IMMIGRATION, JUSTICE AND SOCIETY

New Direction
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THE STATE, NATIONAL IDENTITY AND SCHOOLS

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INTRODUCTION

THE STATE, NATIONAL IDENTITY AND SCHOOLS

by Sheila Lawlor

Dr Sheila Lawlor

Dr Sheila Lawlor is Director of Politeia, an academic historian by profession and directs Politeia's economic and social policy programme, with a special interest in education policy. Her books include Churchill and the Politics of War 1940-1941 and for Politeia has co-authored its education series Comparing Standards and Curriculum series. She is now completing a book on the politics of post-war social policy.

Across western Europe, many countries are facing unprecedented pressures on their education systems as schools aspire to educate children to the highest levels, academically and vocationally, including children from a range of different backgrounds, social, linguistic, ethnic and religious, from across the world. Some countries have aimed to do this through policies of pluralism and multiculturalism while others rely on traditional school systems in terms of content and organisation. To this more general task has been added another dimension with the growth of Muslim extremism in western countries in the last decade or so and the terrorist attacks in 2015-16 in European cities such as Paris, Brussels, Nice and Berlin linked to Islamic extremist movements. These have seemed all the more shocking, when perpetrators are 'home grown' - raised and educated in the country and society which they have sought to attack.

Countries are now reviewing security arrangements and justice systems in the face of such attacks, with the more general question posed about how western liberal democracies, and their systems of law and justice as well as security can preserve the principles on which such systems rest, while being equipped also to meet these new dangers.

There is also a further question, which has particular relevance to education systems. Should they promote integration and assimilation of children from many backgrounds, including Muslims, and, if so, how? How far are their problems with children of different faiths and overseas backgrounds a consequence of a more general failure of schools to educate successfully children from disadvantaged backgrounds, whatever their origins, and how far the consequence of the particular problems of cultural and religious diversity?

In France and Britain, two of Europe's oldest nation states with large Muslim populations often from former colonial territories, these questions are particularly pressing. In the pages which follow, philosophers, historians and specialists in law and education policy consider some of the general questions about the state, national identity and education in France and Britain. On the philosophical side, John Marenbon argues that the striking differences between French and British approaches point to the underlying weakness of the liberal theories with which most philosophers address such problems. Cyrille Michon examines the intellectual background to the peculiarly French notion of '*laïcité*', and considers the distinctions between the nation and the state. Paola Mattei considers the resilience of France's policy of *Laicitè* in dealing with diversity and minorities and the assumption of the neutral public sphere in which religion is kept at the margin. For historians, a central issue raised by these problems of diversity and schooling is how history should be taught. Should school children learn about a national history and, if so, what concept of the nation should it embody? Robert Gildea and Robert Tombs both address this question, looking particularly at how the problem has been addressed in France. Sheila Lawlor also writes from an historian's perspective, going deep into the origins and development of British schooling, in order to consider what resources our present system has to meet the new challenges raised by the religious and cultural diversity of pupils' backgrounds. Claire Legras writes from her knowledge and experience as a senior member of the French judiciary. She looks especially at *laïcité*: should it, she asks, be regarded as a value in its own right, to be set alongside freedom, equality and fraternity, as a national ideal? Or is it rather, not a value but a means, a practical instrument for bringing into effect the aims of the republican ideals themselves?

Although the focus here is on Britain and France, the implications of these analyses go further. These problems are shared with other western European countries. The comparison between Britain and France, in many ways its very different neighbour, both throws light on this wider issue and suggests some ways towards solving it. •

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Dieu et mon droit FRENCH AND BRITISH VIEWS - A COMPARISON

by Claire Legras

***Dieu et mon droit*,** the motto of the British monarch, dates back to the time of the Norman kings. It shows the kinship between our two dynasties: each, in its time, saw itself as having a divine right, and sometimes thought it had divine rights over its neighbour's crown. It seems appropriate, since we have just celebrated the 950th anniversary of the Battle of Hastings, which irrevocably bound our two countries together.

This chapter will address three issues on which our two countries tend to diverge: misunderstandings and common challenges on France's system of *laïcité*; the place of religion in forging national identity and its political legitimacy today; and our education policy in France, now being put to the test by a changing national context.

FRANCE'S SYSTEM OF *LAÏCITÉ*

France's system of *laïcité* is often misunderstood - to say the least - judging by the frequent and robust discussions I have had about it with many British friends and counterparts. To be fair, even in its home country, the concept is interpreted in various ways, and its reaffirmation in the context of the recent attacks in France has not been uncontroversial.

In fact, *laïcité* was enshrined only after a long journey. The country recognised the diversity of its faiths at a relatively early stage. It gave Protestants their full place on the eve of the Revolution, after which the Jews too were emancipated. Napoleon then did a great deal to consolidate these achievements. Not until the last quarter of the 19th century was *laïcité* deployed as part of an effective state strategy to diminish the influence of the Catholic Church - regimes, not religions, were the main fault-line of post-revolutionary France.

The separation of Church and state was not achieved until 1905. The famous law of 1905 is the subject of many fantasies and misinterpretations, including among its supporters, so I would like to take you back to its origins. Its fathers - Aristide Briand, Jean Jaurès and Georges Clemenceau - wanted a liberal law as opposed to anti-religious legislation. A law of compromise and balance, it is based on three principles: freedom of conscience, the separation of political and religious powers, and equality between all citizens whatever their beliefs.

The notion of recognised religions disappeared. The state could not subsidise any religion. But two essential opt-outs were provided for: religious buildings constructed before 1905 remained the property of the state or communes, which were responsible for their maintenance and upkeep. And the state has remunerated Protestant, Catholic and Jewish chaplains - and since 2005, Muslim chaplains too - in the army, prisons, hospitals, hospices and boarding schools.

So the 1905 law puts everyone on an equal footing: no belief gets special treatment. The political is separated from the religious so as to bring together all members of society. Catholics and Jews have come to see it as a pacifying act. As the former archbishop of Paris, Jean-Marie Lustiger has said, even if the Church were offered a political role, it would turn it down.
That freedom is open to misinterpretation, especially in a period of heightened concern. Some people would like religion to remain strictly intimate, confined to the private sphere, a matter of 'conscience'; and

because conscience is enclosed in the brain, it should not come out. But worship, unlike faith, is not a purely private matter. And religions have every right to make themselves heard in the public arena.

Laïcité is what allows unity and coexistence in our democratic societies. But it does not offer life in unison, closely or as a community; instead, it offers separate lives, each person following their beliefs, desires and aspirations, free of - and at peace with - others. Our great writer Benjamin Constant, one of our prominent liberal thinkers, described the freedom of the Moderns as 'peaceful enjoyment of private independence'.

In short, *laïcité* is not a value in itself. It is a philosophical and legal principle aimed at sustaining the founding values of the French state - liberty, equality, fraternity - mentioned in the preamble of the Constitution. Its Article 1 then states that France is a secular republic ('*La France est une République indivisible, laïque, démocratique et sociale*'). *Laïcité* is meant as a mechanism, an organising principle, not a value. I thus firmly believe that current initiatives aimed at editing the Constitution in order to add *laïcité* to the famous triangle are ill-judged.

These initiatives reflect a change that started 20 years ago: in a shifting social context - that of the Muslim community's increased visibility and reported instances of radicalisation - the state has defined *laïcité* as emphasising national identity rather than neutrality. *Laïcité* is now often cited as a value under threat that requires a more combative approach to its implementation.

Some in Britain - and many more in the United States, sometimes in a very aggressive and misinformed way (one need only look at a recent front page of the New York Times) - suggest that *laïcité* has suddenly turned illiberal and embodies a preference for non-religion.

I would like to say three things in that regard.

Firstly, these criticisms are matched by misunderstandings on our side too, as you may well know! Talking down the splitting of British society into communities is a very well-established sport in France. And we often believe that Britain has tended to shy away from very pressing problems: the multiculturalism that was intended to create more diverse communities did not genuinely lead to a greater intermixture; self-segregation exists in the UK but is often accepted as cultural tolerance; Ofsted reports shed light on major misuses of home schooling and on the existence of clandestine extremist schools. We struggle to understand how passive tolerance is not seen as radically out of place on issues such as sharia courts and forced marriages, or how the NHS is faced with specific demands regarding medical staff or medical treatment such as hymen reconstruction surgery. How can progressive Muslim voices not help feeling abandoned in such conditions? The Casey Review of 5th December 2016 may confirm some of these impressions.

Secondly, even though some criticisms of aggressive French secularism are obviously not misplaced, I do not believe they are right to focus on our rules on the Islamic veil. As you know, France has chosen to ban the wearing of conspicuous religious symbols in state schools. When the first Islamic headscarves appeared in schools 25 years ago, judges tried to find a balanced solution and only ban excesses. But the amount of tension and number of incidents increased, leading to the act of 2004.

This act remains very popular. At the beginning of the 20th century, the philosopher Alain wrote: '*School is an admirable place where noise from outside does not penetrate at all. I love those bare walls.*' It seems this is still our national preference.

As for the act of 2010, which banned the covering of the face in public spaces, it does not result from a principled approach to *laïcité*. It reflects two fundamental concerns:

- Upholding freedom and equality between men and women: France believes that the covering of women's faces, voluntary or not, cuts them off from everything that brings them closer to society and other citizens; that it places them in a situation of exclusion and inferiority; and that it damages the image of women in society. And France thinks so especially because, around the world, women are fighting against male oppression and risking their lives to defend their dignity, their future and their children's future.
- The act is also justified by the need to guarantee public order: in polling stations, train stations and airports, in the courts and during demonstrations, it is necessary to be able to identify individuals. But public order is not only about security: it is also about the rules of interaction between people; living together means being able to exchange looks with others.

France's position - which has been upheld by the European Court of Human Rights - is thus linked to its commitment to a balanced gender mix, to what we could call 'the happy visibility of the feminine'. Such values go back a long way and are part of our literature and history. This regulation concerning gender harmony may not be exportable worldwide, but it is one the hallmarks of our civilisation.

And finally, with my judge's hat on, let me explain how important a role judges play in France as arbiters of *laïcité*. I am not an expert in English jurisprudence. However, although I know British courts have had to adjudicate on cases of religious discrimination, and have seen conflict between secular norms and religious beliefs in cases about employment or the clothes children may wear in schools, I do not believe they are asked to be the ultimate social arbiters as in France.

Since the very beginning of the 20th century, the *Conseil d'Etat*, the Supreme Court for administrative law, has been involved in guaranteeing the neutrality of the state as well as the freedom to practise religion. It has enforced strict compliance with the severe restrictions concerning public employees: they are prohibited from showing their religious beliefs. As far back as 1912, we ruled that the state could ban an abbot from wearing his habit at the professional teaching exam for philosophy, because it was a competitive-recruitment exam and a teacher must give the appearance of strict religious neutrality. Today, this jurisprudence has been smoothed, but that ban extends to mothers accompanying children on school trips. It doesn't apply though to teaching staff in higher education, because their students are considered to be mature enough to form their own opinions.

But the *Conseil d'Etat* also condemned the state for not recruiting enough chaplains of a specific faith and thus not allowing prisoners to practise their religion. It decided that local authorities can pay for repairs to places of worship. Recently, it has played a key role in finding the right balance between freedom of religion and public order. While some in France would like religion to remain strictly intimate, confined to the private sphere and a matter of conscience, the *Conseil d'Etat* reminds us that worship is not a purely private matter and that the private sphere is not limited to the domestic sphere. Its recent ruling that local burkini bans were not lawfully supported by *laïcité* is exemplary in that regard.

The Constitutional Court takes the same line: it decided, for instance, that Concordat legislation, which has been in force since 1871 in Alsace and Moselle, and whereby the Interior Ministry pays priests, pastors and rabbis, was in line with the Constitution.

RELIGION, NATIONAL IDENTITY AND ITS POLITICAL LEGITIMACY

A recent case brought before the *Conseil d'Etat* nonetheless brings me to my next point: France's difficulty in fully acknowledging what religion means for people of faith and grasping its political salience. Should the display of Christmas nativity scenes be allowed in public premises such as town halls? The judges gave a conditional positive answer: the display is legal as long as it fulfils a cultural, artistic or festive purpose and does not convey any religious intent. Nativity scenes are accepted if it is possible to ascertain that they are not a call to prayer but a purely festive tradition. This in my view is a slightly dubious so-called neutralising interpretation.

Britain is now a very secular country, despite the Queen being head of the Church of England and 'Defender of the Faith'; despite religion having been central to Britain's history: long before gallicanism, England was home to a vibrant and sometimes violent feud about the respective powers of the state and the Church. The opening provision of Magna Carta addressed the King with the demand: « *quod Anglicana Ecclesia libera sit* ». But even though these concerns belong to the past, I am struck by the fact that faith is widely seen and respected as a force for good, for the individual as well as the community. Religious leaders can legitimately participate in public debate on any issue, most notably ethical and social ones. I believe that Cardinal Nichols is more welcome to do so than the Archbishop of Paris, in spite of centuries of anti-Catholicism!

In France, part of the establishment is so convinced that religion belongs to the past that it is incapable of taking it seriously. Those who have experienced *laïcité* as a necessarily universal emancipation project struggle to understand the spiritual quest of the individual. Many intellectuals and politicians depict faith as, at best, a means of rebellion for the oppressed or, at worst, unhealthy folklore. They fail to recognise that religion is also a great tradition of Western thought, that Christianity created a synthesis early on with Hellenism and brought about the conditions for the advent of modernity. This is not really conducive to discussion and is contributing to a hardening of *laïcité* and to a feeling of exclusion on the part of our religious fellow citizens, especially Muslims. By way of a contrast, as a British Muslim friend told me: '*We do religion well in the UK*'.

The rise of political Islam over the past 40 years has been disconcerting for anyone who might have assumed that religion was a historic relic, had been consigned to the dustbin of history. The intellectual disarray is thus particularly acute in France: hence the widespread failure of French politicians and intellectuals to acknowledge or understand the religious dimension of Islamist terrorism. There are, of course, good reasons for avoiding the conflation of Islam in general with bloodthirsty jihadism in particular. But stating that terrorist attacks have 'nothing to do with Islam' seems too dismissive of the fact that those responsible for the attacks saw themselves as 'soldiers of God'. And it certainly does not help those working to reform Islam in the Muslim world.

EDUCATIONAL AMBITION AND IDENTITY

Just a brief note on schools: the shortcomings of our education policy are a very pressing issue that dominates the public debate in the run-up to next year's presidential election. The intellectual debate is very vivid and no Pangloss can be found around. But it is an extremely touchy issue, for many reasons: the weight of teacher's union and resistance to change are among them. But one must bear in mind that the education system has been tasked in France with a leading role in passing on shared values and a unifying culture.

Historically, the secularisation of schools through the laws introduced by Jules Ferry in the 1880s was a watershed moment in France. In Republican France, schools were never just a utilitarian tool but, first and foremost, an institution embodying political values, aimed at consolidating the regime's authority. Indeed, there is still an ongoing debate about whether the state can subsidise private - mainly Catholic - schools.

The same curriculum, the same treatment: the national education system is still firmly committed to universalism, one of the key ideological principles of French republicanism. And it is intended to act as a bulwark against inter-community partitioning. But this seems more and more theoretical.

How can France make a success of its increasing diversity? Falling educational standards are a huge concern: France is performing worse on equity than other OECD countries.

Reasserting *laïcité* cannot suffice to deal with the problem of cultural relegation faced by many young people from migrant backgrounds. Education is today at the heart of a broader French malaise and that the focus on *laïcité* seems to go hand in hand with an education policy which strives to deprive teaching of its liberating power, as if lower educational ambition benefited integration. The mission of schools was to reduce ignorance, but now reducing inequalities seems the priority. Is this best achieved by accepting falling standards? It is dubious.

* * *

To end on a positive note: today, many intellectuals in France claim that *laïcité* must not be dressed up as something it is not: disestablishment is a process enabling coexistence, it isn't sufficient to confer a sense of identity**.** France understands that greater participation by Muslims in national life is essential, and accepts greater involvement of the state in religious affairs, with the setting-up of a *Fondation de l'islam de France*.

And let's not forget that what brings us together on these difficult subjects is infinitely greater than what divides us. *Laïcité* has created a public arena where religions coexist without being at each other's throats. It is an integral part of democracy, which can flourish only in a religiously-neutral environment. This doesn't mean that religions mustn't be seen or heard. But what they say publicly must be compatible with the quest not for more uniformity in our society, but for more bonds within it. •

PART I.

NATION STATE, LIBERALISM, SECULARISM AND RELIGION

THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

1.1

THE FRENCH DEBATE: SCHOOL, NATION, *LAÏCITÉ*, ISLAM

by Cyrille Michon

This chapter has been written from both a French perspective and that of a citizen with an interest in the theme so it can reflect some of the important analyses of the subject taking place in France.

In particular, there are four controversies in France linked to the questions being considered in this volume. These may have some resonance in Britain and other countries, and could help shed some light on the present situation.

1.1.1 THE DEBATE OVER SCHOOL

The first controversy is about school. Many commentators and politicians contend that the French school system is in crisis. The recent Pisa Assessment confirms in particular that France's school system is weak with regard to the measures of social mobility for students. The social elevator does not work, or work as well as it used to. Many young pupils end their primary school without the basic requirements in language, writing, and maths. This is partly due to the great diversity of family situations, to the growing proportion of young people having non-French cultural roots, to their being of the second, third or more generation from immigration. It is also due to the poor and declining relations between students and their families and teachers: incivilities, lack of respect, even aggression are now more frequent than in the past. Of course, school is not an exception: this is an evolution of society as a whole. Teachers are often seen as service providers, who may be criticized overtly if the judgments they make or advice they give or the children's results displease the recipients or the family. The difficulties for the teaching profession in such conditions, with very few possibilities of sanction at their disposal, should not be underestimated - particularly when they are challenged professionally and psychologically by disrespectful students or classes, who do not see the point of study and work.

