, (2016) *Nineteenth-Century British Secularism* (Basingstoke, Palgrave). The latest treatment of the area which sees a deeper significance for Holyoake's ideological stances about peaceful co-existence between religion and the secular. As such it draws upon post 2000 debates about the relevance of the idea of secularisation.

Edward Royle (1974) *Victorian Infidels* (Manchester, Manchester University Press: Rowman and Littlefield). First deep coverage of the development of secular ideas from th 1790s to 1866. Encyclopedic coverage that easily suggests jumping off points for further research

Edward Royle (1980) *Radicals, Secularists and Republicans* (Manchester, Manchester University Press: Rowman and Littlefield). Carries the story on from 1866-1915. Has the same attention to detail as *Victorian Infidels*

David Tribe (1967) *One Hundred Years of Freethought* (London, Elek Books). Written by a President of the National Secular Society. ow dated but valuable as a way of encountering an 'insiders

Tim Whitmarsh (2016) *Battling the Gods: Atheism in the Ancient World* (London, Faber and Faber). A valuable book for introducing the idea that atheists and secularists, though hard to find, encourage new methods of investigation into their presence before the 1790s.

T.R. Wright, (1986) *The Religion of Humanity: The Impact of Comteian Positivism on Victorian Britain* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press). Scholarly history of the Postitivist movement and its ideas. Its influence can then be traced by following the careers of the personnel mentioned and their later associations and associates.