

Secularism - France and England compared...

DiPs at *The Blue Mugge* pub Tuesday 5th May 2015. 7.45pm to 9.15pm

1. . The Telegraph last week had this headline: Muslim Schoolgirl Told Skirt is too Long under Secular Laws... then "...the 2004 French ban includes Islamic headscarves, Jewish kippa or skullcap, large Christian Crosses or any other "ostentatious sign of religion". Does this indicate clear differences across the Channel relating to all below?
2. The word - take these definitions:
 - a) *Secularism* is a principle that involves two basic propositions. The first is the strict separation of the state from religious institutions. The second is that people of different religions and beliefs are equal before the law
 - b) The view that religious considerations should be excluded from civil affairs or public education.

Issues and questions around definitions of the word....

3. England has been relatively tolerant on issues related to secularism?
If so, when did this tolerance start? Recently; decades ago, centuries ago, across millenia...
4. The Church of England's position reviewed. Compare with churches in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.
5. i) *Humanism* (in its various manifestations) constitutes one of the most enduring answers to the question: what is the human position in the world? Its origins can be traced to a philosophical and literary movement which emerged in 14th Italy, revolving around the recovery and rehabilitation of classical Greek and Latin texts and the reforming of education accordingly. The coining of the term *humanism* is dated early 19th century in Germany.... the contemporary usage is more generalized, denoting a focus on human agents as the dominant central actors in the world.
ii) *Humanist* positions taken on religion in general, and more specifically on faith schools, on Islam and other non-Christian faiths. Humanist funerals and the like...
6. The paradox of France: the crucial importance of *Catholicism* in the country's history. Then, the French Revolution... and a secular state ...

So, a long history, currently based on the 1905 French law on the separation of church and state.

The word *laïcité* has been used, from the end of the 19th century on, to mean the freedom of public institutions, especially primary schools, from the influence of the [Catholic Church](#)^[9] in countries where it had retained its influence, in the context of a [secularization](#) process. Today, the concept covers other religious movements as well.

Proponents assert the French state secularism is based on respect for [freedom of thought](#) and [freedom of religion](#). Thus the absence of a [state religion](#), and the subsequent [separation of the state and Church](#), is considered by proponents to be a prerequisite for such freedom of thought. Proponents maintain that *laïcité* is thus distinct from [anti-clericalism](#), which actively opposes the influence of religion and the [clergy](#)

7. Charlie Hebdo... resonances still active today... A review of our views – *Je suis Charlie*?
8. Compare and contrast English, British and French situations and attitudes...

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