This links to another aspect of the crisis: most young students finish secondary school and take the final exam or the 'baccalaureat' which allows entry to university. Apart from those following a technical training, which is less well developed in France than Germany, this success is of little value. Everything begins after that through what is in effect selection by exams and competitions. While the best students, many of whom have the benefit of having had a favourable environment and greater ambition, are already preparing during their secondary school the more advanced ('superior') courses for such post-school competition, the great mass of young people is not greatly incentivised to work, despite spending more time in class than most of their contemporaries in other countries. Sport and cultural activities have a very minor role, in comparison to formal teaching. Yet in many places formal teaching is met with lack of interest, poor motivation, and this leads to many problems of *discipline.*

In addition to those social and cultural factors, there is now an ideological controversy about teaching, about pedagogy and the aims of school formation. Over the last 40 years or so there has been a great debate among educational theorists about the pedagogy of reading. Should reading be taught by the so-called 'syllabic method' or the 'global method' (what in England has been known as 'phonics' versus 'real books' and 'look say'. This debate between the old school, imposing an arduous, step by step way of learning, and a more modern one, trying to introduce easier and more attractive methods, is symptomatic of a more general contrast.

The question such debates prompt is not unique to France, but it has a particular place in the evolution of French thinking. What is the aim of primary and secondary school and of the National Education system? The more 'political' answer is that school is to form good citizens, who learning republican values, accept differences, and apply the principles of 'laïcité'. The more traditional and culture-based answer would insist on the formation of the mind, cultural development, acquisition of intellectual virtues at work. School is seen then, not so much as a first involvement in civil society and the world of business and work, but rather as a 'detour', a step aside from this busy world, building the personality by the acquisition of basic and then more advanced bodies of knowledge. The two objectives are not absolutely opposed, but there is an important difference of emphasis, and many points of concrete opposition. For example, while the highest authority in the National Education institution (the Ministry of Education) recently declared that classes should be conducted in such a way as to avoid boredom, some intellectuals reacted saying that boredom (when learning arid matters, or less pleasing ones to such-and-such a person) was essential in the process of building one's personality.

Another aspect of the debate over school leads to the second controversy, about the nation. It concerns the teaching of history, of national history.

1.1.2 THE DEBATE OVER THE NATION AND NATIONAL IDENTITY

Should national history be taught, and how? One aspect of this debate concerns the point of any national history, and various doubts about its real basis. We may think of history as being centred on politics, wars, royal dynasties and democratic elections. But do or should historians focus on these and on the specific chronology they afford? More place is now given to the global history of certain regions of the world, if not of the whole world, or to more unified entities like towns and villages, or to smaller regions and cantons, to the evolution of mentalities, and to many historical realities too fluid to be studied within national frontiers. A second aspect of the controversy is the view that focussing on national history, and so on the nation, might encourage different forms of nationalism; and for those who feel themselves outside that history, it may prompt a feeling of repulsion if not of hatred for the nation so defined. The third aspect has to do with the presentation of national history as a «*roman national*», insisting on the great achievements in politics or culture, and covering up the stains of the past, mainly the moral ones (cruelty at war, slavery, colonialism). This is seen not only as bad science, but as a lie to young generations, one which cannot help, but on the contrary will delay, the necessary changes, and might provoke the opposite result; instead of esteem, there

will be rejection and hatred when the hypocrisy is unmasked.

Nations, in the sense of nation-states, among which France and England are the oldest and most prominent examples, are now under trial. In particular, it is feared that nationalism, as well as remorse and even self-hatred, may be provoked by considering the recent past. France and England have, in particular, a colonial past. What one day was honoured as a great empire, is now seen as a sin against human rights. And even if colonialism has now passed (in the strict sense), its consequences remain through immigration and the social differences that accompany it. The very idea of the nation is no more unobjectionable, since it brings with it a certain historical identity (or what some describe as historical 'baggage').

In France republican values are much esteemed, and the country sees itself as supporting universal values, but such values are abstract and ahistorical, and instead of seeing the nation as having a universal vocation to teach those values to others, there is the sense that we should defend those values but fly away from the nation. That, however, cannot be done in the abstract; it needs to be linked to a collective institution. Some say that the nation is, or should be, a thing of the past, but not the state. The state is the moral entity, which has the legitimate use of force and is the main tool to help society in its self-organisation, around republican and democratic values and principles. The state is not endowed with the kind of historical personality that attaches to the nation. At least, we can separate them, and still honour and respect the state even if we are more reserved about the nation. But the state is not without its own history. And in France, some argue that the recent history, that of the Second World War and the destiny of the «*Etat français*» under the Vichy régime, has weakened the state in the minds of the people, whereas the same period in England has rather been to the greatest glory of the state. This might explain why the self-hatred and the criticisms directed at the historical nation also extend to the state in France, whereas they do not in England.

Now, it is true that our nation-states do not have a wholly positive past, and that this should be recognised, learned and taught. But this is no reason to deny the reality of nations. In fact, it is the state which is a modern institution. The idea of nation is that of a people with a common ancestry ('nation' comes from 'nascor'). And without speaking of societies without states, it is easy to point to nations that do not correspond to a state. The Baltic countries have only recently obtained political independence, but the nations had their own culture, language and history under the different régimes and foreign rulers. We spoke of 'nationalities' in central Europe and, recently, in ex-Yugoslavia; these were also collective and historical entities each with a proper identity and individuality. The Polish nation has survived many invasions and states that did not fit its real being. In a way, some provinces in Spain or Italy, cantons in Switzerland, Länder in Germany might also have a right to be recognised as nations. At least they form a people; to most individuals, belonging to this or that people is an important feature of their personal identity. The role of forming a nation might also be likened to a religion which unifies a society of believers even across the borders.

This brings me to the role of the «*roman national*» - what in other countries might be called 'the national story'. Caution may be helpful for historical science but what can be good or necessary for scientific research, or for academic studies, might not be so for young children. The national history manual for the younger pupils is a series of pictures. In France; Vercingetorix facing Caesar, Clovis and the vase of Soissons, Saint Louis doing justice under an oak, Joan of Arc leading the troops against England, Louis XIV at Versailles, the French Revolution and the «*prise de la Bastille*», Napoleon's crowning at Notre Dame and his farewell at Fontainebleau, and so on. This picture book functions as a legend, or legends, like those told in tribes who do not have writing. Is it helpful? I do not see that introducing into the minds of the very young sad or morally bad images which may be true, can not but be disturbing. There is time to do so. Positive legends have a point; they help form a common mind, the nation's mind. And doing so they help the young student to be a part of, belong to that nation, and be partly constituted by the nation. This means they belong to and have a history, a language, a culture, and values that the nation has long ago or more recently adopted. In this way, the French Republic promotes three values of equality, liberty and fraternity. But there is an additional one, to which I now turn; the value of laicity or rather «*laïcité*». It is the topic of the third controversy.

1.1.3 THE DEBATE OVER *LAÏCITÉ*

The way state and religion, or rather churches, live together in a régime of separation of temporal and spiritual powers is in France that of «*laïcité*», a term that is difficult to translate. But the very idea of separation of church(es) and state is not uncommon. The principle might seem to be quite recent, but it has evangelical roots, prompting debate, since the high water mark of Christendom. The Church and the Empire, the Pope and the prince have rarely been at one and invariably the relations between them have been tense.

In the United States, the principle of separation is historically a major ground for the constitution and the state, and it is seen as a way to protect the churches from the political power. In France, however, the principle was applied after the Revolution, and especially at the beginning of the 20th century, with the law of separation (1905), in a quite different way. It followed a long period of incomplete separation between Church and state, characterised at times by subordination (during the monarchy or the old régime period), or, beginning with the Revolution by persecution of the clergy, who had refused to accept the demands of the revolutionary or imperial power over the church. The law of separation was promulgated and enforced in a very tense climate, with violence, expulsion, and after a period of opposition by Catholics to the democratic principle and to the constitution. Because of the lasting influence of the Catholic church on society and politics, this law and the conception of «*laïcité*» which preceded and accompanied it, was seen much more as a way to protect these from the Church than the reverse.

Time has passed, different laws have been promulgated (mainly in the 1920's) which have eased the harshness of the separation and helped accommodate relations between France and the Vatican. These include the treatment of the dioceses as associations, the protection of private schools, the public support and payment of teachers' salaries and so on. The decline of influence of the Catholic church over society, mainly after the 60's, and the continuing decrease in the number of Catholics (both practising and non-practising ones), constitute another important factor in understanding the conception and reality of «*laïcité*». It has evolved from a fighting ideology («*laïcité de combat*») to a quite peaceful system of rules well accepted on all sides. Small moments of tension, or fundamental disagreements on specific topics (like the law on the abortion in 1975), have not really modified this situation since World War I.

Laïcité is not a law. It is rather a value or a conception of the separation of powers, and of the presence of religion in the public forum. It insists on the complete neutrality of the state and its agents, protects the freedom of conscience to believe or disbelieve, and the practice of one's own religion. Manifestations of religious belief are allowed within certain limits - not therefore those that are a threat to public order, or which infringe on the neutrality of spaces where the state through its agents is at work - e.g. the army, public officials, town halls, and of course schools. As is often said, the state is neutral, not society; what applies to representatives of the state may not apply to all citizens. Such limits are not to be seen as obstacles to the practice of one's religion, but as a way to maintain the peaceful 'living together' (*vivre ensemble*) of citizens having different beliefs and sensibilities. So, for example, functionaries of the state, such as professors, should not manifest their own beliefs even through visible signs, but no such prohibition is made to citizens who come into a public institution, or to pupils and students at school. In fact, a similar neutrality of the state along with its representatives and its institutions, is supposed to apply to political opinions as well. The rule is no proselytism, neither religious nor political, in the state's sphere.

Laïcité is subject to many different interpretations in concrete cases. It prompts different attitudes and responses. For some it is seen as a substantial value, on the same footing as equality, freedom and fraternity, the values of the French Republic, and should be treated as such, with potential threats to it taken seriously. By this way of thinking, it becomes an ideology, often called 'laicism', and often promoted as a weapon against religious communities or institutions. But laicism is certainly not the law, nor its official interpretation. In addition, one must be careful in not attributing to the principle of *laïcité* all the measures that have been taken apparently to limit the manifestation of religious beliefs and identity. For example, the prohibition of the Muslim veil in schools was the conclusion of a lengthy inquiry on the pressures exerted on Muslim girls by others or by boys. It was motivated by concern for public order and not prompted by *laïcité* (freedom of clothing is not denied as such). The interdiction of the burka was pronounced

on the basis of the general and tacit principle that the face must be visible in the street and that to hide it might be a threat to security. Of course, arguments of a different kind have also been advanced (dignity of women, limitation of proselytism), but they did not officially motivate the law.

That having been said, I do not wish to assert that all has been resolved and that there is common agreement. Rather, the conflict between the state and the Catholic Church is no more. Some new difficulties appear from time to time, on account of the evolution of society away from Christian principles and culture. For example, the debate sparked by President Chirac, when he opposed any mention of the Christian roots of Europe in the EU constitution, led to questioning about whether this was too great a concession to laicisim at the expense of historical truth. Or, less important because fewer people are concerned, there is the question of the growth of private schools which do not have a contract with the state (and so are almost without public funding); is this due to a wish which families and teachers share, to develop a model of education in total freedom and independence? The real clash with the principle of *laïcité* comes, of course, with Islam. And this is the fourth controversy I want to mention, and maybe the most acute one these days.

1.1.4 THE DEBATE OVER ISLAM

Apart from the shock caused by recent Islamist terrorist attacks in France and other European countries, the basic *datum* is certainly the growing proportion of the Muslim population in Europe in general and in France in particular. Even though statistics identifying ethnicity/religion are forbidden, it is probable that the Muslim population in France has grown over the last 50 years from under a million to over five million, on account of immigration and even more because of larger Muslim families. Though important, this is a difficult question to consider, especially because such immigration is often the result of the colonial recent past of the country. In particular, Algeria was part of France, a French department, until independence. There are historical reasons for such an immigration to France, and a special duty therefore on the country.

From a political and political correctness point of view, we should not consider the Muslims as a community, only as individuals, citizens having the same rights and duties as any others. There are social differences; most people coming from immigration from North Africa still belong to the poorer groups of society those who are socially disadvantaged, and there are more probable social explanations for various actions rather than religious or ethnic ones. We see such groups often have difficulties with integration, high incidence of petty criminality, and so on, not to mention latent racism that may lead to discrimination. And even if some young people have joined terrorist movements, they are a very tiny minority. It is important therefore not to assimilate terrorism to Islam as such or to the Muslim population.

But, whilst it is important to guard against confusion, it is also important not to be blind to the obvious. This section does not set out to consider the relation between Islamic terrorism and Islam. The question about the relation between Islam and violence is intractable, since there is no one single representative of the Muslim religion. But, given the focus here on nationality and nation, it should be stressed that for those populations living in a country the history and culture of which has been informed by Christianity, in opposition at times to Islamic

history and culture, Islam is part of their identity. Most of them see themselves as forming a community even more than a French citizen considers France, or the French nation, as a community defining his or her identity. This is so from a Muslim point of view; the 'umma' is more important than the particular state one happens to live in, and certainly more so if the country is still seen as alien, because of one's family history and because of one's religion's history. From a non-Muslim point of view, it might not be so clear, but we are becoming more conscious of the cultural identity of the Muslim population and more conscious that even though many do proclaim, and sincerely, their attachment to France and to the Republic, there inevitably remains a passionate attachment to their 'origins' and to their religious community. Inevitably there is some solidarity with Islamic countries (this was visible during the Gulf wars), if not sometimes with Islamic terrorism (especially among young people). We are also more conscious that Islam is not only a religion, or that, as a religion, it is not only a spiritual faith and has political, juridical and social bearings as well (or, if religion should include all these aspects, then it is Christianity which is not truly a religion). This is why the demands of *laïcité* sometimes seem to clash with Muslim culture, though many representatives of the Muslim religion say they do not.

What should be done? Some measures have been controversial, even from a non-Muslim point of view. I mentioned that concerning the veil. There is now a controversy about prohibiting the veil at university, though that has not yet been accepted, on the grounds that university students have reached the age of majority and are more able schoolchildren to decide whether or not to wear a veil, irrespective of family pressure. There is the question of the equal treatment of boys and girls, e.g. in mixed swimming pools, on which the state will not negotiate. The same goes for hospitals and the care of women by male physicians. And there is the question of special diets at school, for Muslims and Jews. Some are opposed to special diets, for reasons of republican equality and neutrality. Some suggest an alternative non-meat menu, want separate kosher and halal meals to be provided.

If some recognition is given to communitarianism (the right for a community to apply its own rules where the state is supposed to define the rules for all), how far can *laïcité* be exercised without bullying some people unnecessarily? What is certainly non-negotiable for the Republic are the principles that belong to the identity of the nation and might be said implicit in the immigration contract. For example; monogamy, visibility of faces in public, the neutrality of the state and its agents. But concerning the sort of minor matters just mentioned, it might seem that a compromise would be acceptable on all sides; a substitute non-meat menu, for instance, would be acceptable to Muslims and Jews, but would not require state institutions to follow specifically religious requirements. It seems that this is the solution which is going to be adopted.

One might ask what is the problem with some form of communitarianism. I will not enter the discussion here. Rather, I would like to underline that it is not only, and maybe not so much, a question of justice *in abstracto*. Communitarianism might be a good solution, and is in fact welcomed in democracies like the United States, Great Britain and Canada. But it belongs to their history, to the formation of the nation, to the culture and identity of the people. France has another history, and it would break with a long tradition to limit the range of the law, to restrain the principle of equality between citizens, or that of the neutrality of the state. *Laïcité* is part of our identity now, and it has some advantages too. Sometimes a constitutive principle or value is seen to be so open to criticism that it should be abandoned or drastically reformed. It does not appear that this is so with the principle of *laïcité*. And some countries, even those mentioned earlier, sometimes look at the French solution not in a critical manner but as an effective way to realise the separation of powers and to treat the problems posed by an immigration which is both large in scale and imports a different culture. The real question is how to reach a just solution while maintaining the principles and values that constitute the nation. But there is also an even bigger question about the future evolution of that population and culture, which might progressively modify the principles and values defining it. But that is too big a question for me and for the moment.

* * *

These four controversies about schools and teaching, about the nation, about *laïcité* and over Islam have all been central to the discussion in France. They may reflect debate in other countries and help illuminate the common path for Britain and France. •

1.2

NATIONAL IDENTITY AND THE LIMITS OF LIBERALISM

by John Marenbon

1.2.1 INTRODUCTION - THE 'PROBLEM OF DIVERSITY'.

Last summer's burkhini affair was regarded with bewilderment from this side of the Channel. It filled the French media, however, and was an issue on which every politician had to have a say. Women wearing this seaside variant of the burkha were deemed to be going against the French way of life by exposing so little flesh on the beach, and some towns went so far as to ban the garment. It is easy to see in the spectacle of gendarmes asking Muslim women to remove their clothing a vivid illustration, or rather a caricature, of a paradox of liberalism. One tenet of liberalism is that people's behaviour and development should not be constrained by religious or social customs, especially those which place special restrictions on a particular group (for instance, women) and deprive them of the freedoms enjoyed by others. Another tenet of liberalism, however, is that people - or at least, adults - should be allowed to behave as they choose, so long as they do not harm others.

