

Review Article

Muslims and the Politics of Race and Faith in Britain and Europe

ISLAM, RACE AND BEING BRITISH. Edited by Madeleine Bunting. London: The Guardian in association with the Barrow Cadbury Trust, 2005. Pp. 144. ISBN 0852650566 (PB).

MULTICULTURAL POLITICS: RACISM, ETHNICITY AND MUSLIMS IN BRITAIN. By Tariq Modood. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005. Pp. 240. ISBN 0748621725 (PB).

MUSLIMS AND THE STATE IN BRITAIN, FRANCE AND GERMANY. By Joel S. Fetzer and J. Christopher Soper. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2005. Pp. 208. ISBN: 0521535395 (PB).

RACE, RELIGION & MUSLIM IDENTITY IN BRITAIN. By Muhammad Abdul Bari. Swansea: Renaissance Press, 2005. Pp. 163. ISBN: 0954329473 (PB).

The common perception today is that Muslims in Britain, and elsewhere in Europe, present a policy conundrum for secular liberal democracies. Until the mid-1990s, the primary conflict in Western Europe was between the politics of race and faith. In Britain, the Rushdie affair of 1988-89 decisively reshaped the race relations industry as the category “Asian” was split along religious lines, but at the same time such religious assertion seemed out of place in the multicultural settlement as it was then conceived. “Fight racism, not Rushdie” was the watchword, as badges proclaimed at the time. First in France in the mid-1990s, which experienced terrorism emanating from the conflict in Algeria, and then latterly operations by al-Qaeda-type cells in Madrid in 2004 and London in 2005, have helped to decisively skew this debate yet again. Any expansion of European multiculturalism to include Islam is now framed decisively within a globalised campaign after 9/11, known until recently as the “war on terror”, and now dubbed the “war on extremism” by Washington in July 2005. Yet for the most part, the books reviewed here reflect more acutely these pre-9/11 debates and have not yet fully come to terms with this shift. The question is no longer—in the British context—whether Muslims are the new blacks or the new Jews, but are they the new Irish as well?

Tariq Modood, Professor of Sociology, Politics and Public Policy at the University of Bristol, has been the leading British Muslim voice in debates around national identity, racism, ethnicity, multiculturalism and citizenship over the last decade, and his new volume, *Multicultural Politics*, showcases a felicitous blend of theoretical insight, policy-orientated practicality, and subversive common sense. It is thus all the more shocking to read that this manuscript, first conceived of in 1992, was rejected by more than fifteen publishers (p. xvii)! The volume collects together Modood's landmark essays over the last fifteen years, but they have been sufficiently rewritten to form an elegant and persuasive monograph, with the added advantage that his theoretical insights have been buttressed by the significant empirical research he undertook with the 1994 Labour Force Survey, which had a major impact on public policy in Britain. This strength is highlighted by two carefully researched chapters on education and employment (Chapters 3 and 4), which demonstrate that ethnic differentials in disadvantage are just as significant if not more so than between black and white *per se*. Modood's basic approach is all the more thought-provoking and effective for being asked *within* the confines of the British nation-state and the tradition of liberal political theory: what might multicultural British liberalism look like with Islam at its centre, rather than at its edges? *Multicultural Politics*, alongside Bhiku Parekh's *Rethinking Multiculturalism* (London, 2000) is the most sustained and subtle response to the dilemmas thrown up by the Rushdie affair (treated in some detail in Chapter 5) that has yet been written.

Methodologically, Modood admits firstly to a strong sense of the limits of assimilation that lie in a sense of cultural pride—firstly Pakistani, then Asian, then Muslim—instilled by his father (whose own reflections are recorded in M. S. Modood, *My Faith and I Rest Here*, 2003) which informs his conviction that the misrecognition of collective cultural identity is iniquitous. Secondly, a certain reading of Wittgenstein allows him to adopt a radical sense of contingency about the relationship between social concepts, and so an enquiry into social meaning starts from its use, not with theory or indeed theoretical dispute (Chapter 1). More than anyone else, Modood has helped us to think our way out of existing paradigms in order to incorporate a sense of Muslim subjectivity. Some of the most important groundwork he lays down at the beginning of the book to open up debates around race, racism, anti-racism and ethnicity to forms of cultural racism that involve and include a faith element, in particular, Islamophobia (Introduction, Chapters 1 and 2).

