

Indian Express Dec 29, 1991

Secularism – a la Congress

Sir:

In his article “History in secular India” (IE Dec 19), Mr Rafiq Zakaria has only shown to what ridiculous extent the Congress brand of secularism could be pursued. While secularism should imply activity without consideration of any religion, the Congress brand envisages equal consideration of all religions in every activity of the State. This type of secularism is bad enough in politics but it would be worse if introduced into education.

Mr Zakaria’s quotation from prof. Arnold Toynbee’s writings is quite out of context. It gives an impression that a historian can write anything in any manner that he may choose to, even to the extent of reducing history to a work of fiction. This is far from correct. No doubt facts do not speak for themselves. It is the historian that makes them do so with his imagination, understanding, and interpretation. But this right of the historian to interpret facts does not give him unbridled authority to distort, create or hide facts to suit his viewpoint.

There is nothing blasphemous about any suggestion on the rewriting of history provided sufficient grounds exist for doing so. The main grounds for rewriting history can be only two. One, when it is known that the existing history has been based on distorted or concocted facts under pressure from those in authority, and, two, when all the facts do not seem to have been taken into consideration in compiling the existing history, either deliberately under political pressure, or because of their earlier non-availability/inaccessibility for some reason or other. The demand for the revision of post-Independence history of India made by Mr. Arjun Singh and enthusiastically supported by Mr. Zakaria does not seem to be based on these grounds. The need for revising the history of this period is there nevertheless. Most of the history of this period was written during the Congress rule and was influenced by those in authority at that time. The Nehruvian blunders, corruption at high places, and the general Congress misrule do not find much mention in the official history of that period. The history of that period, therefore, needs to be revised to undo the wrongs done to it by those in power for personal and party gains.

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