But this paradox of liberalism does not explain why the burkhini affair is almost unthinkable outside France. In a way that liberalism would like to rule out, particular national traditions are at play. My aim in the following pages is to argue that such particular traditions - French, British, or whatever - are more important than most moral and political theorists allow. Like the other contributors, specialists in French or British history or education policy, I shall be discussing the 'Problem of Diversity' - that is to say how to reconcile national identity with the increasing diversity of their populations' religious and cultural backgrounds - and the striking differences in British and French approaches to it. But I shall be focussing, not on the historical background or the legal structures, but on the philosophical problem to which this contrast points so strikingly.

1.2.2 LIBERALISM AND ABSOLUTISM

One sort of basis, therefore, for approaching the Problem of Diversity is provided by liberalism - but, as the example just given suggests, there may be other, alternative or complementary bases. The obvious question to ask, then, is what are these non-liberal approaches. But this question is, in fact, a misleading one, although it is one we are most likely to pose, given the way that various types of liberalism dominate political thinking today. The question is misleading, because the answers to it fail to show that liberalism is itself a particular example of a more general approach to political and social thought. Some of the alternatives to it themselves belong to this overall general approach, but there is an altogether more radical alternative, which consists in rejecting the overall approach itself.

The title of this section is 'Liberalism and Absolutism'. Most readers will have assumed that it is supposed to indicate a contrast, or a set of alternatives. Certainly, most liberals would identify themselves as opponents of absolutism. Yet, in fact, absolutism is the overall general approach to which liberalism, as it is normally understood and practised, belongs.

An approach is absolutist when it holds as true, and bases itself on, some position about what is the good life for humans in general and how it can be realised in political society. This absolutism does not exclude disagreement and argument. Indeed, it is precisely because the approach is founded on general principles that argument is possible, both about the principles themselves and their application. But, with regard to whatever position is being held, the claim is that it is, generally, the right one.

The most obvious types of absolutist approach are those based on a religion or an ideology: as in, for instance, a theocratic state or a Leninist one. In such states, there is an obvious official theoretical position about how to realise the good life in political society: in accord with, for instance, shari'a, in present-day Saudi Arabia, or with Christianity in medieval Europe, or in accord with (the Chinese version of) Marxist-Leninism in China.

Liberalism, as usually understood, is no less absolutist, in its basis. According to such liberalism, society should allow its members to flourish so far as possible. Central to their flourishing is what (using the word loosely) can be labelled autonomy. People enjoy autonomy when they make their own decisions about how to live their lives, their goals and how to pursue them. Governments need to act both as arbiters, where one person's autonomous pursuit of his goals conflicts with another's, and as facilitators, aiming to ensure that the material, cultural and educational circumstances are such that all citizens can exercise their autonomy. A state which is liberal in this sense holds no less obvious an official theoretical position about how to realise the good life in political society than a theocracy or a communist oligarchy - indeed, the basic principles of liberalism are strikingly clear and straightforward compared to the intricacies of most religious doctrine, let alone Marxist ideology.

This judgement seems, however, to ignore the fact that what liberalism lays down as its aim is open: each citizen should be allowed to exercise so far as possible his or

her own choices. Surely this is the very opposite of absolutism, which requires that citizens hold a particular set of beliefs and conform to codes of behaviour which can include day-to-day matters such as what is eaten or drunk, sexual relations and dress. There is indeed a sort of liberalism which can claim to be non-absolutist in its practice. This is what might be called 'open' liberalism, which lays down simply that adult citizens should be allowed to act as they choose so long as they do not harm others. Even that stipulation is a type of absolutism, since there is nothing self-evident about making maximisation of individual choice an aim. But the results of such open liberalism would indeed be strikingly different from those of most absolutisms. It confines the role of the state to that of an arbiter when individuals' attempts to exercise their freedom conflict. But where are the open liberals? John Stuart Mill may seem, from some of his pronouncements, to fit the description, but he was in fact neither consistently nor fundamentally one.[1] But which thinking politician today, or which of the theorists who do the thinking with, for or instead of them, follows open liberalism? All of them add to the state's role as arbiter that of the facilitator, helping citizens' to achieve their autonomy, enabling them to make what it has decided are the best choices and giving them the means to realise them.

It is not hard to see why. Even a little thought about how people make choices will suggest that a choice is not free in any meaningful sense simply by being uncoerced (*more* thought might lead to questioning whether even meaningfully free choice is what gives value to a person's life - but that would immediately undermine the basis of liberalism). And one does not have to be a social revolutionary to see that, in any case, giving people choices which they lack the means to follow is a peculiarly empty-handed gesture.

Once, however, the liberal state begins to play the part of facilitator, its absolutism becomes not just a matter of its basis, but also its practice. As well as taking on the role of a Robin Hood and having to find all sorts of criteria on which to base its financial taking and giving, it also has to start guiding its individuals' choices, at least by determining how they are to be formed and trained so as to choose well. Its task becomes that of enforcing best practice on its citizens, often under the pretence that it is simply following value-free scientific information.

1.2.3 ABSOLUTIST STATES AND THE PROBLEM OF DIVERSITY

The way a non-liberal absolutist state addresses the Problem of Diversity depends on the particular state religion or ideology, its exclusivity and universality and, indeed, its particular doctrines. For example, in medieval Christendom, by and large, and not without some dissentient voices, and some occasions of violence, Jews were allowed to follow their religion and educate their children in it, since Christian doctrine held that it would only be at the end of the world that the Jews would convert. In China today, religions and cultures other than the dominant Han one are tolerated and, indeed, officially supported, but only if they submit themselves to the political objectives and control of the Party.

For liberal absolutists, however, the Problem of Diversity is insoluble on a theoretical level, because - as the example given at the beginning illustrates - it immediately raises the paradoxes of liberalism.

These paradoxes are the manifestation of the internal tensions or even contradictions within liberalism. How deep they go is a matter of controversy. They are on show in the process described above, whereby open liberalism ineluctably closes itself, because, in order to allow autonomy to be fully achieved, and as many people as possible to enjoy it, the state must engage in all sorts of coercion which limit or curtail autonomy.

Consider how these paradoxes undermine attempts to tackle the Problem of Diversity where education is concerned. Liberals do not hold that all humans should enjoy autonomy, only adults. Indeed, one important aspect of human flourishing, which many people will seek, is having, nurturing and bringing up their own children. According to liberal principles, the state should interfere as little as possible in how parents choose to exercise their autonomy in this respect, except, arguably, as an economic facilitator. Yet also, according to these principles, the state should be trying to ensure that, when these children become adults, they are in a position to exercise their autonomy in choosing how to live their lives.

All is well so long as the parents in question share these liberal values. In this case, their choices about how to bring up and educate their children will

1 Mill's fundamental belief was in utilitarianism (an absolutism if ever there was one), although one complicated by recognizing different types of pleasure, some more valuable than others. He also held - as a matter of conviction, based on his faith in progress - that open liberalism would lead to the best utilitarian result. In practice, with the utilitarian consequences in mind, Mill accepted many restrictions on the openness of his liberalism.

fall broadly into line with the liberal state's aim of fostering their eventual autonomy. Such parents might, for instance, have a religious belief - even one of a kind which restricts behaviour in important ways. But they will take the view, if they have liberal values, that it is not for them to impose their faith on their children. They will teach them about it, and try, through the witness of their own lives, to advocate it, but it will be for their children to make their own decisions about their beliefs. If they choose to follow the faith as adults, the decision will have been an autonomous one. Both the freedom of parents to choose how to bring up their children and the children's autonomy will have been respected.

Many parents, however, do not have liberal values. In particular, many - indeed the vast majority of - parents with strong religious beliefs, who come to Western Europe from elsewhere have very different values indeed. And such parents have come to Britain, France, Germany and other European countries in large numbers in recent years. Most of them wish not only to raise their children in their religion, as understood and practised within their particular cultures, but to do so in a way which ensures, so far as possible, that they continue to observe this religion and to understand their own position (as, for instance, a man or a woman; a married person or an unmarried one), restrict their aspirations and mould their behaviour in accord with it. They want their children to make the choices they firmly believe are the right ones, and not to learn to exercise their autonomy, if it brings the danger of deciding differently. In these cases, liberal absolutists will have go against their own principles, either by supporting the parents' freedom to bring up their children in accord with their beliefs, or by supporting the children's autonomy.

The liberals may argue that they do not really face a dilemma here. They can point out that the freedom in bringing up one's children defended by liberals does not include the freedom to abuse or neglect them. But is it not an abuse to stifle children's own views, or is it not abuse and neglect when - as many Muslim fathers would wish in the case of their daughters - children are segregated on account of their sex, given a more restricted education than their brothers and taught to fill a subservient role? The answer is, however, that only from a liberal perspective does such parenting

seem clearly to be abusive or neglectful. The liberal may counter that, from the children's point of view, which is what should count for a good parent, nothing is lost by allowing them a wide range choices in life. The liberal is not insisting that the children choose to have liberal views themselves. Although they should have the chance to reject it, they also can choose to embrace exactly the narrow way of life which their parents would prefer for them. What, then, can they have lost?

This question too can be answered. By being given choices, a person loses the opportunity to follow a style of life which is not changed by having to make those choices. Take, as an example, the question of religion. It is one thing to be brought up traditionally - that is to say, entirely in a given religion, without its ever being presented as a possibility that one might not belong or continue to belong to it. It is another thing to be given a liberal religious education, as in the case of the child of liberal though religious parents described above: to be taught about your parents' religion and others, and about agnosticism and atheism, and then decide, autonomously, to follow the religion of your birth. It is not an obvious matter which is better (perhaps one is better for some people, one for others). Something is lost *either way*: the traditional route loses the value of deciding and taking responsibility for yourself; the liberal route sacrifices the straightforward certainty, the assurance that comes from not having to had to overcome doubts which comes with an unquestioned and unquestionable faith or practice.

1.2.4 NON-ABSOLUTISM

By contrast with absolutism, the non-absolutist approach rejects the idea that we could even in principle have grounds to set out in general what is the good life for human beings in respect of its being realised within political society. So, on this view, there are no general solutions to the Problem of Diversity or other such problems. There are no solutions which fit every country, or even any developed country, or any country in Europe. This negative characterisation is true of any sort of non-absolutism. Maybe there are various different types of non-absolutism, each with its own positive characterisation. But the sort which will be considered here - that which seems to be most defensible and offer the greatest benefits, is a type of conservatism. Rather than search for universally applicable solutions, we each have to look to the traditions of our own countries and find the way to act which fits with them or develops from them. One advantage of adopting such an approach is that it provides a way of solving the Problem of Diversity, which liberalism, as normally understood, is unable to do. In fact, within the British context, it provides an unmistakeably *liberal* way of solving this problem, although the liberalism is of a different kind in its bases from what is normally understood by liberalism.

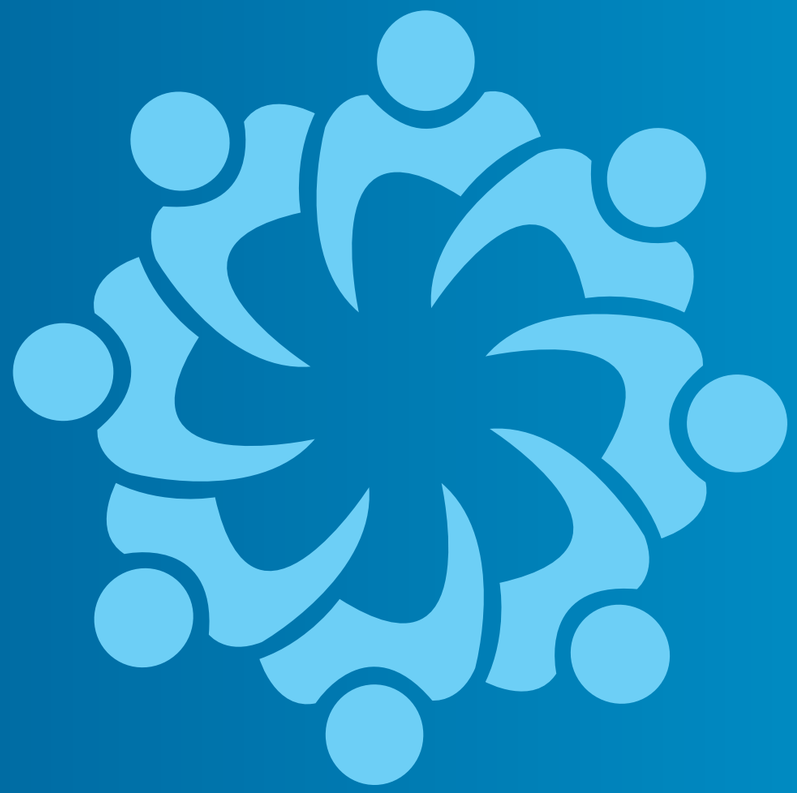
1.2.5 CONSERVATIVE NON-ABSOLUTISM AND THE PROBLEM OF DIVERSITY

In some cases, the content, though not the basis, of a conservative non-absolutist view will scarcely differ from an absolutist one. In a long-established, monolithic theocratic state, whether rulers legislate from religious conviction, or in order to follow the traditions of the country is unlikely to affect the character of the laws they make. But in such countries, as explained above, it is clear how to resolve the Problem of Diversity. By contrast, there is an important difference in dealing with the Problem of Diversity between whether liberal legislation is based on absolutist liberalism or on the liberal traditions of a country.

British political culture is largely a liberal one, although the contemporary view that people's freedoms derive from basic human rights, which they enjoy simply because they are human beings has been grafted on to an older idea of freedoms as granted to subjects under the law of the land. Conservative non-absolutists in Britain will therefore want, like the liberals, to preserve people's autonomy. But they escape the paradoxes of liberalism.

Confronting the Problem of Diversity, liberal absolutists are faced by a clash of irreconcilable requirements arising from their general principles (for instance, the parents' autonomy in choosing a certain sort of education; their children's potential autonomy which the education chosen by their parents may restrict). Conservative non-absolutists have no general principles which can give rise to such conflicts. Rather than invoking general principles to solve problems, they look to particularities, rooted in the history of their own country, such as the institutions which are already established. So in England, the problems of educating children from different religious denominations were addressed long ago through the establishment of a diverse system of faith schools - private, voluntary aided, voluntary controlled. This system, originally designed for different Christian denominations, has been broadened to include Jewish and Islamic schools. But that broadening should be considered merely as a pragmatic response to circumstances. It need not have been made, nor need it be further extended, or organised so as to be even-handed between the different religions. Non-absolutists are in no way bound to be even-handed in their dealings. On the contrary, they need to consider what best fits with the traditions of the country, and such considerations will also determine what sort of particularities are allowed or forbidden in the way the schools are organised and their curriculum.

Moreover, whilst British conservative non-absolutists will be strongly moved by the demands of freedom, since they run so deep in British tradition, they will balance them against other, conflicting demands, also endorsed by British tradition. The practical upshot is perhaps unexpected. The non-absolutist conservative will be far more willing than an avowed liberal to take measures that preserve individuals' autonomy, against the wishes of their parents and family, where the restrictions which they want to impose lead to a style of life at odds with the traditions of the country. •



PART II.

DIVERGENCE AND UNITY

THE POLITICAL DEBATE

2.1

HISTORY AND NATIONAL IDENTITY: FRANCE AND BRITAIN

by Robert Tombs

In many countries, the teaching of history, and especially of national history, arouses conflicting emotions. It sometimes leads to controversial political and even legal interventions, in some cases to require and in others to forbid the teaching of certain historical subjects or interpretations. The emotion arises principally from the assumption that history informs a sense of national identity, has implications for the legitimacy of states and nations, and can influence political opinions and loyalties. As Orwell famously put it, 'he who controls the past controls the future.' This has to some extent been true even in liberal democratic countries such as France and Britain, on which our present discussions are largely focussed. Parliaments, governments, schoolteachers and their trade unions, journalists, scholars and ordinary citizens have all been involved in debate.

There are certain important differences between France and Britain in the way national history is presented by public institutions.[2] The French state and hence French politicians are more directly involved in the administration of the school system and hence in details of history teaching, and they have historically made more conscious and elaborate efforts to shape historical knowledge and interpretation. A notorious example was the attempt to make it a legal requirement to teach that the French empire produced some positive results in its territories. Such direct involvement would be most unlikely in Britain.[3] There are other significant differences. England is unusual in giving so little value to history at school. Compared with some other western democracies, history forms a small part of our education. In France, history occupies a larger part of the curriculum, is pursued by more pupils to a later stage, and is probably taught by more highly qualified teachers.

