

THE CASE AGAINST SECULARISM

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"He who will no! reason is a bigot ; he who cannot is a fool, and he who flares not is a slave."
— William Drummond

In the life of a nation, no calamity can be greater than the rise of irrationalism and lyricism among the intelligentsia. Two centuries of alien rule and alien education have robbed a section of our intelligentsia of the power to Judge problems and issues on the merits of the case. These people have developed the habit of thinking with their blood. Some of these pseudo- intellectuals have taken unto themselves the holy task of propagating the creed of secularism. They say that Pakistan should be a secular state. True! But have they given proper thought to the merits and demerits of their plea? Hardly! For how a man, if he seeks light from reason ignore the verdict of history that: Secularism is an unmixed evil? If they allege that they have pondered over the problem we challenge them to present their arguments. Mere emotional appeals to the much bruised words like 'progress', 'civilization' and 'modernity' are hollow and uninspiring. They are shorn of even the semblance of reason. They leave us cold and unspurred.

We hold that secularism has no future in Pakistan, in particular and the Muslim world in general. Our arguments for this plea are briefly stated in the following paragraphs. But before embarking upon a discussion of these arguments, let us define secularism and cast, a cursory 'lance over its historical genesis.

What is Secularism?

Secularism is a politico- philosophical doctrine which stands for the separation of state and religion. It envisages that religion is a personal matter, a private affair of men 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 strifes of Europe came to an end. These wars were fought between two sects of Christianity and caused great- bloodshed 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 was a vital reaction against papal dictatorship, the remnant of the Holy Roman Empire. It was the product of certain historical forces which emerged during the period of Renaissance and Reformation. Nationalism in Politics, Laissez faire in economics, and individualism in philosophy were its main bulwark. They provided the context in which this doctrine developed and thrived.

This is a brief account of its historical genesis. Now let us see why we think that it has no future in Pakistan.

Has it the sanction of the Majority?

1. Secularism, in our country, is the creed of a small minority. It did not develop as a natural growth. It was implanted by the foreigners who presided over our political destiny for the last two centuries. This doctrine failed to penetrate into the native soil and to develop roots. It was hugged only by those who were educated on the Western lines, in the British-designed colleges and universities. It could find home only in a particular section of intelligentsia, a class of "Baboos" and the vested interests. This class did not, and does not represent the x^eople. It is a legacy of the age of slavery. During the British rule these people worked as the instruments of alien policy, the stooges of white imperialism ; now they are the living symbols of intellectual slavery.. They are a minority thrust upon the millat. They lack the moral stature and although, they talk of democracy in season and out of season. they never respect the wishes and aspirations of the demos. They also have no regard for the history and the traditions of the millat and they do not enshrine the true revolutionary spirit of Islam. People have no respect for them and Dr. Muhammad Iqbal very rightly said about them,

**Thou art the creation of the Western architects.
And owes thy existence to the glamour that is West.
But, thou art a body without soul, without ego.
Like a glittering sheath, that hath no sword!**

This kind of intelligentsia is not a novelty in history. Whenever two different civilizations have come in contact with each other this queer phenomenon has developed. Arnold J. Toynbee has discussed this in detail, in his 'A Study of History' (Vol. V). He says that this class is "hated and despised by its own people because its very existence is a reproach to them." Toynbee calls this group a SOCIAL WEE D, a wild herb growing where it is not needed.

Now this discussion clearly shows that secularism and those who uphold it are not the manifestations of our history.- Their voice finds no echo in the country. There's a very in wilderness. Can such a cry prevail? Can those who do not enjoy the respect of the people become their true leaders and heroes? Can they, in the face of opposition from the demos, succeed in thrusting upon the country a creed which is grossly against the national genius? Force can hold the sway only for a short while. It cannot chain the people down for ever. They have their own way of vengeance!

No Intellectual Basis

2. This country has never witnessed an intellectual movement for secularism. In Western countries, Renaissance and Reformation paved the way for the politico- philosophical movement of secularism. Moreover the conditions in Europe were such that 'the revolt of man' and 'the revolt of angels' became indispensable. The reign of papacy was a reign of terror, inquisitions and persecutions. Religion was reduced to a sham and most of the priests became the incarnations of hypocrisy. Despotism was the order of the day. Revolt against such a pseudo-religious order became indispensable.'

