

In Quotes

A collection of topical quotations pertinent to the secular cause.

"We cannot, and should not, protect our country's children from being brought up by ultra-conservative religious parents but we can, and should, ensure that they go to a school where they learn about other religions, about humanism, about living without religion and are given the confidence that people of all faiths and none are treated equally under the law."

Prof Susan Blackmore

A genuinely secular state defends the rights of all – individuals, families, groups and communities – to liberty of conscience and the pursuit of the 'good life'. No religion or moral framework can claim exemption from the law or from the obligation to respect the rights of others. There is no right not to be offended, though there is a right to be protected against threats of violence or undue aggression. Subject to these limitations, secularism should secure the freedom of all to pursue, enjoy and share their religious or other convictions.

James Paul Lusk, The Jesus Candidate

I swear by my religion. I will die for it. But it is my personal affair. The state has nothing to do with it. The state would look after your secular welfare, health, communications, foreign relations, currency and so on, but not your or my religion. That is everybody's personal concern!

Mahatma Gandhi

"As I explained to the cardinal and members of the church, my book is the Constitution and the Constitution is determined by the people"

Taoiseach Enda Kenny

"BMSD aims to raise awareness within British Muslims and the wider public of democracy - particularly secular democracy, helping to contribute to a shared vision of citizenship (the separation of faith and state, so faiths exert no undue influence on policies and there is a shared public space"

British Muslims for Secular Democracy

"It is legitimate for democracy and respectful of secularism to have a dialogue with religions. That is why I have called for a positive secularism. It would be madness to ignore religion"

Nicolas Sarkozy, former President of France

"The (Catholic) Church portrays itself as the victims of aggressive secularism, but is actually heading towards an aggressive fundamentalism that is further from the Christian ideal than secular ideology"

Sir Stephen Wall, The Tablet

"Secularism, properly understood, is not a bad word. Our Government should not be hostile to religion, but it must remain religiously neutral"

J. Brent Walker, Washington Post

"Let me surprise you first by saying that I am a supporter of secular society. My family roots are in the beginnings of what has become the Irish Republic. In the early years of the last century, the Catholic Church in Ireland exercised an undue influence on the way in which government approached social and moral legislation. The modern secular state is a safer place - it allows space for a proper separation of legislature, judiciary and church. There is then room for a proper relationship between church and state. The state should be the guardian and protector of religious freedom but it should not defer to religion."

Bishop David Chillingworth, The Sunday Times

"Wider society has a moral and civic duty to ensure that parts of our country do not become 'Balkanised'. This means having the courage to explain that secularism does not mean being anti-religious, but a neutral public space. It also means having the courage to stand up for the ideas that make Britain the country it is today"

Ed Husain, The Telegraph

"Modern society requires and deserves a truly secular state, by which I do not mean state atheism, but state neutrality in all matters pertaining to religion: the recognition that faith is personal and no business of the state."

Richard Dawkins, New Statesman

"In an increasingly atheistic and multi-faith society, a secular state, which protects all religions and privileges none, is a model to embrace. If David Cameron wants a real legacy, he could do no

better than to bring home Thomas Jefferson's 'wall of separation'."

George Eaton, New Statesman

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