Throughout the book, he returns continually to the story of anti-racist activism in Britain as his point of departure and carefully charts the shift from reactive identities to assertive ones, or opposition to colour racism to the assertion of cultural identities in the public sphere. The assertion of “black pride” in the 1980s could not contain the very different histories of Asian communities, and Modood posits that the handful of Asian anti-racists

were disconnected from the assertion of cultural and religious distinctiveness among Asian communities in the same decade, which exploded with lasting consequences during the Rushdie affair of 1988-89. (A major finding of the 1994 Labour Force Survey was that British Asians were most likely to define themselves in relation to religion and not race.) In terms of Muslim political assertiveness, Modood argues convincingly that this trend replicates the strategies employed by other minority groups in relation to Anglo-American identity politics—a civil rights approach, a public recognition of cultural difference approach and a separatist power approach. There is a great deal of truth in this observation, but Modood concludes too hastily that these strategies “reflect not so much obscurantist Islamic interventions into a modern secular discourse” (p. 165), rather—to state it positively—they represent adaptive Islamic interventions whose development ought to the subject of further academic enquiry.

In the second part of the book, Modood sets out to tackle the impact of Muslim identity politics upon debates around equality and multiculturalism, secularism, liberalism and national belonging. In the tradition of North American political philosophers like Iris Marion Young and Charles Taylor, Modood argues that multiculturalism extends the liberal notion of “equality” away from a culture- and colour-blind civil rights approach to one that views the public recognition of cultural difference as essential. What has made multiculturalism so powerful has been the assertion of previously private identities in collective public form, notably the feminist movement, ethnic groups and others. Modood’s point is that Muslim assertiveness is part of this general affirmation of difference in the public sphere that defines multiculturalism itself.

The crucial difference of course is that the assertion of religious identity politics reveals the secular nature of this multicultural settlement, and in times of crisis (e.g. the Rushdie affair and 9/11), there is a panicky retreat to a private-public distinction, namely that Muslims ought not to demand this public recognition for what, it is insisted, should instead be a private religious identity. (Modood is careful to distinguish between the moderate secularism practiced in Britain that allows for an established Church and its implications for Muslims as opposed to some of the more radical rhetoric in favour of a hard-line secularism, see Chapter 7.) But the demand made of Muslims to return to the private sphere means either going back to the more assimilationist, civil rights-based approach of the 1960s, which reflects the French attitude at present (as Fetzer and Soper document, see below), or, instead, a gradual recognition of Muslim difference in the public sphere as part of an expanded multiculturalist settlement, as still appears to be the case in Britain.

With regard to liberalism, Modood takes his cue from a reading of Bhiku Parekh’s *Rethinking Multiculturalism* (London, 2000) that uncovers the radical

Parekh. Parekh starts from the point of rejecting liberalism's moral monism, i.e. its assertion that only one way of life is truly human, and this leads to a critique of liberalism's self-understanding of why culture matters to human beings. It is not about cultural minority rights or indeed the option to make cultural choices, but rather that the value of cultural diversity resides in allowing us to reflect more seriously upon our own moral and cultural imperatives. In essence, Modood reads Parekh as a universalist who is committed to achieving a deeper (i.e. meta-ethical) understanding of humanity as glimpsed through the conversation of cultures, because human nature is not a given, but rather it is culturally mediated. It is not so much Parekh's pluralism that is at issue for Modood, but rather a problem of scale: Parekh seems to image some global conversation between the great guardians of various cultural expressions rather than the more pragmatic multiculturalist accommodations to be found in British cities, which is more what Modood has in mind.