Our history and our traditions have nothing in common with the history of the West. There is no papacy or priesthood in Islam. Religious leader like Umer bin Abdul Aziz, Imam Abu Hanifa, Imam Malik, Imam Hunbal, Imam Shafai, Hassan Basri, Al-Ghazali, AbuYusuf, Ibne Taimiah, Muhammad

Bin Wahab, Shaikh Ahmad Sarhadi, Shah Waliullah, Syed Ahmad Shahid, Shah Ismail Shaheed etc. etc. are the heroes of our history. These and other leaders of Muslim thought have always stood for the dignity of man, freedom and social Justice. Even Western historians admit this fact. Robert Briffault says:

"Theocracy (a term he uses as synonymous with religious government—K A.) in the East has not been intellectually tyrannical or coercive We do not find there the obscurantism, the holding down of thought, the perpetual warfare against intellectual revolt, which is such a familiar feature of the European world, with Greece and Rome at its back." (The Making of Humanity. P. 113.)

Dr. Leithner is more explicit. He thinks that if Europe had embraced Islam it would never have fallen a prey to secularism and its logical and historical extension, Socialism. He says:

"There would be no socialists in Europe were Western society constituted on the basis of Muhammadanism for in it a man is not taught to be dissatisfied, as is the great effort, aim and result of our civilization."

There has never been any dissatisfaction with or discontent against the religion in our society. Muslims have great faith in their ideology and think that they have a message for the entire humanity. Their love has been so great and their enthusiasm so high that they established a state to make this ideology prevail and prosper. This is how the founder of Pakistan expressed it:

"Our religion our civilization and our Islamic ideals are our driving force to achieve independence."

Now we ask: Has this history any similarity with the history of Europe? If not, how can the expedients which rose in a particular historical context have any future in other quite different contexts?

Not only that, in our country, there is no intellectual movement for secularism there is a positive movement for the Islamic ideology, which is ipso facto a movement against secularism. The First War of Liberation in the Subcontinent (1857) was fought on religious grounds. Shah Waliullah was the author of a great intellectual movement. This movement developed its political wing in the form of the Liberation Movement of Syed Ahmad Shaheed. The writings of Allama Shibli, Dr. Iqbal, Maulana Maudoodi brought a revolution in the minds and thoughts of Muslims and enabled them to meet the challenge of Western thought. This is a powerful intellectual movement for Islam and has its roots deep in the history of the millat. In the face of this movement, and with a conspicuous absence of any intellectual activity for secularism, can this doctrine have any future in Pakistan? The reply is No and an EMPHATIC NO.

A Reactionary Creed.

Secularism, in the Muslim World came with imperialism. After the success of the national independence movements the power rested with those power-drunk politicians who didn't have the slightest respect for democracy. Throughout the Muslim World secularism and despotism have gone hand in hand In Europe, the traditions of freedom and democracy developed with the growth of secularism. In the Eastern countries it has become associated with lack of democracy, curtailment of civil liberties and the impairment of the sanctity of judiciary.

The history of the last hundred years bears witness to it.

Secular movement which resulted in the establishment of democracy in Europe, which stood for the rule of law and the proper control of executive, which was a truly anti-despotic force in Europe, in the prime of its life ; became an instrument of tyranny and despotism in the East. It failed to produce any respect for law or regard for the democratic values of liberty and dignity of man. Instead of being a progressive movement, it turned out to be a regressive and despotic force. With this record to its credit, we ask, can secularism have any future ?

Europe dissatisfied with secularism

4. Europe embarked upon a gigantic experiment when it adopted secularism in seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. This movement gave birth to a mighty secular civilization, Material prosperity multiplied and the political power immensely increased. West became the leader of the thought and its glamour and outer sheen impressed the enire world. After four hundred years of trial and experiment, the weaknesses of the Western culture have been exposed. Its feet of clay have become visible. It has become clear that material progress, without moral advancement, can never make life worth living. Nay, it makes life,

"A tale, told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, Signifying nothing."
(Shakespeare)

Secularism can never inspire people with a social purpose. Life becomes meaningless and contentment, a mirage. Social activity becomes a restless and feverish affair. Life is robbed of its real joy. The modern world is facing wide-spread chaos and crisis. Spiritual insecurity is written large on the horizon. Masses are in despair. Thinkers and reformers are bewildered.

