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Community, Identity and Institutionalisation of Islamic Education: The Case of Ikra Primary School in North London

Talip Küçükcan

This article is based on ethnographic research among Turkish Muslims in London in 1994–5. Sixteen parents from Turkey and thirteen parents of Turkish-Cypriot origin were interviewed. In addition to in-depth interviews, which overwhelmingly took place in Turkish, participant observation was employed as one of the indispensable tools of the ethnographic method. This involved gathering data in the natural social setting in which, as a researcher, I was able to gain access to the meaning of events and social interactions as understood by the group and the organisation under study. Ethnographic research is expected, as Jackson (1997) argues, to contribute to the reconstruction and elucidation of 'the religious or cultural way of life of others'.

It is argued in this article that Muslims in Europe display great diversity in expressing their religious identity, and employ different strategies in relation to the transmission of religious and cultural values to members of the younger generation. Turkish Muslims are part of the religious and multicultural diversity in Britain and research on this micro-Muslim community is necessary, though insufficient, to understand the religious diversity within Muslim communities in the European context. This article shows that Turkish Muslims are concerned with the religious education of their children and have tried to establish institutions to provide such an education. It is argued in the article that attempts to institutionalise Islamic education on factional lines and on a particularistic interpretation of the tradition, in isolation from the larger society, have little chance of succeeding in an increasingly globalised and transnationalised world.

DIVERSITY AMONG MUSLIMS IN EUROPE

There is a significant number of Muslims in Europe today. Their estimated number is around 23.5 million, of which over 7 million live in Western Europe (Vertovec and Peach 1997) and the representations of Islam are very diverse. The diversity is rooted in the different national, ethnic and cultural backgrounds of Muslim communities. This means that Islam in Europe, as elsewhere, does not have a monolithic nature and Muslim identity is not a fixed category. If one looks at the present Muslim communities such as Algerians in France, Moroccans in the Netherlands, Turks in Germany and South Asians in Britain, this diversity becomes self-evident. Therefore it is vitally important to recognise various dimensions within Muslim communities in Europe in order to avoid essentialising and stereotyping Islamic identity. Although there is a large degree of diversity in the expression of cultural and religious identity among Muslim communities in this country, earlier research on Islam and Muslims in Britain concentrated predominantly on Islam amongst South Asian Muslims. Books such as *Britannia's Crescent: Making a Place for Muslims in British Society* (Joly 1995), *Islamic Britain: Religion, Politics and Identity Among British Muslims: Bradford in the 1990s* (Lewis 1994) and Young *Muslims in Britain* (Anwar 1994) exclusively deal with South Asian Islam. They hardly mention Turkish Muslims in these publications.

This article presents an analysis of ethnographic data on the institutionalisation of Islamic education among Turkish Muslims who are part of the multicultural mosaic in Britain. It seeks to understand how Turkish Muslims try to reconstruct Islamic identity and transmit religious and cultural values to their children. In what follows I will present a case study of a traditional religious establishment, a mosque, which has tried to institutionalise Islamic education in an area of north-east London where there is a large Turkish community. Before moving on to that, it would be useful to give some background information about the Turkish community in Europe generally and in Britain particularly in order to have a complete picture of Turkish Muslims within the European context.

TURKISH PRESENCE IN WESTERN EUROPE

Migration and Establishment of Turkish Muslim Communities

The late 1950s and early 1960s, for predominantly economic reasons, saw frequent large-scale labour migration from Turkey to Western Europe. The initial wave of Turkish labour migration was mainly directed to West Germany. However, labour migration from Turkey was not only confined to Germany. Workers also migrated to several other West European countries such as France, the Netherlands, Belgium, Sweden and Britain.

The beginning of organised labour migration from Turkey goes back to October 1961 when Turkey and Germany signed a bilateral agreement for the recruitment of Turkish workers in Germany. Before 1961, the participation of Turkish workers in post-war labour migration to Western Europe had, at least officially, not taken place (Martin 1991). Most of the bilateral agreements Turkey signed were modified after the 1973–4 economic recession when employment of foreign labour in Europe was halted. Germany and other labour-recruiting countries decided to adopt restrictive policies in the early 1970s, aimed at stopping additional immigrant workers. However, these restrictive measures did not stop family unification. The volume of migration steadily increased and immigrants established themselves as a social and political reality in the countries of settlement in the mid 1970s. Despite restrictions and discouragement, family unification continued and, against the expectations of a return to Turkey, the number of Turks in European countries has steadily increased to almost three million in the recent decades.

