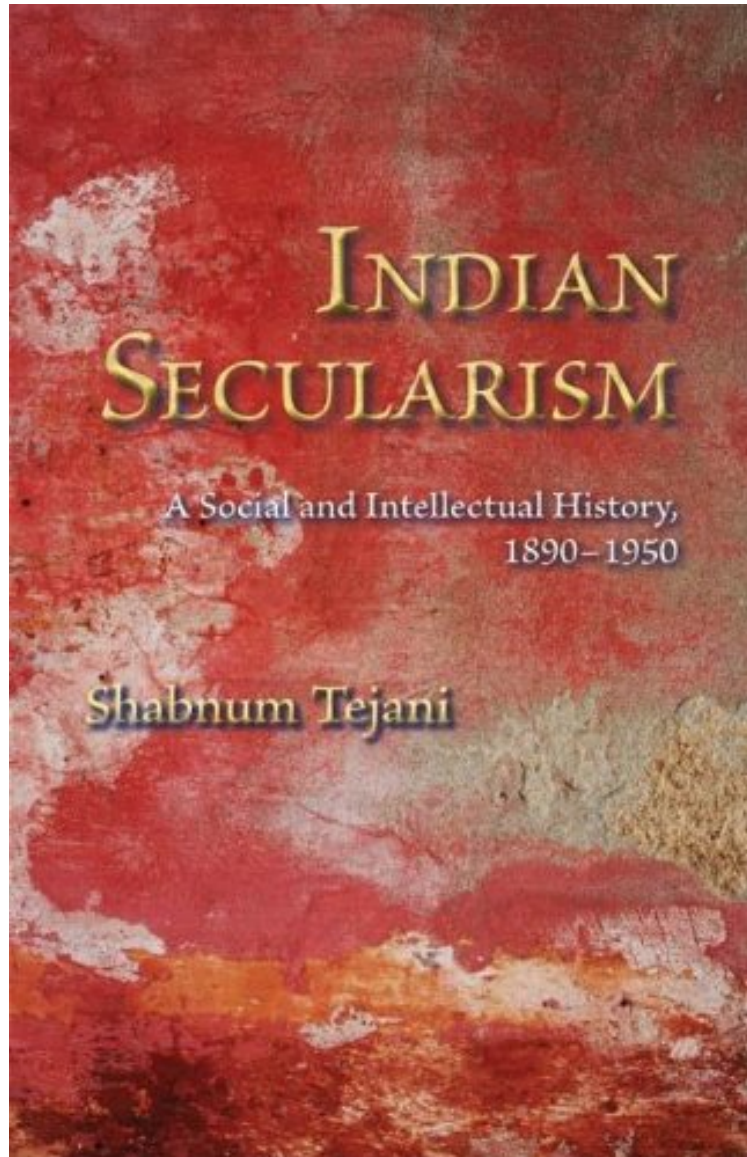


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Indian Secularism: A Social and Intellectual History, 1890-1950

Shabnum Tejani

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Shabnum Tejani : Indian Secularism: A Social and Intellectual History, 1890-1950 before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Indian Secularism: A Social and Intellectual History, 1890-1950:

Many of the central issues in modern Indian politics have long been understood in terms of an opposition between ideologies of secularism and communalism. Observers have argued that recent Hindu nationalism is the symptom of a crisis of Indian secularism and have blamed this on a resurgence of religion or communalism. Shabnum Tejani unpacks prevailing assumptions about the meaning of secularism in contemporary politics, focusing on India but with many points of comparison elsewhere in the world. She questions the simple dichotomy between secularism and communalism that has been used in scholarly study and political discourse. Tracing the social, political, and intellectual genealogies of the concepts of secularism and communalism from the late nineteenth century until the ratification of the Indian constitution in 1950, she shows how secularism came to be bound up with ideas about nationalism and national identity.

What comes through in Tejani's study is that despite claims to the contrary, India was (and is) dominated by one ethnic group, variously orthodox but homogeneously Hindu. October 2009 (Choice) Tejani draws our attention to the evolution of secularism as a political concept in colonial India, and to the often unexpected conceptual anchors that continue to exert a determinative, though hidden, influence over secular politics up to the present day. Vol. 115 Feb. 2010 (Srirupa Roy University of Massachusetts, Amherst) Indian Secularism . . . provides us with a nuanced, historical account of the developmental relationship of ideas of nationalism, communalism, and secularism in India. It will be of interest to many readers. V.10.2 Fall 2009 (Manu Bhagavan Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History) Indian Secularism is a provocative book. It begins with the judgment that secularism is dead, for reasons of semantic vaporization and loss of prescriptive value. It ends with the aspiration for a 'more democratic and plural society'. May 2010 (Dilip Simeon Independent Scholar and Historian) About the Author Shabnum Tejani is Lecturer in Modern South Asian History, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London.