

# THE FALLACY OF SECULARISM

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## THE FALLECY OF SECULARISM

Much talk about secularism is, nowadays, in the air. The prospects of Secularism have, everywhere, become the topic of discussion and controversy. The discussion is swelling everyday and the irony is that much confusion is being spread and clarity of thought is becoming extinct. The present confusing situation calls for a candid analysis and clear-cut approach the problem. An attempt is being made in this brief essay.

Secularism is a politico-philosophical doctrine and stands for the separation of state and religion. It envisages that religion is a personal matter, a private affair of man and has nothing to do with the problems of statecraft. State should remain indifferent towards religion and religion should have no say in politics.

Secularism, as a political movement assumed importance in 1648, the year when the bitter religious stripes of Europe came to an end. These wars were fought between the two sects of Christianity and caused great blood shed and destruction and left behind a long trail of frustration and embittered feelings against religion. The movement with the march of time, gained momentum and in the nineteenth century religion was completely purged from the political arena.

### **SECULARISM IS OUT DATED**

The protagonists of secularism want the future of Pakistan to be so modelled and in such a manner that religion is kept away from the statecraft and the political edifice is reared on the foundations on which the former political instructions developed. This approach to the problem is grossly fallacious and that is so because they fail to appreciate the historical currents and cross-currents which have changed the face of things beyond any semblance of the past. History has marched ahead of secularism, which is today, only a relic of the past having utility only for academic purposes but with no relevance to the facts of political life.

Secularism was the product of certain forces of history which have, for long, faded into oblivion. It was a reaction against papal dictatorship, the remnant of the Holy Roman Empire. Nationalism in politics, Laissez-faire in economics and individualism in philosophy and religion formed its main bulwark and when the Modern world is discarding nationalism and individualism and has totally thrown Laissez-faire to the winds, how can Secularism, a corollary of the former two survive? The concepts about the role of the state have undergone a revolutionary change. This political revolution has knocked the bottom off the creed of secularism and the lofty protestations of the secularists betray an abysmal ignorance of these historical facts.

In the 18th and 19th centuries individualism & laissez-faire held the sway and secularism can only function in alliance with these concepts, It was held, in those days, that state should not interfere in matters economic and cultural. State was only a "Police State" and its purpose was to maintain law and order and to protect the country from foreign invasion. Its main business was the suppression of violence and fraud. The guiding principles of individualism was the maximum possible individual liberty and minimum possible state action. In the words of Lord Melbourne:

"The state should only preserve peace within and defend the country from aggression without."

This was based on the philosophies of J. S. Mill and Herbert Spencer. John Stuart Mill has categorically declared in his essay:

"On Liberty" that:

"The only purpose for which power can be rightly exercised upon any member of a civilized community, against his will, is to prevent harm to others. His own good, either physical or moral, is not a sufficient warrant. The only part of the conduct of any one, for which he is answerable to society, is that which concerns others. In the part which merely concerns himself, his independence, of right, absolute. Over himself, over his own body and mind, the individual is sovereign."

#### **NOTION OF STATE FUNCTION HAS CHANGED.**

This concept of the role of state has been totally rejected. Its futility was exposed by experience and the policy state interfere and control was gradually adopted. Several movements rose and under their influence the activities of the state multiplied. The factory legislations, the policy of protection and state regulation of trade and industry, the provision of education, poor relief and unemployment insurance, the regulation of public health and maintenance of sociality, all, radically changed the complexion of state activities and has transformed the "police state" of the 18th century into the "welfare" state. Now it is being recognised on all hands that the state has duties other than the provision of any army and police. The community as a whole must unite to enforce right against might; to protect the weak against the excess of the strong; to prevent the exploitation of the poor by the rich; to banish the hydroheaded evils of poverty, diseases and illiteracy and to fight against moral laxity and social' anarchy which disrupt the calm and poise of the social and political order. Thus the modern state is a social service state, a positive state, and is basically different from the police or negative state of the laissez-fair conception. It properly intervenes to uphold social standards to prevent exploitation and manifest injustice, to remove the needless hazards of the economic struggle and to promote the well-being & welfare of the entire community. The state cannot discharge these duties unless it subscribes to some ideology and holds up some standards of justice and morality. That is why the historians called the current period of history as an Ideological Age. Today, indifference towards ideologies has become an impossibility. To talk of secularism in the present context of history is absurd and futile. Secularism can function without its counterpart viz. individualism and laissez faire have ceased to exist any attempt to practice it would be tantamount to play Han without the Prince of Denmark. The result is quite evident: it will turn out to be a grand fiasco.

#### **YOU CAN T PUT BACK THE CLOCK**

The current of history moved towards all embracing ideologies and no amount of claptrap about secularism can put clock of progress back. The secularists have either failed study the problem in its historical context or have deliberately convinced at these realities history. Whatever be the case, they are backing the wrong horse.

Another lesson of current history is that the world is in need of a politico-cultural force for collective efforts against rising forces of totalitarianism. Western civilization badly lacks this moral force and on this count is fighting a losing battle against the furious demon of Communism. Only a powerful and progressive alternate ideology can meet challenge of totalitarianism. Secularism is quite out of tune with of history. It cannot stem call cultural onslaughts of communism. Nay. Rather it may p

the way for that. The need the time is a New, Strong ideology. And sooner the New Ideology gathers strength, the better Any delay in this respect, lost humanity a Second E Ages.

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