Modood also argues that liberalism has the resources within itself to accommodate what it would define as illiberal groups. Liberalism would retain a high value on personal autonomy while acknowledging that not all cultural groups will place the same value upon it, allowing for a freely-chosen "commitment to a life of restriction and obedience" (p. 180). Modood asks if liberalism is prepared not only for the emergence of hybrid identities but for the persistence of conservative ethno-religious ones too? The British answer thus far appears to have been: "yes, freely-held illiberal ethno-religious values may be allowed to persist, provided that there is no evidence of coercion, in which case there should be intervention". Large parts of formerly multiculturalist Northern Europe may no longer be so prepared to accept such persistence, the prime example being the Netherlands after the electoral rise of the Lijst Pim Fortuyn and the murder of Theo van Gogh. This is most marked in the French retreat to a more rigid self-understanding of secular Republicanism focused on the issue of the *hijāb* in public schools (see below).

Modood concludes this splendid series of reflections with a meditation on the need to emphasise an expanded definition of multicultural liberalism that allows for greater cultural diversity in the understanding of rights and responsibilities, and a more plural Britishness that is strong enough to inform multicultural citizenship. But current talk of abstract "British" democratic or civic values is unconvincing: one could just as easily be referring to Canada. So Modood is right to insist that national belonging needs to be re-envisioned as well in order to provide some emotional binding across social distinctions, and not just civic duty. But while this is rightly a laudable aim, I am sceptical about the impact of some large-scale processes that seem to be weakening discourses centred on civic engagement and national belonging, and thus this sort of re-engagement faces some serious challenges. Without spelling it out fully, these large-scale processes include:

- ◆ Economic and thus cultural globalization, pushed for by global elites, who champion open borders, are less interested by nationalist arguments, and argue more for a projection of new sorts of regional/global ordering, e.g. the emergence of both the European Union and devolution in Britain at the same time, leading to the reassertion of a new Englishness, the inclusiveness of which is still ambiguous.
- ◆ The commodification of cultural meaning communicated through the mass media (identities of consumption are much more powerful), which weakens civic and nationalist discourses that are primarily mediated through state institutions.
- ◆ The further ordering, although a better word in the British context might be “regulation”, of private life and civil society by the modern state which—in muddying the classic public-private distinction—provokes public contestation from deprivatised identity movements.
- ◆ The adverse impact of the “war on terrorism” and of al-Qaeda-type terrorism upon Muslim minorities in Western liberal democracies; in Britain, this consideration has been particularly salient after 7/7.

All these factors encourage identity movements of resistance that emerge both below and above the level of the nation-state. To paraphrase Manuel Castells (*The Power of Identity*, 1997, pp. 10-11), these are primarily an agonised reaction against globalisation that dislocates identity in the disjuncture between the local and the global, and thus between power and experience. One current example is the anti-war movement in Britain, which has a heavy Muslim involvement. A reflective account by a Muslim leader of the movement, Salma Yaqoob, ‘Global and local echoes of the anti-war movement: a British Muslim perspective’ (2003), reveals that local groups of activists can connect across the globe. In a more general sense, the diasporic idea of the *ummah* is, in and of itself, a by-product of these forms of cultural globalisation (for a sustained theoretical exposition of this see S. Sayyid, ‘Beyond Westphalia: Nations and Diaspora—the case of the Muslim *Umma*’, in Barnor Hesse (ed.) *Un/Settled Multiculturalisms*, London: Zed, 2000, pp. 33-50).

Against these sorts of challenges, Modood is wont to remind us that inclusive national belonging is to be argued for, rather than opting to concede ground immediately to nostalgic or chauvinistic arguments, which, at the time of writing, are more prominent after 7/7. In other words, it is our duty to work for an inclusive sense of national and sub-national belonging that will made the hyphenated identity—British and Muslim—become more real.

A practical exposition of this working-out process is found within Madeleine Bunting’s short collection, *Islam, Race and Being British*. Bunting, a leading commentator on British Muslims in the national press, has usefully captured a moment in the public debate in the period between the Madrid bombings in 2004 and the London attacks of 2005, featuring essentially two

groups: the divided liberal-left commentators of the *Guardian* newspaper, academics and policy wonks, and the voices of Muslim intellectuals and a younger generation of community activists. The collection broadly covers three areas: debates around British Muslim identity (pp. 17-41), the recognition and accommodation of that identity in the public sphere (pp. 43-73) and an innovative section on fostering habits of solidarity (pp. 75-114), ending with an addendum reprinting reportage of the Guardian Forum held in November 2004 entitled "Young, Muslim and British" (pp. 117-144).