France arguably has a more widely accepted national 'narrative' - often called the *roman national* - largely based on the centrality of 'republican values'. This resembles the old British narrative of 'Whig history', structured round the growth of parliamentary democracy, which has been much criticised and intellectually discredited,[4] but which seems to remain at least in attenuated form: for example Michael Gove, the Secretary of state for Education who was personally involved in drawing up a new National Curriculum in 2013, has several times declared himself a 'Whig'.[5]

What these two national narratives - which we might term 'republican' and 'whig' - have in common is a conscious or unconscious tendency to create a sense of national uniqueness, and to exalt mainstream progressive values. In the French case, the narrative is centred on the Revolution of 1789, followed by the gradual victory of republicanism in the 19th century, and the defence of nation liberties in two world wars. The continuing attraction of this narrative is shown, for example, in the continuing popularity of classic 19th century historical works such as those of Jules Michelet and of the 'schoolmaster of the republic' Ernest Lavisse, and the influence of the massive collection edited by Pierre Nora, *Les Lieux de Mémoire*, which explicitly aimed to preserve and catalogue the national 'memory'.[6] In the British case, classic 'Whig history' was above all represented in the writings of Thomas Babington Macaulay in the mid-19th century, and of G. M. Trevelyan in the mid-20th, which emphasised the growth of parliamentary democracy through a series of conflicts with the Crown, followed by a gradual and peaceful process of democratic reform. In both cases these narratives give or gave legitimacy to existing political systems by presenting them as the culmination of a long and glorious national saga - or in the words of an academic critic of Whig history, by creating a 'caricature' of the past pandering to the 'ideas and prejudices' of the present.[7] Both these narratives have always been contested, both by Right-wing and Left-wing alternative narratives. But both retain some purchase on popular ideas about the past, giving some basic themes the status of unquestionable truths. These still play an important part in political debate and even in constitutional interpretation.[8]

In both France and Britain, there is considerable public support (which of course tends to translate into political support) for the teaching of national history. In both countries, this desire has encountered reluctance, or even opposition, from both school teachers and academics, who often see simple national narratives as politically, intellectually and educationally undesirable.[9] In Britain, this led from the 1970s onwards to a clear move away from national history and from anything approaching continuous chronology. Schools were largely free - unlike in France's more controlled system - to choose from a variety of courses provided by competing examining bodies. There was a parallel insistence that historical study aimed at the acquisition of certain skills, such as the ability to assess evidence, compare arguments and detect bias. No particular field of history was required to attain these skills, and it was possible to select from a wide variety of topics and to repeat them if desired, even several times. For critics of the system (who included the present writer[10]) this in

2 For a thorough comparative analysis, see Abby Lisa Waldman, 'The role of government in the presentation of national history in England and France, c. 1980-2007' (Cambridge PhD, 2011)

3 An illustration of the difference. I was recruited for an official French initiative to produce a common Franco-British historical textbook for schools, based on the earlier and well known Franco-German textbook. The French education ministry was eager; their British equivalents simply failed to respond.

4 Famously by the Cambridge historian Herbert Butterfield, in The Whig Interpretation of History [1931] (New York, Norton, 1965)

5 Whigs were the supporters of the 1688 Revolution and an element of the 19th century Liberal Party

6 Pierre Nora, ed., Les Lieux de Mémoire, 3 vols, (Paris, Gallimard, 1984) published in English by the Columbia and Chicago University Presses.

7 Butterfield, Whig Interpretation, pp v, 4, 12, 13, 63

8 For example, the important High Court judgment (3 Nov. 2016) concerning the power of the Crown to initiate 'Brexit' was clearly based on a Whiggish understanding of the Constitution.

9 See Waldman, 'The role of government'

10 See R. Tombs, A. Waldman, C. Moule, Lessons from History: Freedom, Aspiration and the New Curriculum (London, Politeia, 2012)

practice produced an incoherent and fragmented curriculum with an excessive concern with 'skills' of dubious intellectual value, especially when they were learnt and applied mechanically. I might add that these criticisms were echoed by many teachers and students.

2.1.1 HOW SHOULD HISTORY BE TAUGHT?

The answer favoured by Michael Gove and his supporters was to produce a new National Curriculum for History, for use in state schools in England by children aged 8 to 14.[11] It would focus mainly on British history, would be organised as a coherent chronology, and would aim to teach 'content' rather than focussing on skills. The first draft of the curriculum was reportedly largely designed by Mr Gove himself, and it concentrated on a rather 'Whiggish' political narrative. This predictably proved controversial. Critics included leading academic historians, teachers' representatives and commentators in the progressive press. Criticism was partly based on pedagogical preferences spiced with wounded *amour propre* among the teaching and academic establishment who were annoyed that their opinions had not been sought, or if sought not followed, by the Secretary of state. These included such distinguished luminaries as the Regius Professor of Modern History at Cambridge, the President of the Royal Historical Society, the Director of the Institute of Historical Research, and three section chairs of the British Academy. Behind the controversy loomed an often unarticulated but deep political or ideological division. On one hand, those who suspected that Gove's focus on national history was to be a smokescreen for 'Tory history' based on kings and queens, victories and patriotic exaltation, and who wanted history instead to 'challenge' self-congratulatory narratives and instil progressive cosmopolitan values. For example, the journalist Laurie Penny in the *New Statesman* (1 June 2010) alleged that

> The Tories want our children to be proud of Britain's imperial past... It is part of a broader political discourse that seeks, ultimately, to replace the messy, multivalent web of Britain's cultural inheritance with one "big story" about dominance and hierarchy, of white over black, west over east, rich over poor ... History, properly taught, should lead young people to question and challenge their cultural inheritance rather than simply "celebrate" it.[12]

On the other side, there were those who thought that 'a working democracy requires solidarity, belonging and responsibility ... [Citizens] should have a shared sense that the country and its history are theirs, and that they will be responsible for its future.'[13] In the middle were many teachers, educational specialists and examiners who above all wanted a sensible and teachable curriculum which took account of the limited time devoted to History in state schools and of the shortage of historical expertise among the teaching profession.

Michael Gove assembled a diverse group of interested people in March and June 2013, and allowed them to redesign his original draft curriculum.[14] It became less political and less *événementiel*. While preserving the focus on British history, it included comparative elements on other cultures. While being largely chronological, it solved the practical problem of not confining the earlier historical periods solely to the younger age groups. It also included a choice of local and thematic topics and activities. It was met with a reasonable degree of satisfaction, even among some former critics, and was published in 2013.

Irrespective of how history is taught, and whatever the intentions behind it, school history is inevitably affected, if not drowned out, by the overwhelming presence a vast diversity of images and interpretations of the past within both serious and popular culture. The past is constantly instrumentalised to convey messages and influence attitudes. Those in power have of course tried to do this throughout history by creating self-aggrandising ceremonies and memorials. But conveying messages is also an important aspect of serious academic history, which has in recent generations seen the growth of women's history, gender studies, history from below, subaltern studies,

11 The whole process and the controversies it generated are covered by Robert Guyver, 'England and the UK: Conflict and Consensus over Curriculum', in Robert Guyver, ed., Teaching History and the Changing Nation state: International and Transnational Perspectives (London, Bloomsbury, 2016)

12 For a similar view from a weightier source, see Sir Richard Evans, 'The Wonderfulness of Us (The Tory Interpretation of History)', The London Review of Books (17 March 2011)

13 Tombs, Waldman, Moule, 'Lessons from History', p 2

14 See Guyver, 'England and the UK', pp 167-8

post-colonial, transnational and world history, and many other genres. Major themes have been taken up by governments, museums, lobbies and charities, resulting in Holocaust memorials, 'Black History Weeks', migration history and many others. All the themes mentioned have been based on genuine intellectual insights, and the messages they have been used to convey are generally praiseworthy: gender equality, racial equality, tolerance, and inclusiveness. They seem to have been a powerful and successful means of influencing popular sentiments and language.

Alongside such serious purposes, history is a major source of entertainment, and it has been for many generations.[15] It is unnecessary, and it would be tedious, to list even a small selection of recent popular television series, films, documentaries, novels and tourist attractions drawing on the past, in addition to numerous non-fiction historical works aimed at a large readership. Needless to say, all these portrayals of the past vary enormously in authenticity, which is extremely difficult to attain even superficially. But many - either by ignorance or indifference, or through trying to be accessible to a modern audience - efface the cultural distance between past and present, replacing it with the 'trivial, inchoate and ephemeral'.[16] Hence they perpetuate stereotypes, caricatures and bowdlerised distortions. Warwick Castle's 'Dungeon Experience', for example, offered 'the more gruesome aspects of our historic past in an appealing and fun manner.' Some attempts by curators to provide a feeling of authenticity - for example, by incorporating dirt, shabbiness or smells - have been disliked by customers. Real and fake are merged indifferently. A major recent study concludes that we are now 'surrounded by monuments and relics we can barely understand.'[17]

In addition to the past as entertainment, it has also in recent years become a growing and sometimes controversial means of collective self-assertion, including by claiming personal or vicarious victimhood for which public recognition and sometimes symbolic atonement is demanded. There are now in the United States (usually the precursor of trends in Europe) public memorials to executed witches, enslaved Africans, dead astronauts, aborted foetuses, murdered teenagers, civil rights activists, cancer survivors and organ donors.[18]

This huge diversity of images and stories about the past forms the cultural atmosphere in which the teaching of history in schools is obliged to operate. There is anecdotal evidence that some teachers simply use available material to provide undemanding and palatable teaching material: *Blackadder and Horrible Histories* have been mentioned publicly. The conventional - and excessive - concentration of school history teaching on the Tudors and the Third Reich would seem to show how formal historical teaching is influenced by the sensationalising tendencies of popular culture. More generally, it must be the case that children's ideas and sentiments about the past will be at least as much shaped by the ambient culture as by what they encounter at school. Of course, there

15 See e.g. Billie Melman, The Culture of History: English Used of the Past, 1800-1953 (Oxford University Press, 2006)

16 David Lowenthal, The Past Is A Foreign Country - Revisited (Cambridge University Press, 2015), p. 593

17 Ibid., p 592

18 Ibid., p 532

are both benefits and disadvantages. It is a common experience for children's (and indeed adults') interest in history to be stimulated by visiting a historic site or a museum, or by watching a television series.

But there are also potential disadvantages. Perhaps most fundamentally, a commercially driven trivialisation and falsification of the past as a vast theme park or costume drama is a barrier against that attempt to understand past cultures and societies which is the essential aim of all historical study. Instead, we have anachronism papered over with surface detail.

In the context of history and national identity, the kaleidoscopic presentation in popular culture of stories from the past shorn of context and meaning - 'little trees in search of a forest'[19] - fragments and confuses children's perceptions of history. Moreover, powerful narratives stressing separateness, victimhood and conflict clash with a shared national narrative and a common national identity. One might argue that this is a good thing: that triumphalist national orthodoxies should always be 'challenged'. In the words of Simon Schama (criticised by some for being too right-wing), 'argument', 'dissent' and 'the celebration of division' should be at the heart of national history.[20] However fashionable such a view, it would evidently be as one-sided to present history only in terms of division as it would to present it only in terms of harmony. The two are always present, though not always equally present. It would surely be perverse to emphasise, foster and even create present-day divisions and resentments through one-sided presentations, superficial stereotypes and distorted myths of the past. We deplore the abuse of history to perpetuate resentments between nations. It is hard to see why it should perpetuate resentments *within* nations.

However, I am not advocating the solution proposed by the French philosopher Ernest Renan in his celebrated 1882 lecture 'What is a nation?'[21] Renan argued that a sense of nationhood was based on memories of shared past experiences, both of triumph and of suffering, which could create a collective desire to go on living together and building on that heritage. But Renan believed that the 'memory' of the past had to be purged of divisive elements: nations had to be able to 'forget' as well as to remember. This is not only undesirable but ultimately impossible. History does not obediently unite us, and it cannot forever be censored. In many countries, and certainly in England, the past is a source of division, an unlocked armoury of partisan weapons.

2.1.2 KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING

Knowledge and understanding seem to me the only honest and effective ways of limiting the exploitation, trivialisation and distortion of history - something that I imagine most professional historians believe, or at least hope. This, I realise, is a very simple prescription. But like many simple things, in practice it is very difficult. It certainly requires constant effort on the part of teachers, textbook writers, examining bodies and the whole educational establishment.

What, in general terms, should be the aims? The guiding principle - which most people I think would accept - should be intellectual honesty: to provide for children a basic and reliable foundation for perceiving and understanding the past whose traces are all around them and indeed within them. I believe that in English schools[22] teaching should focus primarily (though not exclusively) on the history of England and Britain as places, societies and political communities. This has a general educational advantage of permitting a connected sense of history as continuity and change, conflict and harmony, difference and similarity. The curriculum should aim to provide some of the basic knowledge and understanding of the past that citizens in a democracy need: the ability to understand fundamental historical concepts, to be aware of historical landmarks, to have some appreciation of the development of institutions, to recognise important individuals. This involves learning 'content', including events, their causes and consequences. Only this will allow them to participate effectively in national political discourse.
This does not mean there should be a single ideologically driven narrative, whether 'Whig', 'Tory', Republican, or whatever. Rather, it will be a narrative composed of many narratives. An admirable example is that of Gérard Noiriel, a pioneering historian of immigration in France who forcefully persuaded Pierre Nora that immigration had to be one of his *lieux de mémoire*, and thus brought a hugely important but largely neglected part of French history into the canonical national saga.[23]

I may have presented the aims of history teaching in a rather dry and soulless manner - knowledge, understanding, citizenship. This might make many teachers (not to mention pupils) groan. Is there no place for excitement, fun, emotion? Of course there is, and should be: a national curriculum should provide the opportunity for creativity and imagination, and I believe that the present Curriculum does so.

What about emotional 'identity'? Many people, not only historians, will be suspicious of any attempt to harness schools to even the most innocent political project; and some will think that the fostering of 'national identity' is far from being an innocent project because it can potentially encourage undesirable political outcomes. For that reason, I have suggested above that schools should aim to foster not 'identity' - a loose and overworked concept - but citizenship. Identity can be left to take care of itself. Given the cultural and political tendencies of the teaching profession in England (and probably all other Western countries), the use of school history to foster chauvinism and xenophobia seems, to put it mildly, a remote danger.

To foster citizenship, which would include a sense of belonging to and owning national history, is a very different and I would hope unobjectionable aim. A narrative of narratives (as in the example of Noiriel's incorporation of immigration) is intellectually appropriate as well as being socially and politically advantageous. The philosopher Anthony Appiah - an impeccably liberal intellectual with shared African, British and American connections - spoke in his recent Reith Lectures (2016) of the ability of a shared national history to get people 'feeling and acting together'. This is facilitated by a narrative of history that is both 'potent' and 'lean'. Potent, I presume, because of the feelings of solidarity that it can foster (Renan called the nation 'a great solidarity'). 'Leanness' is a neat yet less obvious concept: I presume it means a narrative not overburdened with detail or interpretation, and hence flexible and adaptable enough to carry a variety of meanings and incorporate a wide variety of experiences. In short, this national history would be a shared conversation and debate, not a single imposed orthodoxy.
But neither would it be merely a cacophony of resentments. In a liberal democracy, nothing prevents a National Curriculum from providing the framework for just such a lean and potent narrative. I recently took part in a discussion in which one member of the audience - a sixth-former - said that as she was a Muslim of distant Indian origin whose family had moved to London via East Africa, she could not see how she could have an English identity. But of course she does: her family's experience illuminates of one of our recent history's most important themes. Our national narrative should be the forest in which this tree, like many others, finds its place and its meaning.

The aim is not to 'flatter' the present, as Butterfield said in his classic critique of Whig history. On the contrary. If history teaching is to help children to develop an intelligent understanding of their own time, it must consciously avoid presenting the past as simply a less successful version of the present, in which earlier generations are merely ourselves in different clothes and with fewer gadgets. This means that the past must be presented with respect: not only its conflicts and failings but also its achievements and difficulties. We should beware, if pursuing a progressive desire to 'challenge' the national narrative by injecting shame and apology, not to repeat the fundamental error of Whig history and show the past as no more than the fumbling attempts of primitive peoples to turn themselves into us. Flattery of the present is an inevitable danger of attempts to use history to convey progressive messages. The only remedy is to ensure that children realise that the past is a foreign country, with different ideas and values to ours: a dose of relativism is an essential element. David Lowenthal makes the point very powerfully: 'The past is integral to our being. We learn to live courageously with its totality, as aware of and alert to its defects and malfunctions as to its glories and virtues.'[24]
Needless to say, teaching history in this way requires knowledge, sophistication and integrity. But this is what we should demand and expect. •

19 Ibid., p 358

20 Speech at the Hay on Wye festival, May 2013, quoted in Guyver, 'England and the UK', p 169

21 Ernest Renan, Qu'est-ce qu'une nation? ed. Philippe Forest (Paris, Bordas, 1991)

22 The devolution of power within the United Kingdom means that schools in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland come under separate administration. The British government has direct influence only on schools in England, as in setting a national Curriculum.

23 Gérard Noiriel, 'French and Foreigners', in Pierre Nora, ed., Realms of Memory, vol. I (New York, Columbia University Press, 1996).

