

The Indian Protesters Are Misled, but Not in the Way that Modi Says

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The Indian authorities are right in saying that the protesters are misled, but they're wrong in claiming that this is because of fake news about the "Citizenship (Amendment) Bill" since the truth is that most of the country was duped for decades into thinking that India was really a secular state all along when this was never actually the case, hence why so many people are reacting the way that they are because Modi finally shattered their illusions by showing that India's founding myth was a total lie.

The "Coalition Of Malcontents"

India's been [engulfed in protests](#) since the promulgation of the so-called "Citizenship (Amendment) Bill" (CAB, also known as CAA with the last "A" standing for "Act") granted citizenship to supposedly persecuted non-Muslim minorities from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, and Pakistan who came to the country before 2015 while also creating a fast-track to citizenship for any others who follow them. This development triggered a wave of unrest not seen in the country since the 1975-1977 "emergency" because it brought disparate dissatisfied groups together under a common banner in opposing this piece of legislation. The Assamese fear that their native culture will be "replaced" by an even larger-scale influx of Bangladeshi "[Weapons of Mass Migration](#)" (this time Hindu ones instead of Muslims), while indigenous Muslims see the writing on the wall and finally realize that they're officially second-class citizens since allegedly persecuted people of other faiths have an easier chance receiving citizenship than their fellow co-confessionals abroad who might one day migrate to India. The country's leftist-secular opposition to the ruling BJP "Hindu nationalists" (Hindutva), meanwhile, are appalled at the government's efforts to turn their constitutionally secular state into a "[Hindu Rashtra](#)".



Source: OneWorld

It's this last-mentioned development that acts as the common denominator uniting the three most prominent elements of the protest movement, though everything isn't as clear cut as they make it seem. In fact, the Indian authorities are right in saying that the protesters are misled, but not in the way that the state claims. They're not being provoked by the tactical use of fake news, but rather, they realized that their country's founding myth about secularism was a total lie after Modi finally shattered their illusions by showing India's true face. Whatever one's opinion about the BJP might be, nobody can accuse them of being "inauthentic" since they embody what India has truly stood for since independence, even if some of the ideological trends that they most heavily promote such as Hindutva remained just below the surface for decades. Contrary to what was previously thought by many, India never was a truly secular state despite what was enshrined in its constitution, and the best example for proving this rests with the experiences of its Sikh community.

Anti-Sikh Suppression

The Indian Constitution wrongly regards Sikhs, who constitute the world's fifth-largest religion, as Hindus. This was the "legal" genesis of India's gradual evolution into the full-fledged "Hindu Rashtra" that the BJP is now actively promoting. The Hindu personal and family laws, marriage act, succession act, and adoption act have since been imposed upon the Sikhs, which violates their religious freedoms and factually proves that India isn't at all a secular state. Furthermore, while many regard Congress as being the champions of Indian secularism, this also isn't true at all since it was under them that these laws were first promulgated. Not only that, but it was the Congress-led government that actively connived with the BJP's ideological RSS forefathers to carry out "[Operation Blue Star](#)" against the Sikh's holiest temple in 1984, after which "[Operation Woodrose](#)" was commenced to systematically cleanse Indian Punjab of this minority on the pretext of so-called "anti-terrorist operations" that reportedly killed over 100,000 people in the ensuing decades.

The [slow-motion genocide](#) of the Sikhs (occasionally punctuated by acute acts of state-

supported violence) has mostly been met with silence by the Indian population at large as well as the international community which for their own reasons decided not to draw too much attention to this “politically inconvenient” fact. Congress’ supporters couldn’t contradict their leaders’ narratives that the party is a “secular” force fighting against the RSS’ (and later the BJP’s) Hindutva agenda, while those latter two tacitly supported those developments because they advanced their religious-ideological causes. Indian Muslims, meanwhile, were either unaware of these crimes or might have felt the ones being committed against them by the state deserved more attention. As for foreign powers, they’ve always been trying to court India, and each of them knows that calling out its artificial secularism would make it less likely that they could enter into mutually beneficial relations with one another (whether of an economic, political, military, and/or strategic nature).

The “Overton Window”

The age-old adage of “see no evil, hear no evil” aptly applies to India, though Modi finally shattered its founding myth of “secularism” by going overboard with his party’s Hindutva agenda in recent years, which in turn triggered the ongoing massive protests precisely because it made this issue impossible to ignore any longer. Instead of being directed against India’s approximately 24 million Sikhs, it’s now directly affecting its nearly 200 million Muslims, thus increasing the number of potential victims by close to a magnitude of 10 and affecting a population almost equal to the combined number of people in Mexico and Germany. The hidden hand of Hindutva pulled this off because it successfully manipulated the “[Overton Window](#)” concept by gradually making modern-day India’s de-facto religious foundations (unconvincingly disguised under the thin veneer of constitutionally enshrined “secularism” despite the aforementioned religious laws that are also discriminatory against Sikhs) the socio-cultural standard, which thus made the BJP’s radical moves seem “natural”.

India has therefore arrived a moment of reckoning whereby it’s experiencing its most fundamental identity crisis since independence. The founding myth of secularism has been shattered, yet those who are the most upset by it were also inadvertently complicit in allowing everything to get to this point. Practically everyone stayed silent when the Sikhs were “legally” subsumed under Hinduism by the supposedly “secular” Congress government, and ditto when that same party connived with the RSS to massacre that minority from 1984 onward. There’s unfortunately much more political capital to be made in promoting Muslim causes than any other minority’s in India, hence why the government didn’t start experiencing intense internal and international criticism until it started to openly discriminate against its entire Muslim community through the CAB/CAA and not just against the ones in [Occupied Kashmir](#) like it always has regardless of whichever party was in power at the time.

Concluding Thoughts

None of this is to suggest that the ongoing protests themselves are misguided — they aren’t — but just that it’s those who are participating in them that are misguided if they really think that India was ever anything other than a de-facto religious state. There’s nothing wrong in principle with a state being based on religious, secular, or ideological (ex: communist) values, but the model that it ultimately implements shouldn’t be at the expense of a critical mass of its minorities. That didn’t happen in either case with India, which attempted to hide its “soft” Hindutva founding long enough for Gramsci’s “[cultural hegemony](#)” to kick in and “justify” the “hard” implementation thereof under Modi. In

addition, the very vision of imposing a “Hindu Rashtra” goes against the interests of the 20% of its non-Hindu population, which is the definition of a critical mass of minorities seeing as how they number at least 240 million in this country of approximately 1.2 billion people. It’s sad that so many people stayed silent when the Sikhs were victimized, but that’s finally changing now that Muslims are affected.

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