Most of the voices of the liberal-left featured here advocate a multiculturalism that is open to the Muslim presence, even if after the London bombs, the editor notes that:

What these suicide bombers typified was not the failure of Muslim participation in British life, but its success. The challenge to our understanding of how to build a harmonious multicultural society has been shaken to the core. (p. 7)

This is not the collection to tell us if the London bombs have blunted this spirit of pragmatic engagement on a part of the British liberal-left, but it does indicate how violent terrorism can skew the issues considered here. But at least in the months leading up to the attacks, the indications are that Muslim identity politics has, probably in the period after 9/11, forced some radical rethinking very much in the direction set out by Modood, who provides a keynote summary of his longer argument (pp. 19-23) found in *Multicultural Politics*.

The first section on British Muslim identity captures less of a debate and more the feeling of a set of analytical analyses combined with some reflective faith-centred pieces. Paul Gilroy strikes a note of scepticism, seeing the addition of faith to the race relations settlement as code for "business as usual" in the interests of a new imperialism, and a panicky response to a reactive form of political Islam rather than encouraging the emergence of hybrid identities. Safraz Manzoor charts the development of the "empty" identity category "Asian" from its colonial bureaucratic origins in Kenya to its cultural promotion in the 1980s and 1990s as a counterpoint to black pride in the UK context, but noting wrongly its disaggregation after 9/11 (in fact it should be dated back to the Rushdie Affair). Both Tariq Ramadan and Dilwar Hussain argue for integration in terms of retaining Islamic principles but re-expressing them in British cultural terms with a commitment to principled public engagement; Hussain does so in more explicit theological terms. Some of the responses from participants at the "Young, Muslim and British" forum indicate that the focus on Muslim identity is already passé and is in danger of becoming an irritation: "I consider myself to be a British Muslim but I don't like to be pushed into defining myself; it has a dislocating effect. To some, as a Muslim I am either a fanatical terrorist or a victim of Islam, and I am neither of those: we are just people." (Salma Yaqoob, p. 129)

The second section on recognition and accommodation of Muslim identity in the public sphere is the most contested over by liberal-left intellectuals. In general there is substantial support, echoed by Geoff Mulgan, for what Sunder Katwala calls “a pragmatic empiricism to the relationship between religion and state [that] will not deliver an entirely coherent blueprint...but the outcome will be challenged if it does not seem to be animated by a concern for fairness and equity between faiths and citizens.” (p. 47) This involves multifaith inclusion in what the British constitutional historian Walter Bagehot called the “dignified”—as opposed to the “efficient”—parts of the state, a process that should neither be “doctrinaire” nor “logical” but rather leaves “anachronisms and loose ends everywhere”.¹ Polly Toynbee argues passionately against any such accommodation, looking for a rigorous secularism, and the need to protect women from misogynist teachings, contending that religious groups have formed—despite their theological differences—a caucus led by the Church of England to guarantee their collective rights in the public sphere. Maleiha Malik partly answers Toynbee in arguing that the Muslim search for legal exceptionalism is acceptable only in cases where it does not lead to “multicultural vulnerability”, i.e. that the state should not cede jurisdiction to groups who will systematically discriminate against some subordinated members, leaving these vulnerable persons to struggle alone and unaided for basic rights. The strongest reservations emerge (from Toynbee and Timothy Garton Ash) with respect to the proposal by the British government to outlaw incitement to religious hatred (still ongoing at the time of writing); only Seumas Milne provides a short defence.