24 Lowenthal, The Past Is A Foreign Country, pp 609-10

2.2

INTEGRATION VS. EXCLUSION: TEACHING CITIZENSHIP AND HISTORY

by Robert Gildea

2.2.1 CITIZENSHIP AND COHESION - AN INTEGRATIONIST OR PLURALIST MODEL?

The challenge is this: how, through the teaching of citizenship and history, best to strengthen a fragile national cohesion in France and Great Britain in a context that is post-colonial, post-Cold War, post 9/11, post-*Charlie Hebdo* and Bataclan, and now post-Brexit? Colonial empires provoked a 'colonisation in reverse' that made France and Britain multiethnic and multicultural nations.[25] The end of the Cold War removed the threat to the West of international communism and communist parties, but replaced it by global political Islam that influenced some immigrant communities. The threat this posed to national security was made explicit in 9/11 2001, 7/7 2005 and the terrorist attacks in France on 7 January and 13 November 2015. This has made the prevention of 'radicalisation' and the integration of new and diverse populations into existing nations a matter of urgency. Two models of integration have been tried. One may be described as integrationist or monocultural, requiring all citizens and residents to share in a single model of citizenship and single national history. The other may be described as pluralist or multiculturalist, allowing a degree of public recognition of the specific cultures of different religious and ethnic groups on the grounds that they contribute to the richness of national life.[26]

The French model has long been integrationist. Republican schools have been teaching 'moral and civic education' since the establishment of free, compulsory (up to the age of thirteen) and secular (*laic*) education in the 1880s. Schools teach the values of the Republic, which under the constitution is 'indivisible, secular, democratic and social', and upholds liberty, equality and fraternity. The philosophy of *laïcité* was designed to remove the influence of the Catholic Church from the state school system, and as far as possible from private schools, because the Church was seen to support a return to the French monarchy. *Laïcité* was embraced by Protestant and Jewish minorities who saw it as a guarantee against the claims of pre-1789 Catholic uniformity. It nevertheless encountered difficulties in majority-Muslim colonial Algeria, where Muslims were subjects not citizens because Islamic law on matters such as polygamy was deemed incompatible with French law. The *Code de l'Indigénat*, which made these subjects effectively serfs, was extended from Algeria to the French colonies in general from 1881 and lasted until after 1945. Immigration from North Africa imported the problem of exclusion and a crisis broke out in 1989 when French authorities prohibited female schoolchildren from wearing the *hijab* or headscarf on the premises. *Laïcité* holds that integration with the Republic and nation is a matter for each individual citizen and refuses to enter dialogue with ethnic or religious groups, on the grounds that this will legitimate 'communautarisme' on the Anglo-Saxon model.[27] A hardline version of it aimed to do to Muslim practice what it had done with Catholicism around 1900.[28]

Whereas religious education was banned from state schools in France after 1881, in England it became compulsory under the 1944 act, although parents had the right to withdraw children from lessons. The Swann Report of 1985 introduced a culture of serious thinking about delivering education in a multicultural society, working with ethnic minority community groups and combating racism.[29] Citizenship education arrived much later, perhaps because the British still felt themselves to be subjects of the Crown with rights conceded in law by its ministers rather than as free and equal citizens under laws they have made for themselves. On the other hand, they had a strong sense of Britishness and superiority to people in other parts of the world that could be played upon.[30]

The 1997 Labour government commissioned the Crick Report on *Education for citizenship* (1998), and this was included on the national curriculum in 2002. It encouraged socially responsible behaviour, service in the community and informed engagement with public life. It was colour-blind and thought that prejudice and racism should be tackled within the wider framework of citizenship rather than head-on.[31] 'Citizenship education creates a common ground between different ethnic and religious identities', Crick argued, and implied that ethnic minorities would have to adapt to the dominant national identity.[32] Following race riots in Bradford and elsewhere in the summer of 2001, together with 9/11, fears increased that immigrant communities were not integrating sufficiently and living 'parallel lives'. The new mantra became 'community cohesion', in the words of Ted Cantle, 'to create shared experiences and values, rather than continuing to entrench separatism and to recognise and reinforce differences'.[33] After more extensive urban riots in August 2011 *Daily Mail* journalist Melanie Phillips denounced 'the disaster of multiculturalism — the doctrine which held that no culture could be considered superior to any other because that was 'racist'[...] children were no longer

25 This term comes from the Jamaican singer Louise Bennett in her Jamaica Labrish (Jamaica, Sangster's Bookstores, 1966), 179-80

26 Christopher Hill, The National Interest in Question: Foreign Policy in Multicultural Societies (Oxford, OUP, 2013), 9, 28-34, 59-72

27 See Jean Baubérot, Histoire de la laïcité française (6th ed., Paris, OUF, 2013); Paola Mattei and Andrew S. Aguilar, Secular Institutions, Islam and Education Policy. France and the U.S. in Comparative Perspective (Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2016)

28 Pierre Manent, Situation de la France (Paris, Desclée de Brouwer, 2015), 37

29 Maurice Craft, Multicultural education in the United Kingdom' in James A. Banks and James Lunch (eds), Multicultural Education in Western Societies (London, Holt, 1986), 81-6

30 John Beck, 'A brief history of citizenship education in Engalnd and Wales' in James Arthur and Hilary Cremin (eds), Debates on Citzenship Education (Abingdon, Routledge, 2002), 3

31 Bernard Crick, Essays on Citizenship (London and New York, Continuum, 2000), 132-4

32 Audrey Osler and Hugh Starkey, 'Citizenship education in France and England. Contrasting approaches to national identity and diversity' in James A. Banks (ed), The Routledge International Handbook to Multicultural Education (New York and London, 2009), 335-8

33 Ted Cantle, Community Cohesion. A New Framework for Race and Diversity (Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 11

taught about the nation in which they lived, and about its culture'. [34] A Prevent strategy aimed at the de-radicalisation of Muslims was introduced and the teaching of Fundamental British Values was promoted in schools. These were defined in 2014 by David Cameron as 'freedom [...] parliamentary democracy, a free press, the rule of law', implying that law went with order.[35] There was thus a shift in Britain to a more integrationist or republican model requiring those of immigrant origin to imbibe British values as a condition of exercising citizenship.[36]

The shortcoming of the integrationist model is that inclusion always involves exclusion. Those who refuse to remove the *hijab* on entering the school are considered not properly republican or French, while those who fail to learn English and support the English cricket team are considered not fully British. The issue is doubly difficult for those of foreign origin who are not French or British citizens. In France today there are three million non-European immigrants, the children of whom discover in citizen classes that they cannot vote, despite promises that they would be able to vote at least in local elections first proposed by François Mitterrand in 1981, but never implemented. In the UK, Commonwealth citizens can vote in all elections so long as after five years' residency they have been granted indefinite leave to remain, but many other immigrants do not enjoy the vote. They are urged to assimilate British values but these too often carry a soft-imperialist spin that these values are superior to those of other peoples, who received them at the hands of the missionaries and soldiers of the British Empire. To quote David Cameron's 2014 speech more fully:

> We should be proud of what Britain has done to defend freedom and develop these institutions - parliamentary democracy, a free press, the rule of law - that are so essential for people all over the world. This is the country that helped fight fascism, topple communism and abolish slavery; we invented the steam engine, the light bulb the internet; and we also gave so much of the world the way of life that they hold so dear.[37]

That this might be experienced as excluding by Britons whose families were originally colonial subjects was eloquently expressed in 2015 by Kiran Yates, whose family was Punjabi, in her satirical magazine *British values*:

> The message was clear: either you're on the side of Britain, of how we think, act and live, or you're against it. It's hard not to see that language as divisive. As a result, it's sort of become a buzzword for proving your allegiance to British identity, whatever that might mean. We should challenge that idea and make the point that British immigrant identities are great and funny and important to the social and cultural fabric. Who we are and what we value need to be visible.[38]

2.2.2 HISTORY AND NATIONAL COHESION

Civic education was one vehicle of national cohesion; another was the teaching of history. This, however, was also a battleground where integrationist and multicultural models vied for supremacy. Powerful national narratives of the achievements of white British and French peoples were cultivated, but these were challenged by other narratives which gave a greater voice and identity to immigrant communities who were yet part of the nation.

In France the *roman national* conventionally begins with 'nos ancêtres les Gaulois', who were defeated by the Romans but then adopted much of their civilisation.[39] Assuming a two-thousand lineage of Gallo-Romans and later Franks on French soil, it privileges the so-called *Français de souche* and marginalises those whose families might be of North African origin. These constituencies were divided from each other by the Algerian War of 1954-62, a brutal war of decolonisation between the French state, army and settlers on the one hand and Algerian nationalists on the other. Algerian *harkis* who had fought for

34 Daily Mail, 11 Aug. 2011

35 https://www.gov.uk/government/news/british-values-article-by-david-cameron

36 Paola Mattei and Miriam Broeks, 'From multiculturalism to civic integration: Citizenship education and integration policies in the Netherlands and England since the 2000s', Ethnicities, 10 Nov. 2016, 6-10, 15

37 See note 10

38 http://www.thefader.com/2015/08/27/british-values-zine-kieran-yates-interview

39 Suzanne Citron, Le mythe national: l'histoire de France en question (Paris, Ed. ouvrières, 1989)

France were either massacred after the nationalists secured independence, or fled to France where for years they were interned in camps, and were caught in the middle. Asked in 2000 whether this should be on the school syllabus historian Jean-Pierre Rioux was defensive: 'The republican school in France does not think we should favour the Algerian War to the detriment of other events also, so as not to take the risk - because the school authorities do not want this - of inflaming memory conflicts that exist and that one can detect in class'.[40]

To ignore the painful legacy of the war, however, did not mean that it would go away. A survey undertaken in Toulouse in 2003 by the Achac research group found that the children of immigrants saw colonisation as 'a metaphor for oppression endured *today':* they feel like a 'child of the *indigène* or a child of colonisation', a way of thinking very like that of 'children of slaves' in French Caribbean territories. Like descendants of slaves, they did not see national history as theirs, whereas for most *Français de souche* the Algerian War was proof that former *indigènes* from North Africa and their descendants could not be viably integrated into France.[41] The after effects of the Algerian War were burned into the landscape of metropolitan France, especially in the *banlieues* where North African migrants mostly lived, and formed part of what Achac called the 'colonial fracture' between former colonial peoples and their former masters.

The stories of the children of immigrants and those who reported them were not able to modify the *roman national.* The researchers of Achac, headed by Pascal Blanchard, were for a long time held at a distance by mainstream French history departments; their postcolonial approach was seen as too radical, too polemical. The *roman national* was policed by establishment historians such as Pierre Nora. The first two volumes of his *Lieux de Mémoire* detailed sites of memory that crystallised the identity of the Republic and the nation; only in volume III did he concede that there were *Les Frances*, plural Frances.[42] When British historian Perry Anderson criticised the absence in the collection of Dien Bien Phu, France's 1954 defeat in Vietnam, Nora replied, 'Mourning! Colonial mourning! That would be a real *lieu de mémoire* to deal with'.[43]

Far from engaging with any postcolonial approach to their own history, the French political class preferred to preach up the benefits of their colonial project. In 2005 the French parliament passed a law expressing the nation's 'thanks to the women and men who took part in the work undertaken by France in its former French departments of Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia and Indochina'. Article 4 required school syllabuses to recognise 'the positive role of the French presence overseas, notably in North Africa, and to give the eminent place they deserve in history to the sacrifices of the soldiers in the French army that originated from these territories'. This provoked fierce controversy, with hundreds of historians signing the manifesto of the *Liberté pour l'histoire* denouncing the prescription (later repealed) that schools were being required to teach a certain historical line. A different form of opposition was stirred among young immigrants for whom France's colonial past in Indochina and Africa meant something entirely different. A movement called *Les Indigènes de la République*/The Natives of the Republic was launched on 8 May 2005, the anniversary of a massacre of Algerians who were protesting that they should be granted some of the freedoms for which many of their number had been fighting in French armies that unhappily coincided on VE Day 1945. Its spokesperson Houria Boutelja, born in Constantine, Algeria, and studying in Lyon, declared:

> We are the children of colonisation [...] Our parents and grandparents were enslaved, colonised, animalised. But they were not crushed. They preserved their human dignity by the heroic resistance they undertook to shake off the colonial yoke [...] Dien Bien Phu was their victory. Dien Bien Phu was not a defeat but a victory for liberty, equality and fraternity.

In Britain, there was likewise a tendency to emphasise the benefits brought to the world by the Empire rather than its negative side of exploitation and violence.

40 Jo McCormack, 'Memory in history, nation-building and identity. Teaching about the Algerian War in France', in Patricia Lorcin ed., Algeria and France, 1800-2000 (Syracuse UP, 2006), 143

41 Pascal Blanchard, Nicolas Bancel and Sandrine Lemaire, 'Les enseignements de l'étude conduit à Toulouse sur la mémoire coloniale', in Bancel, Blanchard and Lemaire, La Fracture coloniale. La Société française au prisme de l'héritage colonial (Paris, La Découverte, 2005), 247-54

42 Pierre Nora (ed), Les Lieux de Mémoire (Paris, Gallimard, 1984-92)

43 Perry Anderson, Perry Anderson, 'Union Sucrée', LRB, vol. 26 No.18, 23 Sept. 2004; Anderson, La Pensée tiède. Un regard critique sur la culture française (Paris, Seuil, 2005), 52, 121

The orthodoxy was captured by Niall Ferguson's *Empire. How Britain made the modern world* (2003). By contrast Paul Gilroy, author of *The Black Atlantic*, warned in 2004 that 'the quality of the country's multicultural frame depends on what is now done with the hidden shameful store of imperial horrors'.[44] In 2005 historians David Anderson and Caroline Elkins published accounts of the brutalities committed by the British in Kenya during their war against the Mau Mau in the 1960s: dispossessions, internment camps that Elkins called 'Britain's Gulag', torture and mass executions.[45] The official response was not at all in the same vein. Visiting a Commonwealth war cemetery in Tanzania in January 2005, Gordon Brown announced that 'the days of Britain having to apologise for its colonial history are over. We should move forward. We should celebrate much of our past rather than apologise for it'. [46]

Even as he spoke, Britain was repeating the errors of its colonial past in Iraq, not only provoking Islamic resistance to its occupation of the country but dividing the country at home. Benjamin Zephaniah, a British-born poet of Jamaican parents, refused an OBE in 2003, declaring, 'I get angry when I hear that word 'empire'; it reminds me of slavery, it reminds of thousands of years of brutality, it reminds me of how my foremothers were raped and my forefathers brutalised… Benjamin Zephaniah OBE - no way Mr Blair, no way Mrs Queen. I am profoundly anti-empire'.[47] Two years later three British-born Pakistanis and a Jamaican convert to Islam perpetrated the 7/7 bombings in London. One of them, Mohamed Sidique Khan, a teaching assistant from Leeds, justified the attacks as a response to British imperialism: 'Your democratically elected governments continually perpetrate atrocities against my people all over the world […] Until you stop the bombing, gassing, imprisonment and torture of my people we will not stop this fight. We are at war and I am a soldier. Now you too will taste the reality of the situation'.[48]

A powerful debate ensued on how history could be used to shape national identity and a sense of belonging. The Conservative view was this would stem from the Edwardian notion of 'our island story' that encapsulated the exceptionalism of British history from the Romans to Queen Victoria.[49] Incoming Secretary of state for Education Michael Gove told the Conservative Party congress in 2010 that:

44 Paul Gilroy, After Empire. Melancholia or convivial culture? (Abingdon, Routledge, 2004), 102

45 David Anderson, Histories of the Hanged: Britain's dirty war in Kenya and the end of empire (London, Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 2005); Caroline Elkins, Britain's Gulag: the brutal end of empire in Kenya (London, Jonathan Cape, 2005)

46 http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-334208/Its-time-celebrate-Empire-says-Brown.html

47 Guardian, 27 Nov 2003

48 Frank Ledwige, Investment in Blood. The Real Cost of Britain's Afghan War (New Haven & London, Yale UP, 2013), 202-3

49 See for example Henrietta Elisabeth Marshall, Our island story: a child's history of England (London, Jack, 1905)

> The current approach we have to history denies children the opportunity to hear our island story. Children are given a cursory run through Henry VIII and Hitler without knowing how the vivid episodes of our past become a connected narrative. Well, this trashing of our past has to stop.

