

# NSS welcomes initiative to mark freethought history month

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The National Secular Society has welcomed an initiative to mark the history of freethought and secularism throughout April.

American activist Luciano Gonzalez, from North Carolina, is working with historians to make April the International History Month of Freethought, Humanism and Secularism.

Gonzalez has [said](#) the purpose of the month is "to encourage the discovery, celebration and contemplation of the long history of secularism, humanism and freethought by everyone, not just humanists, secularists and freethinkers". She hopes people will learn more about "histories that have been forgotten, were never known publicly and were erased" and become aware of the efforts of secularist activists and historians.

In a [blog post](#) on *Patheos* last week Gonzalez encouraged participants to share their ideas on what they would like to learn on the subject, make videos and organise events.

The month was partly chosen because George Holyoake, the man who coined the term secularism, was born on 13 April.

NSS council member and historian Bob Forder said the society "enthusiastically supported" the initiative.

"Secularism in the UK has a long and heroic history. At the NSS we are proud of our traditions and individuals like Thomas Paine, Richard Carlile, George Jacob Holyoake, Annie Besant and Chapman Cohen. Both our first two Presidents, Charles Bradlaugh and George William Foote, struggled against prejudice and intolerance to establish secularist principles.

"And there have always been close links between the NSS and the USA, with British secularists supportive of the secular provisions of the American constitution.

"Understanding the ideals of the secularist movement and the rich traditions of our predecessors is vital if we are to identify challenges to secularism today and formulate consistent, principled responses to them. We wish Luciano Gonzalez and others the best of luck and hope there are many more secularist history months to come."

The NSS has been campaigning for a fairer, secular society since 1866, and there is more information on the society's [history](#) on its website.

*The image shows NSS founder Charles Bradlaugh (1833-1891).*

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