The third section is the most engrossing—concerned as it is with cultivating “habits of solidarity” between Muslims and non-Muslims—although the complexity of the issues raised leads to some disjointedness. Sukvinder Stubbs, Tahir Abbas and Phoebe Griffiths all argue for an emphasis upon tackling issues of social and economic disadvantage. Stubbs in her article maintains that poor Muslims stuck in the inner cities and poor whites in disadvantaged suburbs share much in common: a sense of cultural pride, severe material disadvantage not found in other ethnic groups, and similar social problems related to poverty (p. 78). Stubbs goes on to highlight the problem with the new “community cohesion” agenda of government after 2001, which can easily degenerate into a facile “pancakes and poppadoms” approach. However, it may be wrong to conclude that community cohesion requires grand, symbolic acts, but rather “all manner of small local interventions are needed to engender the habit of living...with strangers, so that strangeness ceases to be an object of fear” (p. 113), as Ash Amin theorises. In practice, Indra Adnan shows how complexities around cohesion arise: the most dynamic schemes tend to be

1. Katwala is quoting George Orwell from his famous wartime essay on patriotism, *The Lion and the Unicorn: Socialism and the English Genius* (1941).

youth or community-led without too much outside management or interference, tend to attract new and more open-minded participants, and that the extent and nature of appropriate inter-community cohesion is culturally differentiated and defined.

A useful codicil highlights the nature and manner of debate around Muslim issues. The debate in Keighley, a town in West Yorkshire racially-polarised between Pakistanis and whites, is captured in two pieces by a local MP (Ann Cryer) and a community activist (Azhar Hussain). This demonstrates how local debate ought to seek a balance, without simplifying the examination of issues, between failures in education, employment and increased segregation and a sensitive exploration of cultural issues like diasporic connections, the complexity of multiple identities and women's rights. Farah Khan provides a recognisable account of an introverted Muslim community in Sunderland in the North-East of England, whose traditional attitudes prevent it from real political engagement or rich cultural expression. Asim Siddiqui reflects on the Islamic radicalism of student campuses in the 1990s and his determination to found an open platform in London, the City Circle, as a *halāl* alternative to the Friday night pub culture, which has opened up Muslim debate and political participation (through the anti-war movement) to wider society. Ehsan Masood calls for greater intra-Muslim debate about religious reform and attacks the illusion that such debates could be essentially private in an interactive wired-up age.

All in all, Bunting's collection captures an engaged and constructive debate that leaves grounds—even in these dark days after the London bombs—for optimism, although two caveats should make us pause for thought. Those on the liberal-left who would return to the simpler civil rights approach of the 1960s, reaffirm the focus on anti-racism and inequality, and advocate a retreat from the extended notion of equality as the public recognition of difference are not well-represented here. There is only Polly Toynbee, but no Will Hutton, David Aaronovitch, Nick Cohen, or—dare one say it—Yasmin Alibhai-Brown. This is not even to mention some commentators on the right who have little time for either wing of the liberal-left on this issue. The second note of caution concerns the demonstrable gap in the discourses of Muslim activists (this is not true of the Muslim intellectuals) and their non-Muslim interlocutors. This is particularly true of the young Muslim voices recorded in the forum, revealingly with an over-representation from the Islamic activist “bubble”: it is clear that they were not asking the same questions or using the same language. As Safraz Manzoor notes they voice a more sophisticated form of apologetics than the pioneer generation would have done, but have not as yet started down a more reflective path on issues around the politics of recognition, social exclusion or “habits of solidarity”. A similar inattention might have been felt from the Muslim side with regard to foreign policy and civil liberties issues.

By contrast with Bunting's collection that features younger Muslim voices, there is a lengthy new contribution on race, religion and Muslim identity from a doyen of the British Muslim establishment, Muhammad Abdul Bari, Deputy Secretary of the Muslim Council of Britain and Chairman of the East London Mosque, now probably the leading Muslim institution in the capital (having overtaken the position once held by the Islamic Cultural Centre in Regent's Park). *Race, Religion & Muslim Identity in Britain* is a brisk, populist tour through race, ethnicity, faith, religious pluralism and Muslim identity. It does seek to please academic pedantry for terminological precision, for although Abdul Bari does note scholarly differentiation between "race" and "ethnicity" and between "faith" and "religion", he remains unapologetic for using them interchangeably as found in common usage (pp. 14, 18). The concise style leaves us with potted histories, e.g. a general account of slavery that bypasses the Muslim world (pp. 23-25) or a history of British Christianity that jumps from the Reformation to colonial mission leaving out the Enlightenment (pp. 58-64), and starts with the claim that "Britain's religious history goes back to the fourth millennium BC" (p. 58), i.e. that there is no religious history before Stonehenge. There is also some imprecision in the text, e.g. the Board of Deputies of British Jews has more than 240 (not just more than 150 years) of history (p. 67) and Prince Charles did not express the desire to redefine his future role as "Defender of Faiths" (p. 68)—as opposed to "Defender of the [Anglican] Faith"—but as "Defender of Faith" (the subtle difference lying in support for perennial wisdom as opposed to the current multifaith ecumenism). The interest in the book therefore lies more in what it can tell us about how these core issues are understood by a senior community leader with long grassroots experience.