The new history curriculum he devised prescribed that pupils aged eleven to fourteen should "know and understand the history of these islands as a coherent, chronological narrative, from the earliest times to the present day: how people's lives have shaped this nation and how Britain has influenced and been influenced by the wider world […] gain and deploy a historically grounded understanding of abstract terms such as 'empire', 'civilisation', 'parliament' and 'peasantry'." [50]

This credo was reinforced by David Starkey, speaking to a teachers' conference in 2011. He argued that 'Britain is a white mono-culture and schools should focus on our own history' and reiterated that this was 'absolutely and unmitigatedly white' outside London.[51] This was contested by academics and teachers committed to history as a way to integrate diversity and multiculturalism. Claire Alexander, whose family was from Calcutta, and Joya Chatterji, who did her first degree at Delhi University, had completed a project called Bangla Stories, based on interviews with Bengali Muslims caught up in the 1947 Partition, the Bangladesh Liberation War and migration to Britain.[52] 'Who and what', they asked, 'are included in 'British history' and who or what are excluded? How does 'our island story' engage with centuries of migration to and from its shores? […] Our island story is necessarily a globalised one, and has always been, and Britain itself has always been, ethnically, culturally and socially diverse.'[53] In 2014 they pioneered a 'History Lessons' project among schoolchildren in multi-ethnic cities - London, Manchester, Leicester, Sheffield and Cardiff. In their own families, in the classroom, on guided walks in the neighbourhood and in local museums, they explored stories of immigration. With teachers, museum staff and film-makers, they discovered histories that brought to life global trade, industry, empire, slavery, immigration and diversity. Far from being excluded from a monocultural national history, one London teacher reflected at the end of the project, 'They can see themselves reflected back in the history classroom'.[54]

In France there was a similar debate about the *roman national*. Should it be reinforced in order to create a firm sense of national identity, or should it be modified to accommodate more multicultural perspectives? President Sarkozy tried a little of both. His legacy was to be a Maison de l'histoire de France in the Archives Nationales, but this was widely criticised as nationalistic and was abandoned in 2012 by President Hollande. On 6 April 2011 Sarkozy unveiled a plaque in the Panthéon to the Martiniquais poet and political leader Aimé Césaire who had died at the age of 94 and praised him as a leader of France's black Caribbean territories. On the other hand he made scarcely a reference to Césaire's savage 1950 indictment of colonialism[55] Patrick Singaïny, a journalist from La Réunion who had written about Césaire, criticised Sarkozy's tribute because it did not develop the idea that minorities could be fully integrated as French citizens. 'Most people of French stock see themselves only as 'white' and 'Christians'. A French person of colour does not exist for them', he said. 'Someone who has been colonised or their descendants are not recognised as French because the definition of the French domain requires some people to be excluded'. He added that 'These people, in addition to their culture of origin, have a composite French identity which France needs in order to preserve her emotional depth and guarantee her civilisational modernity'.[56]

2.2.3 INTEGRATION AND ISLAM - THE RESPONSE TO ISLAMIC STATE

This plea for a 'one and multicultural France' was dealt a heavy blow by the rise of Islamic state and France's decision to bomb it in Syria in September 2014. A vicious response came with the *Charlie Hebdo*

50 https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/239075/SECONDARY_national_curriculum_-_History.pdf

51 http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2061809/David-Starkey-row-British-history.html

52 http://www.banglastories.org/

53 Claire Alexander, Joya Chatterji and Debbie Weekes-Bernard, Making British Histories. Diversity and the National Curriculum (London, Runneymede, 2012), 3-14

54 Alexander, Chatterji and Weekes-Bernard, History Lessons: Teaching Diversity in and through the History National Curriculum (London, Runneymede, 2014), 12

55 http://politiques-publiques.com/martinique/cesaire-au-pantheon-le-discours-de-n-sarkozy/

56 Edgar Morin and Patrick Singaïny, La France une et multiculturelle (Paris, Fayard, 2012), 11, 29-38

killings of 7 January 2015 by the brothers Chérif and Saïd Kouachi, of Algerian origin who had trained in Yemen, and Amédy Coulibaly, a Malian radicalised with Chérif in the prison of Fleury Mérogis, a notorious jihad academy. In a video he recorded probably on 8 January, Coulibaly described himself as a 'soldier of the caliphate' and explained, 'You attack the Islamic state, we will attack you. You are bombing regularly over there'. Then, addressing his Muslim brothers, he asked, 'What do you do when they directly violate the law of Allah? What do you do when they assault our sisters?'[57] An estimated four million people demonstrated on Sunday 11 January, wearing badges with the motto 'Je suis Charlie'. The fundamental values of freedom of thought and speech, *laïcité* and the Republic were dramatised. It seems that the republican school had done its job. The outpouring, however, was not shared by the young Muslims of the *banlieues*. 'For many Muslims it was impossible to say 'Je suis Charlie', said writer Karim Miské, because *Charlie Hebdo* attacked their prophet [...] To say 'Je suis Charlie' would have been to say, 'I submit to the white secular order, even though I think it is horrible'.[58]

The main response to the attacks was to reinforce the integrationist model. A fifteen-point Charter of Laïcité, published in September 2013, was required again to be posted in every school. Article 3 proclaimed that 'Laïcité guarantees freedom of conscience for all. Everyone is free to believe or not', but article 13 ran, 'No one may appeal to his or her religious affiliation to refuse to conform to the regulations of the republican school'.

Some voices called for a *laïcité* that was less dogmatic and more benevolent, less integrationist and more multicultural. Philosopher Pierre Manent argued that *laïcité* was not neutral because it functioned in a society that was still culturally Catholic. He urged 'a compromise between Muslim French citizens and the rest of the citizen body'. These would be recognised as 'a community in a surrounding community that is not Muslim'. Attempts to make Muslims abandon their culture and 'modernise' should be abandoned. They should be accepted 'as they are' and allowed to practise their customs in public so long as they respected the laws of the Republic. The line was nevertheless drawn at polygamy and the full veil, regarded as anti-women and preventing 'the exchange of signs by which one human being recognises another'.[59]

A 2015 study entitled *Fatima gets worse marks than Marianne* provided evidence that the republican school, far from being an engine of integration, in fact increased segregation. Moreover, by attributing the problems of immigrant children of Muslim origin to a failure to integrate through the school, it failed to address deep-rooted reasons for the alienation of these young people, living effectively in ghettoes, suffering social deprivation and unemployment. Muslim schoolchildren, the authors found, were segregated in different preschool nurseries from *Français de souche*, were directed towards lowest-status technological qualifications in school, and were systematically generally awarded lower marks by teachers who had not been trained in unconscious bias. They also found that current textbooks represented Islam in a stereotypical way as unable to adapt to the modern world and violently hostile to the West since the Crusades. Not surprisingly, it discovered that 73 per cent of teachers in 2015 thought that Islam was not compatible with the Republic.[60]

Even after the Bataclan attacks on 13 November 2015, a minority of voices continued to defend the multicultural approach. Edgar Morin, of Sephardic Jewish origin, former resister and opponent in the 1950s of France's role in Algeria, traced France's ills to her foreign policy in the Middle East and to the effective exclusion of Muslims from French society. Much more thought, argued Morin, had to go into how to integrate them:

> The war against Daech will be won not only through peace in Syria but through peace in the *banlieues*. Nothing in depth or over time has been to done for a real integration of the nation by schools teaching that French history is multicultural and by a confronting discrimination in society.[61]

57 Gilles Kepel, Terreur à l'Hexagone. Genèse du Djihad français (Paris, Gallimard, 2015), 169-70

58 BBC Radio 4, French culture war, 10 Nov. 2016

59 Pierre Manent, Situation de la France, 63-84, 165

60 François Durpaire and Béatrice Mabilon-Bonfils, Fatima moins bien noté que Marianne (Paris, Éditions de l'Aube, 2015), 47-83

61 Le Monde, 17 Nov. 2015

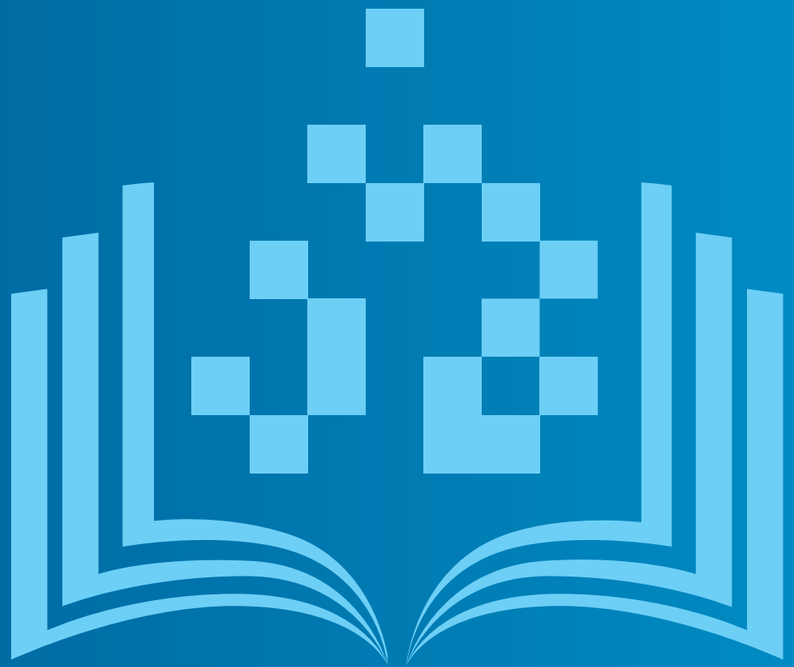
2.2.4 BREXIT - A VOTE FOR BRITISH IDENTITY?

In Britain, it may be argued that Brexit was at least in part the victory of a certain view of history that privileged the achievements of white British inhabitants through the empire and two world wars, at the expense of recognising that the country was now profoundly multicultural and that the contribution of non-white Britons had also to be celebrated. In September 2016 Onni Gust, lecturer at the University of Nottingham, argued in History Workshop Journal that 'it is clear from the 'Leave' campaign and interviews with people who voted to leave the EU, that nostalgia for empire and particularly the imagined community of World War Two played a considerable role in swaying people's vote.' A bibliography was provided replying critically to some of the main historical tenets of the 'Leave' campaign, such as 'We didn't fight two world wars for this', 'We're not racist but they're not like us', 'It's not about race, it's about Islam and the clash of civilisations', and 'We just want to make Britain great again'. Omar Khan, director of the Runnymede Trust, declared that 'There never was a time when Britain and the British identity was impervious to migration', and that this was a constitutive dimension of Britishness. He continued:

> Many in Britain spoke this year of "taking our country back", asserting the importance of sovereignty and democracy in the face of European bureaucracy. But it's equally obvious that many based those aspirations on an imaginary history. This confusion imposes a cost, as the notion of a country where people of migrant background are never truly British doesn't just misunderstand our past, it also pushes our nation down a route towards economic stagnation and social conflict.[62]

In the very difficult context of the present in France and Britain, the choice in respect to teaching citizenship and history is difficult but stark. The integrationist approach offers what seems like a simple solution, to hammer home the ideal of a common citizenship and shared national story. The multiculturalist model runs the risk of allowing immigrant groups to retreat into their own separate cultures and have little or nothing to do with common threads. On the other hand, integration also involves exclusion. Because it serves the interest of the white French or British people, it has the effect of stigmatising and alienating, even radicalising populations of immigrant origin, especially those of Muslim faith. Integration ignores the legacy of colonialism, colonial conflict and immigration that continues to divide one people from the other. This legacy must be confronted head-on by thinking through its colonial history and the meaning of that history, its triumphs and its tragedies, and by writing immigrant peoples back into the national narrative. Only in this way will it be possible to arrive at what the French call the 'vivre ensemble'. •

62 https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/oct/27/britain-migrant-past-brexiters-immigrant-history



PART III.

EDUCATION POLICY AND NATIONAL IDENTITY

3.1

THE RESILIENCE OF *LAÏCITÉ* AND THE REPUBLICAN SCHOOL IN FRANCE

by Paola Mattei

The establishment of the French public education system during the Third Republic was the mechanism through which laïcité would be instilled as a republican value in the 19th century. Through this new education system, the holy trinity of French values, liberty, equality, and fraternity, would replace the Catholic holy trinity as a method of identity. Debates during the late Third Republic focused on how far to promote Republican identity in schools and how much to exclude religion from the public sphere. This debate is best characterized as a debate between centralism, the philosophical underpinnings of the state, and centralization, the process of organizing a modern nation. As will be discussed later, the exact role of Republicanism in the education system was a great subject of debate, namely due to the limitations it would place on other key liberal values like freedom of expression. The historical role of schools as a method of secular identity earned the school system the nickname *La Laïque*.

The history of *laïcité* as a legal principle begins with the French Revolution. The Declaration of the Rights of Man guaranteed the freedom of conscience in order to break the political power of the First Estate over the French government. Citizenship becomes entirely detached from its religious ties to the Church. Article 10 of the Déclaration des Droits de l'homme et du citoyen (1789) states that "Nul ne doit etre inquiété pur ses opinions, meme religieuses, purvou que leur manifestation ne trouble pas l'ordre public établi par la loi." While such reforms were also meant to create an ethically independent citizen, they were first and foremost designed to rebase the sovereignty of France its new government and not in Rome. Laïcité was thus a political method to reassert state sovereignty in the lives of its newly created citizen through the elimination of religion from public life. The Directorate passed laws that halted public financing of Catholic religious institutions, banned the use of religious signs in public, and annulled the religious vows made by citizens forced into the Catholic clergy. The origins of laïcité were conceived as a combative ideology to assert the dominance of a non-religious sovereignty.

Though many of these laws would eventually be repealed at the turn of the 19th century, the debate over the role of religion in political and public life continued. The Concordat of 1801 recognized Catholicism as the religion of the majority of the French but also recognized the Jewish and Protestant religions. The Bourbon Restoration served as a warning that the results of 1789 were not permanent. Indeed, the fact that provincial citizens voted overwhelmingly for the monarchists indicated that a new civic education system needed to disseminate new civic, Republican values.

The establishment of the Third Republic in 1871 placed *laïcité* at the centre of a new conception of state and citizen. One of the major reforms during this period removed religious instruction from public education to separate the affairs of church from the affairs of state. Within this framework, two views of *laïcité* existed: First, an aggressive and combative secularism espoused by Emile Combes, aimed at eliminating religion entirely from the public sphere; second, a pluralistic secularism supportive of mutual separation of the state and religions in the spirit of respecting all spiritual faiths. Jules Ferry, Jean Jaurès and Aristide Briand sustained this latter, more tolerant model.

The debate between separation and elimination led to major Republican disagreements. The issue peaked in 1877, after enacted legislation ordered the closure of Congregationalist school and the deportation of members of unauthorized religious orders. Critics condemned Combes' approach and claimed laïcité violated core liberal principles. Combes' approach was rejected in favour of one that preserved the Catholic Church while maintain the dominance of the state in important policy areas like education. The ultimate passage of the 1905 law was the ultimate triumph not just for the state but also for the state's dominance in public institutions. This chapter will consider how schools in France have ultimately served as both a battleground and as a test range for the extent to which *laïcité* is enacted and national identity developed.

3.1.1 THE ÉCOLE LAÏQUE AND THE NEW CHALLENGES

Schools have been institutional agents in France, of republicanism. Schools encourage republican ideals such as individualism and secularism. In 2003, the Ministry of Education issued a *Guide républicain* to all schools to help define contemporary republicanism in the classroom setting. They have been secular institutions (*l'école laïque*) and the primary institutional fortress of republican values.
At the heart of my analysis is the following question: How does the perceived challenge to one of the most fundamental republican values in France—*laïcité*- generate turbulence to the long established and powerful French educational system, if at all? How does it generate policy reforms aimed at re-establishing the primacy of the republican ideology in the wake of increasing

religious diversity? How do such policies impact school actors, in particular teachers and head teachers? Reforms do not only concern political elites, and abstract concepts, but also mobilise actors and public opinion.

The 2004 ban of the veil in schools was intended to serve as a defence of *laïcité* as a republican value, from the perceived threat of religious extremism and radicalization of schoolchildren (Lorcerie, 2012). In the opening section of the Stasi Commission's Report, written in December 2003 by Bernard Stasi, the President of the special Commission created by President Jacques Chirac to reflect on the state of *laïcité* in France, stated that ' it is important to respect the value of *laïcité* and, whenever it is under threat, to defend it' (Stasi and Commission de réflexion sur l'application du principe de laïcité dans la république., 2004). Such a perception of laïcité harkens back to the combative form it took against the Catholic Church as recently as the late 1950s in order to minimize the influence of religion in official affairs. Indeed, the first line of the report vividly asserts the place of *laïcité* in French national identity: 'The French Republic is constructed on *laïcité'*.

If the French state cannot avoid an assertive and combative response to the 'new' threat of religious extremism, what is the exact challenge in schools? To whom is this a challenge? Why is this a serious and credible threat and what is its nature, socio-economic or religious? The republican value of *laïcité* is seen to be under threat in public institutions and in schools by religious extremism. The public anxiety in 2003, turned into outright terror recently, after the attack on Charlie Hebdo and on the Jewish supermarket in Paris. The events generated a public reflection upon the French model of integration and the risks of youth radicalisation. This is not-about Islam and its radicalization, but about the French approach to freedom of religion in schools in the context of the new circumstances posed by failed integration and consequently the search for new models of integration.

In certain cases, extremist groups have incited students against the French Republic and its values. Therefore, a defence of *laïcité* is foremost a legitimate defence of the French republican values through schools against those who oppose them or attack them. It is worth noting that religion is certainly not the explanatory factor of educational underachievement, poverty, deprivation, and social exclusion. Rapid demographic changes in French schools and increasing diversity of the student population are new challenging factors, amplified by the difficult integration of ethnic and cultural minorities in the deprived areas of large urban cities, rising unemployment, and rise in discriminatory unlawful behaviour in schools.

The opponents of the 2004 ban claim that it is an infringement on individual freedom of expression. The restriction by law on the display of ostentatious religious signs is viewed as a limitation to individual freedom. Schoolgirls who choose deliberately to wear the *hijab* in schools are restricted in their ability to do so in public, and in turn they are said to feel discriminated against. The alleged discrimination against women who wear the *hijab* raises the question of whether the ban is a means of discrimination against Muslim minorities in France. The claim is that girls are prevented from expressing adherence to their cultural values and, and undermined in expressing freely their religious practices. I disagree with the assumption that treating citizens identically automatically means treating them inequitably. In the case of the 2004 ban, the intention was to ensure that all schoolchildren received equal treatment under the law, even if the implementation focused more on Muslim girls wearing headscarves.

However, the advocates of the ban argue that *laïcité* actually protects individual freedom of religion because the public sphere in schools ought to be neutral and remains secular. The neutrality of the public space is one of the key tenets of the value of *laïcité* in France, entrusted in the 1905 Law. Far from being discriminatory against specific groups and embodying a preference for nonreligion, this law determines that the state acts as a guarantee of the individual freedom of conscience (*Liberté de conscience*). The state must protect all public places from religious pressures. The 1905 Law guarantees all citizens the freedom of religion. It is therefore the opposite principle to the denial of individual expression. Schools are protected from dogmatic beliefs such religious and political extremism, a remnant of the historical battles with strong religious institutions like the Catholic Church. Far from being the suppression of individual liberties, this paper presents the argument that *laïcité* as a legal principle not only does not violate freedom of religion, but it can protect all schoolchildren from external pressures and constraints, by creating a neutral public space in the classroom (Weil, 2005a). This idea is also sanctioned by *laïcité's* strongest guarantor the 1958 Constitution of the Fifth Republic, which declares that "France respects all beliefs la France respecte toutes les croyances".[63]

Education empowers individuals to know their rights as citizens and to exercise their duties. The primary goal of the French education system is thus to educate each individual to acquire their freedom and dignity. Religious dogmatism and culturally differentiated rights is thus condemned and has remained outside the framework of the French public education system.

