



Indian History Congress

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NCERT MODULES ON PARTITION HORRORS DAY

The Indian History Congress strongly protests the falsehoods, with a clear communal intent, being spread among middle and secondary level school children by bringing out a Special Module on Partition Horrors Remembrance Day by the NCERT and Ministry of Education, Government of India.

Turning history completely upside down, the modules hold not only the Muslim League but also the Indian National Congress responsible for the Partition of the country. Quite in tune with the loyalist stance of the communal forces during the freedom struggle, the British colonial rulers are given a clean chit in these modules. “The British government tried their best to preserve India as one until the end”. The 1942 Cripps Mission and the 1946 Cabinet Mission Plan, which actually had the idea of Pakistan embedded in them, are wrongly cited as proof of the British trying to leave a united India and the Congress is blamed for not accepting them and in the latter case pushing Jinnah towards ‘direct action’ and the Calcutta killings in August 1946! The “Culprits of partition” are three “Jinnah who demanded it, second the Congress, which accepted it” and it was only “formalized and implemented” by Mountbatten, “he was not the cause of it”.

The reality is very different from what the modules argue. The partition of India was the result of a long-term strategy of the British pursued since the 19th century of divide and rule, particularly after the revolt of 1857, which Hindus and Muslims fought together, shoulder to shoulder. The result of this long-term, nearly a century long effort at divide and rule had to be ‘divide and quit’, i.e., the partition. It could not be what some British strategist briefly flirted with in the end, the notion of ‘unite and quit’, a notion selectively picked up by the NCERT modules.

Among the various strategies in the British armoury to divide and rule was the bringing in of the notion of separate electorates based on religion and their promoting religion based communal political organisations. The formation of the Muslim League was a ‘command performance’. A benevolent attitude was taken towards other communal organisations be they Hindu or Sikh, while targeting the Indian nationalists led by the Indian National Congress. Finally, Indian history was rewritten showing Indian society as historically always divided on the basis of religion and the British coming in to save India from religious strife and persecution under Muslim rule.

The communal parties aided the British by acting as the bulwark against the rising Indian national movement. The British colonial interpretation of Indian society was adopted and popularized by the communalists. The NCERT modules reflect the same colonial/communal bias.

The Indian National Congress leaders are criticised for “whitewash(ing)” history “in an effort to strengthen the nationalist movement”. They are accused of making “emotional appeals”, presumably for Hindu-Muslim unity, and “limiting their discourse to a binary of ‘native vs. foreign’”. They are (in true loyalist mode) accused of “blaming the British rulers for every problem, including communalism.” The nationalist leaders are accused of “consistently overlook(ing) the historical realities of Hindu Muslim relations”. The colonial argument of Hindus and Muslims being always in conflict is invoked and the effort is to target not the British but the Muslims, in keeping with the current regime’s efforts at promoting islamophobia. As was done by the Hindu Communal forces during the freedom struggle, including during the Quit India Movement, the argument that it is the Muslims, and not the British colonial rulers, who are the real enemy is propounded. What is highlighted is the so called “ideology of political Islam, which denies the possibility of any permanent or equal relationship with non-Muslims. This principle has been consistently applied in various parts of the world for centuries and can still be seen today.”

Jinnah’s position on 22 March 1940, “when he called for a separate nation for Muslims” is quoted at length:

“The Hindus and Muslims belong to two different religious philosophies, social customs, and literature. They neither intermarry nor interdine together and, indeed, they belong to two different civilizations which are based mainly on conflicting ideas and conceptions. Their views on life and of life are different. It is quite clear that Hindus and Muslims derive their inspiration from different sources of history. They have different epics, different heroes, and different episodes. Very often the hero of one is a foe of the other, and likewise, their victories and defeats overlap.”

What is not mentioned is the two nation theory propounded by the ‘Hindutva’ icon V. D. Savarkar three years earlier, in 1937, in his presidential address to the Hindu Mahasabha:

“India cannot be assumed today to be a unitarian and homogenous nation, but on the contrary there are two nations in the main, Hindus and Muslims, in India.” Repeating the British colonial argument in better detail than Jinnah, he refers to the “centuries of a cultural, religious and national antagonism between the Hindus and the Moslems”. The title of the section in which the above the statements are made is “As it is there are two antagonistic nations living in India side by side”.

It is indeed ironical that Hindu communalists are never included in the list of those responsible for Partition. But among the chief culprits’ are said to be the nationalist leaders^{3/4} when the entire spectrum of the national movement, Moderates, Extremists, Gandhians, Congress Socialists, Communists, Revolutionaries etc., all believed that India had a long civilisational history of being able to live together with difference, who celebrated

diversity, who believed in Hindu-Muslim unity and dreamt of an 'Idea of India' which was to be secular, inclusive, humane and democratic. The Indian National Congress, which since its inception in 1885, struggled relentlessly against religious communal division, its greatest leader Mahatma Gandhi giving up his life for it, is projected as one of the main 'culprits' of partition! Let us not forget that the Mahatma's murder was a product of the vicious Hindu communal propaganda criticising him for arguing for Hindu-Muslim unity, which the NCERT modules dismisses as unrealistic 'emotional' appeal not taking into account "the historical realities of Hindu-Muslim relations."

If this is not distortion of history to promote a hateful polarized future one wonders what it is. In the name of 'Partition Horrors' what is being promoted is a hatred for the Muslims. It is not aimed at showing what communal ideology Hindu or Muslim leads to. It is not warning against the rampant propagation of Hindu communal ideology in the country today with open calls for genocide of the Muslims. All descriptions in the modules refer to Hindus and Sikhs killed and humiliated and no mention of the retaliatory horrors inflicted on Muslims! Let us not forget that the Mahatma's last fast, weeks before he was murdered by a Hindu communalist, was to try and contain the attacks on Muslims and their places of worship happening in Delhi!

The most objectionable part is that this distorted polarizing history is being fed to tender minds of school going children.