The first impression is the length of the struggle for recognition and equality that this generation of activists has had to face, firstly combating racism in earlier decades, then finding an opportunity to express their faith identity firstly through interfaith and latterly in terms of public policy, the continuing fight against poverty and exclusion in Muslim communities, and finally the challenges coming out of religious turmoil in the Muslim world and the consequent "war on terror". The book itself is concrete evidence of how all these strands are interconnected, and are not analytically or ideologically separate. Abdul Bari is clearly alive to the new difficulties the community has faced since 9/11, by ending his synopsis of immigration and race legislation with the Anti-Terrorism Act of 2000, and is absolutely right to see the adverse implications of the new security agenda on community relations amid rising Islamophobia (pp. 4-8, 36-37, 46, 96, 144).

Despite these challenges, another general impression that emerges is one of growing confidence in the positive political role that British Muslims can play in faith-based civic engagement. Abdul Bari argues that as the new communities "have upheld their faith with openness and unbending

seriousness”, they have “emboldened the hitherto docile religious establishments in Britain, and together they have forged an understanding and, in cases, alliances to put faith and religion back at the forefront of the social and political agenda” (pp. 2-3). Abdul Bari then goes on to articulate an Islamic vision of “faith as common moral action” that in a multicultural, multi-faith society eschews an exclusive or arrogant sense of nation and *ummah*. Rather the notion of *ummah* and of national belonging should be defined by the highest religious values of upright conduct, moderation, service, and openness to pluralism and change (pp. 9, 84-85, 104-105, 108, 120-121) but not by postmodern relativism (pp. 115-116). Abdul Bari sets out the Islamic rationale for loyalty to the nation-state which is based on seeking the common good with the proviso of a conscience clause if the state is deemed to act unjustly (pp. 112-113). All this is done with the verve, energy and sincerity of the experienced community leader rather than with the finesse of the professional theologian.

For the most part, Modood, Abdul Bari and Bunting’s collection focus upon the interaction of the state and Muslims with the emphasis upon community action, but the question remains: what does that relationship reveal about the state’s response to Muslim public assertion? Joel Fetzer and Christopher Soper take this angle in examining three major nation-states—Britain, France and Germany—and their significant Muslim minorities. Fetzer and Soper highlight issues that have proved central to this negotiation in each polity: state funding of private Muslim schools in Britain, the wearing of the *hijāb* in French public schools and the provision of religious instruction in German public schools. Given that the spotlight has usually been upon the political motives of European Muslims, this new emphasis marks a novel and refreshing departure of enquiry.

In a well-documented, focused and lucid manner, these two professors of political science and committed Christians argue that current theories explaining how European Muslims fare in winning concessions from the state are inadequate. The first theory argues that the greater the political resources of Muslims the more likely they are to win concessions; however, of the three case studies, French Muslims have been given the fewest rights but are politically the most united as the Ministry of the Interior imposed a single, democratic representative body, the Conseil français du culte Musulman, upon them in 2003.

