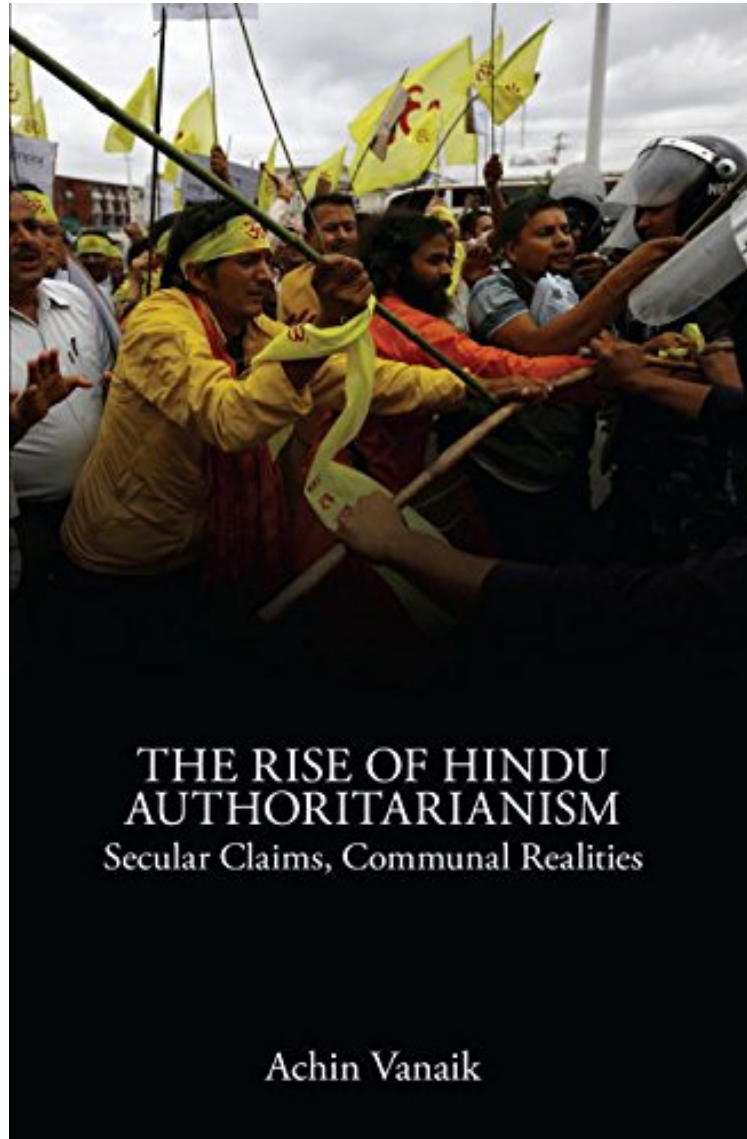


The Rise of Hindu Authoritarianism: Secular Claims, Communal Realities

Achin Vanaik

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Achin Vanaik : The Rise of Hindu Authoritarianism: Secular Claims, Communal Realities before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Rise of Hindu Authoritarianism: Secular Claims, Communal Realities:

The definitive analysis of Hindu nationalism in contemporary India and the challenges for the radical Left. With the Hindu nationalist BJP now replacing the Congress as the only national political force, the communalization of the Indian polity has qualitatively advanced since the earlier edition of this book in 1997. This edition has been substantially reworked and updated with several new chapters added. Hindutva's rise necessitates a more critical take on mainstream secular claims, ironically reinforced by liberal-left sections discovering special virtues in India's distinctive secularism. The careful evaluation of the ongoing debate on Indian fascism has resonances for the broader debate about how best to assess the dangers of the far-right's rise in other liberal democracies. A study follows of how Hindutva forces are pursuing their project of establishing a Hindu Rashtra and how to thwart them through a wider transformative struggle targeting capitalism itself.

Vanaik touches on almost all the fault lines and nerve ends of political discourse in India today. He has taken on the arguments against modernity and secularism that have been made by some of India's best-known intellectuals. This is a book that deserves to be read and to be thought about. Arundhati Roy, author of *Capitalism: A Ghost Story*. This new edition of Achin Vanaik's *The Furies of Indian Communalism* is a welcome intervention in the current debate on Indian politics and culture. Vanaik shows brilliantly that the consolidation of Hindu communalism was not simply an outgrowth of the rise of the Bharatiya Janata Party and its allies, but was significantly fuelled by the secular Indian National Congress itself. He adds to this a subtle and entirely convincing diagnosis of the politics of the Sangh Parivar, agreeing that it has strong elements of fascism in its outlook, but counselling against the panicked temptation to view their ascension as a slide into fascist rule. Vanaik caps his analysis with an excellent take-down of the indictments of secularism so much in vogue in the current intellectual climate, arguing that a commitment to secular politics has to be at the core of any democratic and humane political vision. This is a tour de force, both an indispensable guide to the current state of Indian politics and a vital resuscitation of the values that were once at the heart of Indian political discourse. Vivek Chibber, Professor of Sociology, New York University and author of *Postcolonial Theory and the Specter of Capital*. Vanaik's reading of Hindu authoritarianism is, by a very long chalk, the most intricate, comprehensive and rich account of the present crisis in India and of the historical circumstances wherein it is embedded. Tanika Sarkar, historian and author of *Hindu Wife, Hindu Nation*. Secularism for Vanaik is an essential component of democracy. It also gives a spine to nationalism in insisting on the equal rights of all citizens, and this precludes projecting a section of society as the enemy within. In discussing fascism, the author rightly emphasizes the danger of the possible combination of communalism and capitalism in a way that could bring about a fascist system. Romila Thapar, Professor Emerita, Jawaharlal Nehru University. No country in the world has been the subject of such mystification as India, as much from within the country as from without. At once a contribution to the campaign against racism as an intervention in theories of politics and culture, Achin Vanaik's study is a powerful counter to essentialising ideologies. It provides a lucidly rational corrective to the layers of anti-modernism under which the subcontinent has too long been submerged. Fred Halliday. About the Author: Achin Vanaik is a writer and social activist, a former professor at the University of Delhi and Delhi-based Fellow of the Transnational Institute, Amsterdam. He is the author of numerous books, including *The Painful Transition: Bourgeois Democracy in India*, also from Verso.