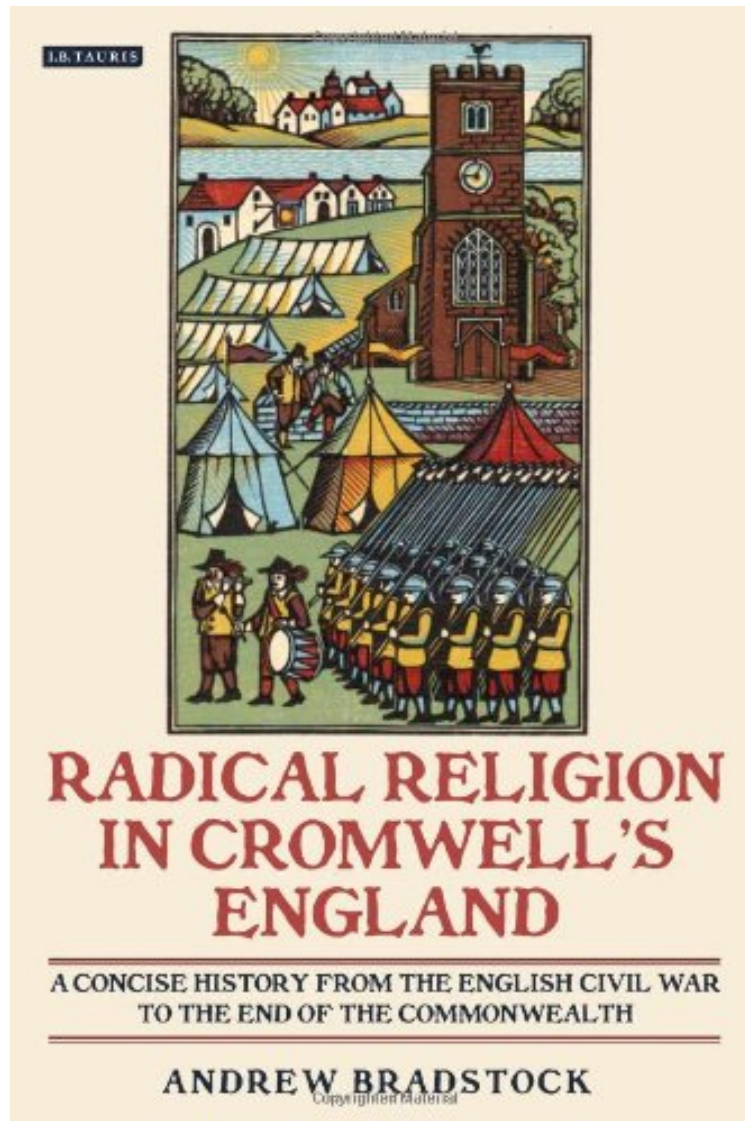


(Ebook pdf) Radical Religion in Cromwell's England: A Concise History from the English Civil War to the End of the Commonwealth (International Library of Historical Studies)

Radical Religion in Cromwell's England: A Concise History from the English Civil War to the End of the Commonwealth (International Library of Historical Studies)

Andrew Bradstock

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Andrew Bradstock : Radical Religion in Cromwell's England: A Concise History from the English Civil War to the End of the Commonwealth (International Library of Historical Studies) before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Radical Religion in Cromwell's England: A Concise History

from the English Civil War to the End of the Commonwealth (International Library of Historical Studies):

"The present state of the old world is running up like parchment in the fire." So declaimed Gerrard Winstanley, charismatic leader of radical religious group the Diggers, in mid-seventeenth century England: one of the most turbulent periods in that country's history. As three civil wars divided and slaughtered families and communities, as failing harvests and land reforms forced many to the edge of starvation, and as longstanding institutions like the House of Lords, the Established Church and even the monarchy were unceremoniously dismantled, so a feverish sense of living on the cusp of a new age gripped the nation. *Radical Religion in Cromwell's England* is the first genuinely concise and accessible history of the fascinating ideas and popular movements which emerged during this volatile period. Names like the "Ranters," "Seekers," "Diggers," "Muggletonians" and "Levellers" convey something of the exoticism of these associations, which although loose-knit, and in some cases short-lived, impacted on every stratum of society. Andrew Bradstock critically appraises each group and its ideas, taking into account the context in which they emerged, the factors which influenced them, and their significance at the time and subsequently. The role of political, religious, economic and military factors in shaping radical opinion is explored in full, as is the neglected contribution of women to these movements. Drawing on the author's long study of the topic, *Radical Religion in Cromwell's England* brings a remarkable era to vivid and colorful life.

'Andrew Bradstock has balanced affection and scholarship in his splendid introduction to a social and religious world in which much is bizarrely different, but much is prophetic of modern spiritual and political explorations. It is a pity that contemporaries did not have such a clear and unsensationalised guide to the radical religion of the Interregnum; it might have encouraged them not to subject James Nayler to bodily mutilation, flogging and perpetual imprisonment.' - Diarmaid MacCulloch, Professor of the History of the Church, University of Oxford and author of *A History of Christianity: The First Three Thousand Years*; 'The upheavals of the English civil war triggered an astonishing explosion of ideas - on religion, politics, society, economics and morality - that were unprecedented and without parallel in English history. These ideas crystallised in a succession of new movements: the pioneering democratic Levellers; communist Diggers; millenarian Fifth Monarchists, proclaiming an imminent kingdom of heaven on earth; and Quakers, fiery and combative evangelists who struck fear into most of their contemporaries. Andrew Bradstock brings these movements to vivid life, capturing their spirit and excitement, and explaining their ideas and appeal. He assesses, too, the challenge they presented to the government and to social order. His book provides an accessible, scholarly, and up-to-date introduction to all these groups, along with Baptists, Ranters and Muggletonians, and offers an ideal introduction for both undergraduates and general readers. Although most of these movements have long since vanished, Bradstock spells out in a stimulating conclusion how many of the concerns they raised - on democracy, authority, toleration, property rights, and gender, for example - remain pressing issues today.' - Bernard Capp, FBA, Professor of History, University of Warwick; 'At the heart of this important book is Andrew Bradstock's concern with the power of religious ideas to inspire political action" in the tumultuous years of the English revolution. He shows in lively and lucid prose how attacks on the established church and speculation about sin, salvation and religious truth had profound implications for seventeenth-century government and society. The writings, arguments and interventions of a remarkable array of individuals and movements are presented; Bradstock provides a balanced discussion of the latest scholarly debates on Quakers, Ranters, Levellers and the rest, but often he allows his subjects to speak for themselves with generous extracts from the vivid pamphlets in positions were defended, and enemies denounced. The author covers inspirational but ephemeral movements, like the Diggers who, energised by the extraordinary prose of Gerrard Winstanley, sought to make the earth a common treasury for all", and other groups like Quakers and Baptists, who endure to this day. Students, more advanced scholars and all those concerned with the dramatic conflicts and fundamental debates of seventeenth century England will benefit enormously from Bradstock's book, and will be encouraged to reflect on the continuing relevance of his themes to contemporary concerns with religious freedom and social justice.' - Ann Hughes, Professor of Early Modern History, Keele University
About the Author
Andrew Bradstock is Director of the Christian Socialist Movement in London. He is the author and editor of several books in the field of radical religion and politics in 17th century England, including *Faith in the Revolution: The Political Theologies of Muntzer and Winstanley* (1997), *Winstanley and the Diggers, 1649-1699* (2000) and -- edited with Chris Rowland-- *Radical Christian Writings: A Reader* (2002).