The second and third theories—that opportunities for advancement framed by the state are decisive in determining its manner of achievement and that how the political class views the relationship between religion or religions and the state is a further decisive factor—are deemed to be partially explanatory but not fully adequate. In terms of opportunities, the fact that significant decisions are made at local level with regard to educational policy in Britain and Germany has made it easier for Muslims to gain parity than in the more

centralized system in France. Ideologically, British pragmatism has always had a better track record of promoting tolerance, and the German definition of citizenship undertook a radical shift in 2000, moving from *jus sanguinis* (“law of the blood”, in which to gain citizenship one would have to prove ethnic German descent) to *jus soli* (“law of the soil”, in which residence becomes the main criterion for citizenship). French Republicanism, enshrined with regard to religion by the concept of *laïcité*, or the strict separation of state institutions and religion, has been reinforced in reaction to the presence of 5-6 million Muslims.

Fetzer and Soper’s key point is that opportunity structures and state ideology are in this instance chiefly driven by the precedence of church-state (and in the case of Germany churches-state) relations, which provides the major factor explaining the success or failure of European Muslims to win accommodations from the state.

In Britain, from the sixteenth century onwards the establishment of the Anglican Church of England, in opposition to Rome, allowed the state and the national church to form a close political partnership. One consequence of this was that none of Britain’s major political parties developed an ideology of entrenched secularism (remembering here the famous adage that the Labour Party owes its origins more to Methodism than to Marx). As religious minorities were granted greater rights in the nineteenth century, even as Anglicanism began its long slow decline, the Church of England retained significant legal and political advantages, for instance in having a significant policy input into education and social welfare provision. As a result, Muslims—like other religious minorities—have been able to make a similar input.

The whole argument about the public funding of private Muslim faith schools only becomes possible in a context where the church had historically dominated the field of education up until the mid-nineteenth century when the state finally began to take its own responsibility for provision more seriously. As a result of this legacy, nearly a third of all primary pupils and 15% of all secondary pupils are taught in Church of England schools today, despite Britain’s culturally post-Christian status. Although it has not been easy, the broad point here is that on grounds of precedent and equity, the funding of Muslim schools had an inexorable rationale. By contrast the duty to provide religious instruction has meant that the provision of state aid to private Muslim schools in Germany has not been a priority (only two receive such funds).

Laïcité has its origins in revolutionary France in which popular opposition grew against both the monarchy and the Catholic Church, symbolized by the “Festival of the Goddess Reason” held at the Notre Dame Cathedral in 1793. Napoleon re-established Catholicism as the religion “of the great majority” but not the nation’s religion as in Protestant England, and the Pope forfeited

the Church's properties as the state took over the financial support and appointment of the clergy. In the late nineteenth century this arrangement came under attack, as the rights of priests to inspect French schools were stripped away, ending with the Separation Law of 1905 in which the state declined any longer to pay cleric salaries (excepting hospitals, schools and prisons) or to allow explicitly religious public monuments. But the Law's framers disagreed as to whether *laïcité* meant "soft" state neutrality with regard to religion or the "hard" state promotion of atheism. In the hard version, believers were not to display any exterior manifestation of religion in public spaces. Given the existence of this tradition, it is clearer why the headscarves affair (*l'affaire du foulard islamique*) which blew up in 1989 and then culminated in a ban of them in 2004 was so controversial in France but not so in Britain or Germany (although some German federal states like Baden-Württemberg and Lower Saxony did ban them for religious instructors if not for students). Certainly back in 1989, the Conseil d'État (France's supreme administrative court) finally ruled that the donning of the headscarf was a matter of private conscience, but after 9/11 the ban in French public schools upheld the strict conception of *laïcité*.

In Germany, after the mass migration of Turkish workers (by far the largest ethnic Muslim group in the country), a double assumption operated which became increasingly untenable culminating in the formal recognition of the salience of settlement in attaining citizenship in 2000. Firstly, that the Turks, as Gastarbeiter (guest workers), would not stay but would eventually go home, so there was no need to plan for their long-term needs as Germany was not a country of immigration. Secondly, therefore, as Islam was a "guest religion", Germany and Turkey signed accords to the effect that Turkey would look after the religious needs of the Gastarbeiter. This arrangement never came to complete fruition because firstly the Diyanet İşleri Türk-İslam Birliği (Turkish-Islamic Association for Religious Affairs) only became active in Germany in the 1980s and secondly its secularist ethos was opposed by a number of other Muslim associations that had sprung up in the interim.

