

Subscribe to NSS Podcasts: [Apple Podcasts](#) | [Android](#) | [Google Podcasts](#) | [Stitcher](#) | [Spotify](#) | [RSS](#) | [YouTube](#) | [Blubrry](#) | [TuneIn](#).

[I'm listening to the latest episode of the National Secular Society podcast, with news and expert analysis from across the secularist movement. You can find out more and subscribe here: Click to tweet](#)

Ep 51: Laïcité and free speech in France

Posted: Tue, 08 Jun 2021

Satire is "the oxygen of a democracy," according to [Caroline Fourest](#), a French writer, filmmaker, feminist, anti-extremist and former [Charlie Hebdo](#) journalist. Free speech, including satire, is a vital part of *laïcité* or secularism.

Secularist principles are deeply enshrined in French law and culture. In this episode, [Emma Park](#) speaks to Fourest about the place of these principles in France today, and the threat currently posed to them by Islamist extremism.

Fourest considers the role of *Charlie Hebdo* as a descendant of 19th-century satirical newspapers that were critical of Catholicism. She then discusses her personal experience of working at *Charlie* in the 2000s, and about the magazine's decision to republish the "[blasphemous](#)" cartoons of [Mohammed](#) originally printed in the Danish newspaper *Jyllands-Posten*.

Fourest argues that, for all satirical cartoons, the context must be considered – but that subversive humour has a vital place in a free society. She reveals the difficulties of getting a fair hearing in the British media, which often shrink from anything perceived as offensive. Her message is clear: we must be able to discuss "blasphemous" issues openly without fear of reprisals, and public figures must lead the way. If we are silent, the extremists have won.

[Watch this episode on YouTube](#) | [Direct MP3 Link](#) | [Transcripts](#)

Notes

- [The outcome of the Batley investigation is a surrender of liberal principles](#)
- [Brutally murdered for doing his job](#)
- [Blasphemy in the classroom – The Batley Grammar case](#)

Support the podcast, share with a friend, and leave a positive review everywhere you can.

Podcast produced by Emma Park for the National Secular Society (2021). All rights reserved.

[Satire is "the oxygen of a democracy," according to @CarolineFourest, writer, anti-extremist and former Charlie Hebdo journalist. She speaks to @DrEmmaPark in the latest episode of the NSS podcast.](#)

[Click to tweet](#)

We publish our podcast to enable exploration of subjects of interest to NSS members and supporters. Guests' views may not always align with those of the NSS.

- [Share on What's App](#)

- [Share on Facebook](#)
- [Share on Twitter](#)
- [Share on Email](#)
- [Subscribe to RSS Feed](#)

Tags: [Blasphemy](#), [Charlie Hebdo](#), [Extremism](#), [Free Speech](#), [Islamism](#), [Laicite](#), [Secularism](#)

Related Campaigns

- [**School Resources**](#)

Resources for schools and students to understand and explore secularist topics.

[Read More](#)

- [**Freedom of Expression**](#)

We promote free speech as a positive value.

[Read More](#)

- [**Defend free speech**](#)

Fundamental values cannot be defended by curtailing peaceful free expression

[Read More](#)

- [**Blasphemy laws**](#)

Blasphemy laws and religious restrictions on speech are incompatible with pluralism & human rights.

[Read More](#)

Subscribe to NSS Podcasts: [Apple Podcasts](#) | [Android](#) | [Google Podcasts](#) | [Stitcher](#) | [Spotify](#) | [RSS](#) | [YouTube](#) | [Blubrry](#) | [Tuneln](#).

If you value the podcast please share it with a friend and leave us a positive review wherever you get it. You can also support future podcasts and our campaigns by [joining](#) the NSS or making a [donation](#).