W. H. Andin says:

"I have come a very long way to prove, No land, no water, and no love. Here am I, here are you: But what does it mean? What are we going to do?" Another thinker says:

Despite its immense achievements, Western civilization now finds itself without a dynamic and simple faith. Organised religion has lost the lead, but despite all economic and social progress, nothing has yet been found to take its place as an inspiring force."

"(European Order and World Order" in Planning No. 154).

There is a wide-spread resentment against the secular temperament of the Western civilization. Mere material prosperity cannot solve the problems of human society. Spiritual and moral needs of man must also be catered to.

How can secularism, which has failed in Europe itself, solve the problems of our society? How can it inspire us with hopes of a better world? It can never guarantee a rich and prosperous future for our country. This is what Iqbal also said:

(How can it inspire Arabia and Iran with a new life when the Western Civilization is itself moribund). And in the words of Iqbal, this is so, because:

(Though Europe is radiant with the splendour of Arts and Sciences. Forsooth it's the valley of darkness without the Front of Life!) Secularism: A Historical Antiquity.

The protagonists of secularism want the future of Pakistan to be so modelled that religion is kept away from the statecraft and the political edifice is reared on the foundations on which the western political institutions 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 inarched 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 papacy. 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 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 eighteenth and nineteenth centuries individualism and 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 were "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 concept of the role of state has been totally rejected. Its futility was exposed by experience and the policy of state interference 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 regulations of trade and industry, the provision of education, poor insurance, the regulation of public health and maintenance of security, all radically changed the complexion of state activities and have transformed the "Police State" of the eighteenth century into the "Welfare State". Now it is being recognised on all hands that the state has duties other than the provision of an army and police. The community as a whole must unite to enforce right against might; to protect the weak against the excesses of the strong; to prevent the exploitation of the poor by the rich; to banish the hydra-headed evils of poverty, disease 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-faire 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 and 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 call 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 cannot function without its) counterparts, viz., individualism and Laissez-faire which have ceased to exist. Any attempt to practise it in their absence would be tantamount to playing Hamlet without the Prince of Denmark. The result is quite evident: it will turn out to be a grand fiasco.

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

Communism and Secularism

6. Another lesson of current history is that the world is in dire need of a politico- cultural basis for collective efforts against the rising forces of totalitarianism. The furious demon of Communism is staring mankind in the face and secularism acts as the green light for it, signalling it to move in. R. N. Craw-Hunt, the renowned authority on Communism frankly says:

"It (Communism) is in the last analysis a body of ideas which has filled the vacuum created by the breakdown of organised religion as a result of the increasing secularisation of thought during the last three centuries, and it can be combated only by opposing to it a conception of life based upon wholly different principles." (The Theory and Practice of Communism, P. 6).

Douglas Hyde, an ex-editor of the Communist "Daily Worker" writes:

"Poverty, squalor, social injustice, bad conditions are the things upon which it feeds, the things it uses for its own purposes. They are not the things from, which it originates.

Communism is not, first, and foremost, a social and political problem. It is a, spiritual problem and only if we understand this shall we see why it has spread in this particular age and no other."

(The Answer to Communism P. 45-46).

This is the world ideological situation. Secularism would be an open invitation to Communism in this country. We are living in such an age that the nations who possess all-embracing and life-giving ideologies should establish their social order on those ideologies and work as a bulwark of defence against the ideological encroachments of Communism. Their experiments can also benefit the rest of the world which is panting for a new cultural order. If those countries who have a blazing trail of traditions and a glorious heritage also succumb to the onslaught of Secularism, humanity is fore-doomed to death. Are we really prepared to commit suicide and forge death for the rest of mankind?

7. Last, but not the least, the situation in Pakistan is such that Secularism would be a sure road to disintegration and destruction. Secularism lacks a social purpose; it cannot weld heterogeneous elements into one organic whole. Only a revolutionary ideology can do that. History of the conflicts of Swiss states, the tussle between the different cultural groups of Yugoslavia, and Czechoslovakia and the annals of the changing boundaries of Europe bear ample testimony to it. Secularism can

have no future for Pakistan, and secularism has no future in Pakistan. Pakistan has come to live, and Insha-Allah it will progress and prosper despite the machinations of a few trouble-mongers.

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