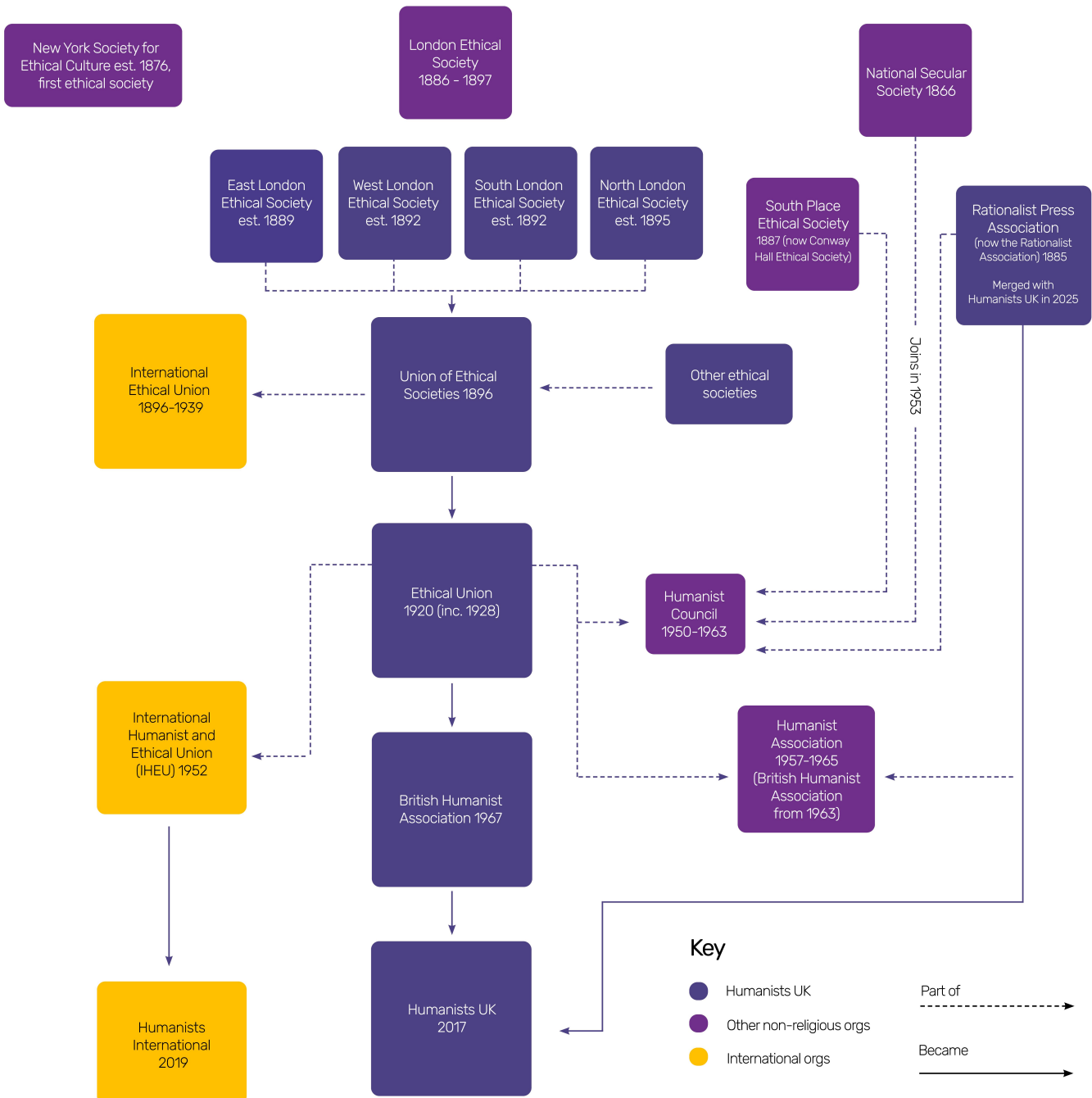


The history of Humanists UK



The Ethical movement began in America in 1876, when Felix Adler founded the New York Society for Ethical Culture. Its focus was on living good lives without reference to religious doctrines or supernatural beliefs, and it inspired other ethical societies across the US and in the UK. In England, the first of these was the London Ethical Society, founded in 1886.

The Union of Ethical Societies (now Humanists UK) was formed ten years later, in 1896, joining together existing ethical societies for fellowship and the furthering of their shared aims. At first, these were four London societies, but many more – from all across the UK – went on to join.

Over the following decades, the Union worked alongside other non-religious organisations, including the National Secular Society, the Rationalist Press Association, and the South Place Ethical Society, as well as with humanist groups on an international level. The Union of Ethical Societies became the Ethical Union, then the British Humanist Association, and ultimately Humanists UK, but its central humanist values of reason, compassion, and living well have remained the same since those earliest days.