However despite the existence of this foreign status in the formative decades of Turkish residence, the precedence of churches-state relations still proved decisive in the development of Islamic religious instruction in German public schools. The German Basic Law (*Grundgesetz*), which has a clear antecedent in the Weimar Constitution, provides for a middle ground between Britain and France in that while it recognises the basic separation of religion and the state it also formalises co-operation in areas like education and social welfare; for historic reasons, this formal co-operation is particularly strong with regard to the *Evangelische* and Roman Catholic churches (to whom combined over 90% of the population belong). If there is no state church, religious communities that were recognised in the

Weimar Republic are given the status of public corporations, which means that they are entitled to 8-10% of federal taxes to be used for religious, social welfare and educational work. Other religious groups may acquire this status if they meet criteria of permanency, a minimal population size and respect for the law; but as yet, none of the *Länder* (federal states) have recognized any Muslim community. But the authors argue that this recognition is only a matter of time (p. 109).

The key issue is that Article 7 of the Basic Law requires state schools to provide religious instruction (*Religionsunterricht*) "in accordance with the doctrine of the religious community concerned" (p. 111). Without public corporation status for any Muslim community, Land school officials do not feel obligated to provide Islamic religious instruction or consult with Muslim leaders about what provision may be given. Instead in all but one federal state (Bremen, where state schools must teach "Biblical history in a Christian context" (p. 113)), Muslim children instead receive religious studies (*Religiöse Unterweisung*), which does not promulgate religious beliefs but conveys facts about the content of a religion, its culture and history. North Rhine-Westphalia has taken the most adventurous approach to this impasse by developing courses on Islam that look more like religious instruction, but which at the same time argue for its compatibility with German liberal democracy. Since 2002, in Berlin, where religious instruction is voluntary and may be run by recognised religious organisations, the Islamische Föderation Berlin was allowed to administer Islamic instruction in public schools; by 2004, one thousand students in sixteen state schools were being taught in these classes. The crucial point is that where initiatives have been taken by individual federal states, these were at the behest of policy makers who felt obliged to apply the Basic Law consistently and not because of lobbying pressure. However whatever argument is made with regard to equity by German Muslims focuses precisely on this lack of religious instruction in state schools, thus reflecting the paramount influence of the churches-state precedence; equally, German Catholics and Protestants are arguing for an extension of this provision to Muslims recognising that to do so protects *all* religious instruction.

The modest hypothesis of the primacy of the church-state precedent is amply proven by a clear argument, an extensive literature review and dozens of interviews with key officials and community representatives in all three countries. A detailed attitudinal survey surprisingly concludes that well-educated secular liberals are disproportionately more likely to support Muslim claims than the orthodox of other faiths, and that despite media stereotyping, Europeans have only slightly hardened their attitudes towards their fellow Muslim citizens after 9/11. The survey also suggests that what constitutes reasonable entitlement for Muslims is still strongly influenced by historical precedent for European elites, but less so for its ordinary citizens (pp. 130-145).

Fetzer and Soper argue that even if the Muslim presence has reawakened old debates about religion and politics, an increasingly more secular Europe will be more successful in integrating Muslims if it adopts liberal interpretations of *laïcité* or singular or multiple forms of religious establishment and so recognises these claims to equitable treatment on the basis of the church-state precedent (pp. 155-157). Overall the argument is fine insofar as it goes, but does not even address, as Tariq Modood or Ash Amin attempt to do, the real challenges to the nation-state in a globalised age which has weakened its integrative abilities and produced a miasma of reactive identity politics. Current discourses of nationalism, multiculturalism and citizenship all seem much more contested and less able to envision an overarching civic identity that is at once integrative, cosmopolitan and liberationist. But that is precisely the challenge that now lies ahead for British Muslims and their co-religionists to Europe: to argue for a re-envisioning of the common good inclusive of the Muslim experience. The success or failure of this venture will have long-term consequences not only for Europe's Muslims but for the harmonious co-existence of Western and Muslim nations in the twenty-first century.

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