This chapter views the French school as an institution at the intersect of providing educational services and supporting a specific political and institutional project, namely the teaching and preservation of republican values and equal citizenship according to the blueprint of the First Republic. The institutional role of schools has been historically determined and maintained with a formidable continuity and institutional stability in the last two centuries.

As Patrick Weil argues, France is the most religiously diverse country in Europe, with the largest communities of Buddhists, Jews, and Muslims. However, the category of religion as a marker of diversity has until recently received minimal scholarly attention, because the historical focus in France has been on the ethnicisation of social relationship. In the aftermath of the French and American Revolutions, political leaders wanted to instil uniform republican values to children through schooling. Uniformity of treatment was seen as the enemy of privilege. It was political citizenship that underpinned nationality and efforts of integration. After the revolution it became critical to find political and religious common denominators to build the nation state and equal citizenship. This is not to say that there were no conflicts over religion. For instance, in the United States there was a tension between newly arrived Catholics and nativist Protestants, and this tore communities apart. However, the conflict never reached the intensity as in France to which laïcité was born. In France, the Catholic Church came under fierce attack by the state and political and educational leaders. National identity was born to replace the religious belonging.

In the early days of the French and American public education systems, religion was not a central dimension of the political debate and education policies aimed at building equal citizenship and national identity. Is religion the most relevant dimension today? It has been more difficult in recent years to clearly demarcate ethnic from religious diversity and conflicts as they play out in French schools. Nussbaum asserts that we live in a time of anxiety and suspicion because religion has returned to the centre stage of such collective fears in Europe and in the United States. The most recent public debate, and integration policies in France have focused on re-establishing a neutral and secular public space in schools. The threat to the national identity has once again arisen in an era of increasing diversity when the sense of belonging is challenged. Nussbaum writes: ' Despite the historical differences, we should be worried about the upsurge in religious fear and animosity in the United States, as well as Europe. Fear is accelerating, and we need to try to understand it and to think how best to address it' (Nussbaum, 2012, p. 19).(2012, p.19).

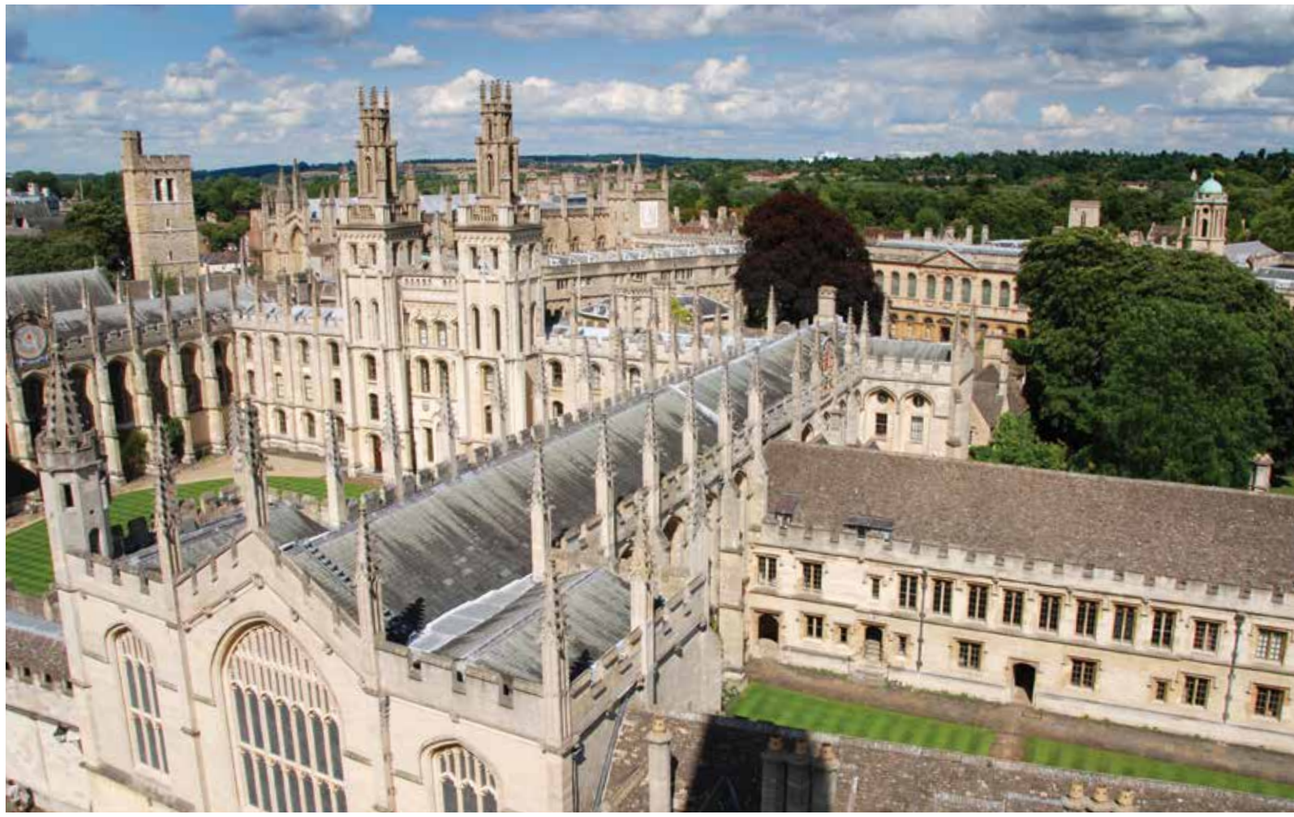
One of the most intriguing developments in the contemporary French political debate is the predominant framing of diversity in terms of religious 'otherness'. The politics of difference are the politics of religious other-ness in France. In the United States religious affiliation has never represented an element of differentiation and diversity due to the primacy of the ethno-racial dimension has been predominant. On the contrary, in France religion has been an important element of otherness, which stem from the historical confrontations between the French state and the Catholic Church. Religious differences distinguish the older waves immigration (Polish, Italian, Russian immigrants) from the new immigration associated with Islam. There is a stigmatisation of Muslims in France and in the United States, if not open discrimination and racism. •

63 Translation: 'France respects all religious confessions'.

3.2

BRITAIN'S EDUCATION IDENTITY - DISTINCTLY NOT NATIONAL

by Sheila Lawlor



3.2.1 INTRODUCTION - THE PRINCIPLES, THE PROBLEM

France and Britain, Europe's two oldest nation states with a shared and intertwined history, have followed very different paths in education and schools policy from the 19th century. France, as others in this volume explain, has grafted national and Republican values onto schools with a fourth, 20th century addition, that of laicity, 'laïcité'. The approach to schooling as a results follows one of religious neutrality and its education policy is seen as aiming to leave outside the school doors a pupil's, ethnicity, culture, religion and community to embrace a French national identity. In France, this idea of a monolithic national identity is now being challenged by the intelligentsia, and along with it the idea of a national history, though such challenges are accommodated at the edges not at the core.

England, by contrast, developed its education policy (Scotland has had a different system) in the 19th and 20th centuries to reflect the voluntarist principles on which schools had been founded and evolved over two millennia, and on their aims and particular arrangements. There had been no specific role for the state, no conscious state policy vis-à-vis the purpose, content or nature of education or national 'values'. However throughout the 20th century England has moved to a more centrally controlled 'state' and uniform system, whereas today it is moving away from that model, back, it seems, to its earlier founding principles. The aims of diversity, promoting parental choice and greater independence for schools and teachers are shared in other European countries for whom liberalisation of the system has become a path to reforming educational standards.

France, like England, has a significant Muslim population including many people from former colonies, and a further question for the education system is whether, and if so how best, schools should promote integration and assimilation. Can or should a new 'national identity' be inculcated through schooling? Or will the restoration of the principles on which the best traditions of English education are based, be best for allow the country's diverse, but cohesive identity accommodate into the whole different groups, as it has done historically, without further state intervention.

Over the centuries, in fact two millennia, the tradition had been voluntarist, liberal (with a small 'l') and diverse. It reflected the aims of those who founded, endowed or otherwise supported schools - monarchs, the church, charities, guilds, benefactors, philanthrophists, secular and religious bodies; the religious character of the country over the ages; and, altogether, the focus of those who provided ran or taught in schools. Parents or guardians decided how and by whom their children were educated in line with their own circumstances and wishes, including those about moral and religious teaching. By the mid 19th century, the government was making grants to schools and inspecting them as beneficiaries; by the 1870s it required parents to have their children educated and it also provided for the founding of schools under the aegis of local 'boards' where otherwise they might not exist. At that stage and for the next sixty years, state funding or provision of schools tended to reflect the voluntarist, diverse and liberal settlement that had evolved over centuries, one in which schools were in general Christian, or established to reflect the Christian denominations: Church of England, Non-Conformist or Roman Catholic.

The incremental changes after 1870 were initially to fund, provide and require the education of children. In general, they respected existing arrangements and the principles on which these were based, supplementing, rather than superseding what was there.

In the 1940s, however, the broad understanding on which schooling developed changed, reflecting the trend in government policy to greater central state control of areas of life from which it had hitherto kept its distance. The state more expressly sought to organise schools into a national system, absorb the voluntary institutions into it, iron out the differences. Schooling would be reshaped through a growing bureaucracy in which cadres of education professionals, employed by local and central government, increasingly determined the 'process' of education in a manner removed from, and sometimes in conflict with, the principles on which

pupils in this and other similar western countries had been educated over the centuries. This novel approach effectively nationalised schooling over the next 60 years, until 2010, into the makings of an 'absolutist' system: organisation and content were decided by the new and growing breed of education professionals and officials removed from the teachers, often ignorant of the subject knowledge being taught, and hostile to the very principles of an English (or British) liberal education. The aim continued to be to rationalise the system, eliminate diversity and make for uniformity in the structure of schools and in the content of what was taught and the public examinations set. Attempts to reverse or check the trend were invariably prevented by those running the system centrally: the public sector unions, the education training colleges (upgraded in the 1980s to 'university' education department status, though without the academic and intellectual foundations of the universities) leftist in inclination, along with the theorists who had captured it. Thus rationalisation had claimed its victims: denominational education in the 1940s; grammar schools in the 1970s, middle schools and the sixth forms of 11-18 schools in the 1980s.

Some elements of the varied system escaped, others were added: 'grant maintained' schools in the 1980s, academies in the 1990s, thrown an escape route by direct central (rather than local) government funding with the aim of raising academic standards by being more responsive to the parents than their local authority siblings. Nonetheless, until 2010, when Michael Gove became education secretary, such challenges to an absolutist system, were insignificant, more often than not undermined by the manner in which the official machine subverted the intention behind a reform, and by the manner of its introduction.

Mr Gove's aim was to restore academic and intellectual standards, greater freedom for and greater diversity of institutions. The means he chose were to liberalise both the structures and content of education in line with the principles on which the success of English schools and teaching rested. The first education secretary since Balfour's Act[64] to understand the link between both, he also had the intellectual ability and single minded determination to drive change through the obstructive bureaucracy and teachers' unions. After a short period under a successor appointed to see things through to the 2015 general elections, the new prime minister, Theresa May, has set the seal on Gove's reforms by going further, to open the system to a new wave of new grammar schools. The changes to the curriculum and exams, and now proposed for the structure of schools, restore some of the principles Britain has had in common with its continental neighbours (notably France and Germany), the restoration of academic and intellectual values, and have more recent parallels, in terms of liberalising structures, with what has been done in Denmark and Sweden.

As in some other western countries, the traditions and structures on which schooling has evolved in England are sometimes seen to be unequal to the task of educating today's more pluralist, multicultural societies of the 20th century.

3.2.2 VOLUNTARIST, LIBERAL AND DIVERSE - THE CHARACTER OF ENGLISH SCHOOLING

From the earliest times, schools were provided by the church (later churches), by monarchs, by charitable bodies, by individuals. Initially when often attached to cathedrals and monasteries, e.g. Kings School Canterbury (597), they taught subjects linked to a religious, administrative or official profession in the Church or to public office: Latin, and often astronomy, liturgy and verse, and mathematics. They also had a distinct charitable role, to educate and give opportunities to poorer children. Eton College, the most famous of the great English Public Schools, was founded by Henry VI (along with King's College Cambridge and All Souls College Oxford), as a charitable school to provide free education for 70 poor boys who would then go to King's College Cambridge. Henry lived between 1421-1471, and the model for Eton may have been the older foundation, Winchester, founded by the bishop of Winchester, William of Wykeham, in 1382 for 70 poor boys who would go to New College Oxford (also founded by him). By the reign of Elizabeth 1st, education or the advancement of learning was one of the four charitable activities under statute, along with the relief of the indigent, the advancement of religion, and the advancement of objects of general public utility.

Many English schools have subsequently been thought of as being covered by the term 'grammar' school. Dr Johnson would later suggest the name was because Latin was taught grammatically. In any case, the label became more commonly used from the 15th century, although over time, the curriculum would include other subjects - languages, technical and scientific subjects. Grammar school founders included monarchs, e.g. the famous, 'King Edward' Birmingham grammar schools, and local boroughs and councils.

Although the reformation, with its absolutist approach to schooling, and the accompanying dissolution of the monasteries led to the closure of many church foundations and their schools, nonetheless, the untidy emergence of schools, founded and endowed by monarchs, merchants, guilds, corporations, bishops continued. Over time, schools were provided under the aegis of both the established church and others:

- When during the reformation cathedral and monastic schools were closed and their lands seized, some were replaced by new foundations. (Westminster, a Benedictine school, was re-founded under the patronage of Henry VIII and confirmed by Elizabeth 1st (since seen as the School's foundress).
- Merchants and guilds continued to set up schools in the 16th and 17th century.
- Christian churches fanned out after the reformation to provide education for their own special flocks including poor children.
- The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (SPCK), founded in 1698 by Thomas Bray founded charity schools for poorer children of primary age.
- Baptists and Presbyterians promoted the Sunday school movement with other Christian groups from the late 18th century. These schools educated children working during the week.
- National Schools were provided in the early 19th century by the 'National Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor in the Principles of the Established Church'
- The 'ragged schools' were set up following the 7th Earl of Shaftesbury's founding of the 'Ragged School Union'(1844) with 200 free schools established in seven years, some with special missions to the great industrial centres of 19th century England.

By the mid-later 19th century, the picture was of a network of different schools, funded and founded by individuals and organisations: primary or elementary schools in many English parishes in towns and villages, generally under the aegis of the established church; Roman Catholic schools, no longer proscribed, in the major towns with numbers swollen following Ireland's great famine in the 1840s; non-conformist Baptist or evangelical schools.

There was no state identity and minimal state involvement. Schools, like the society from which they sprang, tended to have a Christian ethos partly as a result of their connection with the church - a single church in the pre-reformation time, many denominations subsequently. The exception was those schools set up for the Jewish children, after Cromwell encouraged Jews to return to England in the 17th century. At one stage, the Jewish Free School in London, founded in 1732, was the largest school in Europe.

It was not until the 1830s that the state began to fund provision and not until the 1870s that it began to provide schools. That involvement did not change the voluntarist, Christian and denominational character of education significantly, and the same principles, structures and aims remained until World War 2. But the settlement was challenged, particularly by elements of the Liberal Party, by the Non-Conformists and by those advocating a national system of state run and owned secular schooling.

3.2.3 FUNDING, CONDITIONALITY, CONTROL

The 1870 measure to provide for 'public elementary education in England and Wales' opened the prospect of a state run national system. Yet it would largely build on what was there, fill the gaps in the voluntary system which had, after the 1830s, received increasing funds of public grant, parliament having first voted an annual sum for education in 1833. Initially that sum went to two organisations which supported

64 Arthur James Balfour, 1st Earl of Balfour, Prime Minister July 1902 - 1905. The 1902 Education Act abolished the school boards and gave responsibility to Local Education Authorities (LEAs) under the local county and borough councils for elementary schools, to provide funding for voluntary schools, and to develop the elementary and secondary schooling.

schools: the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (SPCK) for the Church of England ones, and the British and the Foreign School Society for the Non-Conformist ones, although subsequently grants also went to the Roman Catholic schools and to Jewish ones. Education was neither compulsory nor necessarily free, but figures suggest that by 1861 around 95 per cent of children of elementary school age were enrolled in schools, though school attendance was probably very patchy at both day and night school. Schools became eligible for grants, conditional on satisfactory inspection.

Schooling reflected the wider debate over religion in England in the 19th century. The 1870 settlement was no accident, but a compromise seen through under the prime minister Gladstone, whose earlier protagonism of the Anglican Church had been as powerful as Newman's of Rome. He had come to see a multi-denominational basis for England's Christianity as more effective than a 'common denominator' Christian basis. As far as schools went, no 'non-denominational' Christian teaching could meet the different religious beliefs of non-Conformists, Anglicans or Roman Catholics. By contrast, some Liberals and non-Conformists wanted a national 'state system' of non-denominational or secular schools run by the state along Prussian lines.

What the 1870 Act aimed to do, however, was to supplement not supersede, what was there: to fill the gaps in the existing provision which was mainly, church or charitable schools. If the churches could not meet the need, then local boards would set up new schools to provide primary education - fee-paying but with exemptions possible for poorer parents, funded centrally and via local rates. The Act was therefore framed with a view to meeting denominational convictions, avoiding unnecessary cost and establishing public elementary schools through local boards funded through local rates. While grants for new buildings would continue until the following year, the grants system which had developed since the 1830s would cease.

The 1870 Act was seen through parliament by the Vice-President of the Council of Education, W.E. Foster. Paying tribute to the work by the managers of the different denominational schools, he explained its premises: curtailing costs to the public purse, meeting the conscientious and religious sensitivities of parents and providing the practical basis for public elementary schools by the new boards. The 'Conscience Clause' would protect the sensibilities of parents too distant from the school of their faith: children would be exempt from religious instruction in schools which did not meet parental wishes on religious or moral matters, with the lessons timetabled for the beginning or end of the day to facilitate the parents. The 1876 Act obliged parents to educate their children. Compulsory school attendance from age 5 to age 10 was introduced in 1880, was raised to age 11 in 1893, to age 12 in 1899. The school boards had, in 1870, been given powers to compel parents but these were not always used. School fees would under the 1870 Act continue to be paid, though discretionary powers could be used to remit the fees for poorer pupils. Under the 1891 Act, however, a payment of 10s per head would be paid in elementary schools for school fees.

However, it was clear that the backbone of the system, the voluntary schools, were struggling and short of income and the Balfour Education Act in 1902 therefore ended the 1870 settlement. Out went the 2,500 school boards that by then existed, their functions being transferred to the local council LEAs. Responsibilities for the elementary schools and for developing new secondary and technical schools would go the the LEAs. The winners were Anglican and Catholic schools, now funded out of local rates (except for teaching in religious education) and the losers the Non-Conformists, who lost their places on school boards.

By and large, the old approach that there was no 'state' system, no 'national identity', no official view, religious or moral, imposed on schools or parents remained. Rather, the role of the state in stepping in to fund and then to provide schools, was to accommodate the status quo, helping parents with the means to educate their children according to their own views and beliefs. The formula of 1870 for the then Board Schools went with a conscience clause to excuse parents who objected to the denominational education of their children.

3.2.4 AN IDENTITY OF UNIFORMITY 1944 - 2010

For the best part of four decades the neutrality of government remained, but during the war years, the ambitions of the new education minister, R. A. Butler, to produce a major education act, encouraged by the natural inclinations of his department for its own aggrandisement, exploited the collectivist trends of the time. Ostensibly, the 1944 Act aimed to raise the school leaving age to 16, and do so after a secondary education, and to resolve the question of the Church Schools.

That settlement would be based on the premise that a higher proportion of public grant would go to church schools which accepted greater control by the Local Educational Authorities (LEAs) and taught the agreed 'non-denominational Christian syllabus' for religious instruction. This was supposed to cater for non-conformists as well as Anglicans. Such schools would be known as 'voluntary controlled' schools. Those which maintained their independence of the LEA and continued as denominational schools would receive less funding, though they would enjoy more independence.-

For Butler, the future lay in greater collectivism, with the local and central state determining systems on central lines. To that view the untidy system which reflected different views and permitted different schools with a variety of governing arrangements - grammar schools, voluntary schools, a multitude of denominational schools, LEA schools - would be sacrificed. A state (or county council) approved religious syllabus would be introduced into many, heralding the way for greater government control of the private spheres in which parents raised their children in line with religious and moral beliefs: spheres which the state had hither accommodated and reinforced.

1944 set the trend for a state education policy for the next six decades, when governments of left and right entrenched the role of the state in shaping not only the school system and its structures, including the type of permitted school, but the content and style of teaching, through its examination system and its system for registering candidates for the teaching profession.

In the 1960s and 1970s the landmark decisions to end the tripartite system of schooling, with academic, vocational and secondary schools, and change to a uniform comprehensive system confirmed the role envisaged for the state by the education interest groups and officials: to impose an 'identity' of uniformity on England's schools through the bureaucracy of state. Britain's leftist educational agenda attacked intellectual and academic elitism, and in doing so removed the foundations for good technical and professional education, which had not developed in Britain to the same extent or high level as in Germany, or indeed as it developed in France.

In the 1980s, attempts to change course foundered. The 1988 Act to reform and liberalise the system and open it to competition, restoring the parental choice lost in the decades since 1944, were thwarted by those who advised on and implemented the Act. The minimal national curriculum to ensure that children, at the very least, would be taught and tested in English, maths and science to a set level in primary school, was subverted in a parody of 1970s managerial bureaucracy, with 'assessment targets' and 'key stages' as its focus rather than basic subject knowledge. Moreover, the proposal to establish a wave of independent 'grant maintained' (GM) state schools was undermined by judicial challenges and

the political hostility of the interest groups, the unions and the left - although those 'GM' schools that were set up and survived remain to this day amongst the country's leading schools, a favoured choice by leaders on the left for educating their own children.

The plan to reform school inspection in 1992 followed suit: the measure to open the profession to those outside the education bureaucracy and to raise the standard of inspectors and inspections was undermined by political hostility, horse trading over and 'capture' of the measure by the education vested interest groups. Inspection remained heavily bureaucratic, time consuming and politicised, failing to move away from the state's anti-academic values on schools or the ideology of the bureaucracy, with the new body OFSTED taking refuge in the managerial system.

Even the 1990s and 2000s programme to extend the number of specialist independent academy schools was restricted by rules over admissions policy and the refusal to allow selection or concentration on academic merit. Some attempts to reverse or stop the trend in the pre-2010 decades were initiated by education secretaries such as Kenneth Clarke and, to a lesser extent, by John Patten (both Conservatives) and Ruth Kelly (Labour).[65] But good, well- intentioned reform could not survive the subsequent implementation at the hands of a hostile bureaucracy. As a result, by the 21st century, the state had imposed its own identity on school education, commonly known as 'state education', egalitarian, anti-intellectual, anti-academic and anti-elitist. The system was recognised by the end of the millennium to be in crisis, by governments of the left and right, scarred by under-achievement, particularly amongst disadvantaged children in the urban centres, where schooling no longer could be counted on to transform the opportunities open for life. International comparative evidence bore this out.

Michael Gove's liberalisation of the system was the first major challenge to the post-war model. It sought to change the structure of schooling, and move from an LEA run system to independent governing arrangements, building on the academies programme and opening a new wave of independent 'free' schools. The most ambitious change was, however, to the curriculum and exam system. There would be less state control and prescription of what was taught in the classroom, to make way for an academically more rigorous curriculum and examination system, which left teachers free to choose their own methods and build on the skeleton of the core knowledge of each subject. This was a return to the liberal approach to education, which had been taken historically by the state, a reversal of the collectivism of the war years and subsequent decades. For Gove, there were limits, however to liberalising. There would be no new grammar schools or selection and new church ('faith') schools would be restricted in the proportion of children of their own faith they could admit - curbs which indicated tradition could sit uncomfortably with the modernisation of the Conservative party's political image under the Cameron leadership. Gove's compromise was to leave things on selection and church schools as he found them, making clear that he considered 'that the role of a number of faith institutions...in education has been all to the good'.[66] But the new prime minister, Theresa May, does not share the reservations, much less embarrassment about the potential for such schools to educate all, poor and rich, as they had always done. The aim now is to restore diversity and return the system more fully to its mixed foundations: a new wave of grammar schools is proposed, as is greater freedom for new 'faith' or voluntary schools from the cap on admissions, so such schools can admit more pupils from their core religious background.

3.2.5 VOLUNTARISM TO ACADEMIC ASPIRATION

It will, however, be far from simple to restore Britain's education to its traditional voluntarist, academically aspirant, parentally involved identity, given the structure which it has inherited.

The assumptions on which the 1870 Act and subsequent legislations were built have taken a battering since 1944. The backbone of the system has been weakened, its diverse range of schools absorbed to a greater or lesser extent into the state system, their independence sapped.

After the 1944 Act, many Church of England primary schools moved to LEA control, their curriculum, governing body and religious syllabus to be determined by the state, while Roman Catholic schools, generally 'voluntary aided', have not escaped the curbs and interventions of centralising government on admissions, the curriculum, the governance of their schools. Since the 1960s, grammar schools have mostly been phased out in the wake of Labour's Circular 10/65. Although some became independent and others benefitted from the Conservative governments' reprieve of the 1970s, ending the obligation on LEAs to go comprehensive, the hostility continued under governments of both main parties. It is hardly surprising that the number of grammar schools in England and Wales fell from around 1,300 in 1965 to 163 (in England) today. Direct Grant schools were also ended after the Labour government's 1975 proposals to stop the 'direct grant' of public funding to pay the fees for poorer children in fee paying schools. With it, the tradition of educating the less well off in independent educational foundations was phased out, and despite occasional noises about reversing it, no Conservative administration has yet done so.[67]

The focus of attack by many of the leftist intelligentsia and the educational left continues to be on the recent changes to reinvigorate the system by promoting the principles on which it was founded. The academically aspirational curriculum and exam reforms under Michael Gove were opposed as reactionary, potentially discriminatory and insufficiently pluralist; grammar schools and selection continue to be opposed as divisive, religious schools are taken as an affront to the militant secularism some espouse. Britain's system of government and consultation seems disproportionately weighted to reflect such views in the shaping and advising of legislation, rather than the views of most people. For example, 60 per cent of those polled by Sky Data in September 2016 backed Theresa May's plan to end the ban on grammar schools, with only 27 per cent against and 13 per cent did not know.[68] There is no evidence that this 60 per cent who favour ending the ban have been officially consulted in the formal consultation process.

The aggressive attack goes beyond the academic and intellectual values of the curriculum, and has been directed against both 'faith' (mostly Christian) schools and the legal obligation on all LEA schools: these schools, including LEA schools, academies and foundation schools, are obliged under the 1996 Act to reflect the broadly Christian nature of education in their RE syllabus, 'that the religious traditions of Great Britain are in the main Christian while taking account of the teaching and practices of the other principle religions in Great Britain'. Their daily collective act of worship daily is supposed to be broadly Christian, though non-denominational. (Designated religious schools may use their own syllabus.)[69]

Yet, campaigning to end the Christian character of maintained schools by the leftist groups continues, joined by individuals such as the former education secretary, Charles Clark, and groups such as the Humanist Society.

Finally, the restoration of voluntarism and academic values is also now threatened by attempts to meet the potential threat posed by insurgent Islam. One response has been to oblige schools (and other educational institutions) to follow a 'prevent' strategy, which involves bureaucratic oversight and intervention in schools to identify and report pupils potentially at risk of radicalisation - what amounts to making teachers into watchmen. Such a policy follows the failed decades of multiculturalism espoused by the left and secular progressive allies who sought to treat any culture, language or religious identity as being on a par with the cultural, religious and political assumptions of this country. The failure of that policy can now be measured by its failure to educate many children from all backgrounds to achieve at school, integrate in society afterwards and take their place in the

65 The Rt Hon Kenneth Clark, QC MP, Secretary of state for Education 1990-92, The Rt Hon John Patten MP, Secretary of state for Education,1992-94. The Rt Hon Ruth Kelly MP, Secretary of state for Education, 2004-6

66 Robert Long and P. Bolton Faith Schools: FAQs, p.11, Briefing Paper, 06972, House of Commons Library, 2015

67 Labour's 1970s measures were Circular 4/74, which restated that Labour governments aimed to end selection at 11, and the 1976 Act. The Conservative measures were Circular 10/70 and Education Act of 1979. The Direct Grant Grammar Schools (Cessation of Grant) Regulations 1975).

68 13 September 2016 http://news.sky.com/story/most-people-back-theresa-mays-grammar-school-plans-poll-10570433) The House of Commons 2016 briefing mentions 'supporters' of grammar schools as Conservative MPs and Opponents as Labour, the Greens, the outgoing Chief Inspector of Schools, the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, the Social Mobility groups, and a former Conservative shadow education secretary. In focussing on just one measure, social mobility, (on which there is no conclusive evidence), it draws on extracts from groups or individuals who are either ambivalent or opposed http://researchbriefings.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefing/Summary/SN07070#fullreport

69 (Schools in Britain reflect the basis of this largely Christian evolution Schools must have a collective act of worship daily that is broadly Christian though non denominational 1/94 and the main part of the RE syllabus must be Christian teaching, though with some acknowledgement of the other principle religions in Great Britain. Circular 1/94. Designated religious schools are free to use their own RE syllabus.

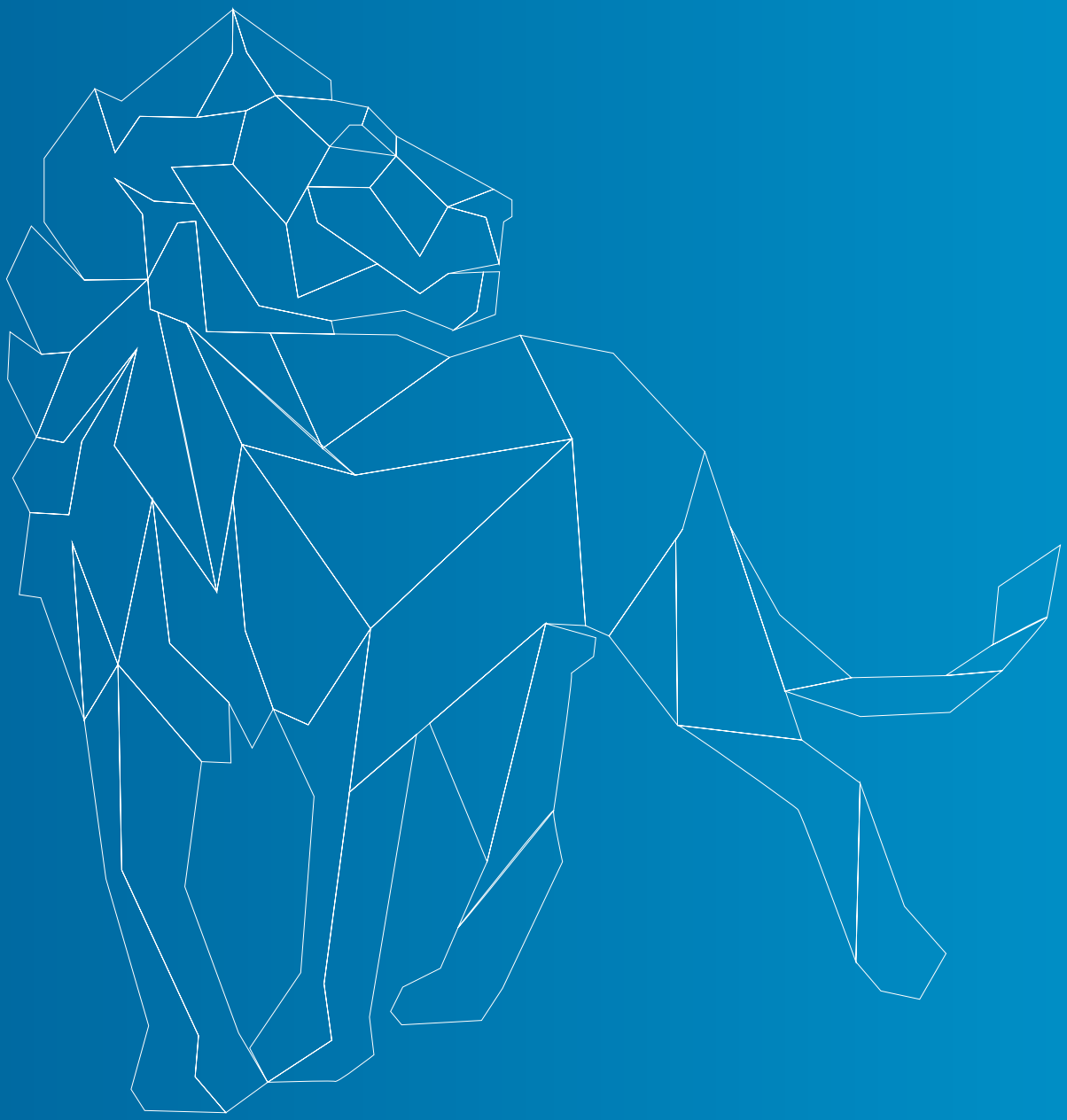
world. The problem is not, however, just about the government measures taken to tackle radicalism. Despite the contempt with which leftists and exponents of radical Islam might hold the views of one another, each has in common a shared intolerance of the traditions of this country. Many on the left remain militant against the liberal and diverse foundations of education including its church schools; meanwhile some Islamic extremists seek to make war on the very foundations of liberal democracy.

Although creeping centralisation and the declining educational standards and opportunities will continue to contend with these and other obstacles, Mrs May's government appears determined to persist. Education reform to introduce a schooling system that works 'for everybody' will include schools for everybody provided by every group. Church Schools and grammar schools will once again be able to take a place and expand their numbers.

This chapter suggests that the identity reflected by the state in education until the 20th century (with the exception of the reformation and post-reformation periods) was one which reflected the richness of a variety of independent, voluntary, charitable foundations including the different denominational schools aiming to teach their branch of Christian children. For the non-denominational schools, the settlement was that they would reflect the established religion, to be broadly 'Christian' with a formula for a non-denominational Christian syllabus (RE), and a daily act of worship. Although Britain, like other western countries, has seen a decline in the numbers of Christian believers, Christianity remains the largest religion with almost 60 per cent (59.3 per cent) of people identifying themselves as Christian. Muslims are the second largest group of 4.8 per cent, The Anglican Church remains the established Church.

There are reasons to believe that by restoring academic values to schools, by supporting the voluntarist including church foundations education (chosen by many Muslim parents and their children in France), and by removing the bureaucratic and often illiberal leftist agenda promoted by the Department for Education, we will create the best antidote to radicalisation. It is the only proven way to bring about an academically and vocationally aspirational system which takes its place with the best in the world. By contrast, there is good reason to doubt that special Islamic schools allow all their pupils, girls as well as boys, to flourish academically and become integrated members of British society. •

NOTES



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