Migration from Cyprus and Turkey to Britain

Available research data suggests that migration from Cyprus to Britain started as early as the 1920s and continued throughout the 1930s and 1940s until the Second World War (Oakley 1987). Economic stagnation and political instability after the war produced the second wave of migration from Cyprus. The increase in the volume of Cypriot immigration led to the introduction of restrictive measures by the early 1950s (Solomos and Woodhams 1995). Despite these measures,

no decrease was observed in the rate of immigration and, on the contrary, as George and Millerson (1966/7) note, 'the number of immigrants to this country [Britain] rose substantially in the following years . . . The political unrest in Cyprus, with the inescapable violence, curfews, economic stagnation and psychological frustration, added its own share in contributing to the number of immigrants.' It is reported that, following the 1974 ethnic war in Cyprus, 'several thousands of Cypriots entered Britain on a short stay basis as unofficial "refugees" from the fighting and territorial displacement' (Oakley 1979). The number of Cypriots, regardless of their ethnic origin, was 160,000 in the 1980s, of which 20–25 per cent are said to be Turkish-Cypriots (King 1982). Turkish-Cypriots started to migrate to Britain primarily for economic reasons between 1950 and 1960 (Sonyel 1988), and the partition of Cyprus after the 1974 ethnic clashes produced another significant wave of Turkish-Cypriot migration to Britain.

Given the lacunae in the statistical data, it is very difficult to give a precise figure for either Turkish-Cypriots or Turks from the mainland in Britain. Statistical information about Cypriots does not distinguish between Turks and Greeks, except in the more recent figures extracted from the 1991 census. Immigration from mainland Turkey is not as well documented as immigration from Cyprus, due to the relatively small volume of Turks coming from Turkey. My interviews with Turks suggest that migration from Turkey can be traced back to the late 1960s and early 1970s. Beginning from the mid-1970s an increasing number of Turks started coming to London on their own initiative using their social networks and kin relations. The 1980 military coup in Turkey also caused further immigration to Britain. There are varying estimates of the size of the Turkish population in Britain as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Number of Mainland Turks and Turkish-Cypriots

	Estimates	Source(s)
Turkish-Cypriots	60,000	Nielsen (1989)
	45,000	Anwar (1993); Nielsen (1995)
Mainland Turks	40,000	Bhatti (1981); Ladbury (1977; 1979)
	26,597	Owen (1993)
	65,000	Annual Report, Turkish Ministry of Employment and Social Security, 1992, 1993
Total	66,597	Lowest total from separate estimates of Turkish-Cypriots and Mainland Turks
	125,000	Highest total from separate estimates of Turkish-Cypriots and Mainland Turks
	115,000	Gazioglu (1989)
	300,000	*The Independent*, 2 January 1996, based on a statement by a Customs and Excise Officer

Settlement of Turks/Cypriots in London

The settlement pattern of Turkish immigrants to Britain is similar to that of Greek Cypriots. Almost all Turks live in Greater London. It may be suggested that the use of social networks, kinship relations and patronage has perpetuated the concentration of Turkish people in the same quarters of the city. Oakley (1970) notes that, due to a similar clustering of Cypriots in the same area, Camden Town used to be called 'Little Cyprus'. As shown in Table 2, Turks in London live mostly in north-east London. A much smaller number, on the other hand, live in Lewisham, Southwark, the City of Westminster, Barnet and Kensington and Chelsea. Dokur-Gryskiewicz (1979) found in her earlier research on Turks that 54 per cent of her respondents in London reported that they preferred living with Turkish neighbours. This finding explains, at least partly, the concentration of Turkish people in particular locations of London.

Table 2: Local concentrations of those born in Cyprus and Turkey

District	Born in Cyprus	Born in Turkey
Enfield	11,339	1,783
Haringey	7,798	3,890
Barnet	3,944	662
Islington	3,153	1,445
Hackney	2,555	4,783
Southwark	2,297	484
Lewisham	2,061	436
Waltham Forest	1,850	867
Brent	1,407	
Redbridge	1,388	
Westminster, City of		726
Kensington and Chelsea		564
Sum of top ten	37,792	15,640
Great Britain	78,031	26,597

Source: Owen (1993)

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION OF MUSLIM CHILDREN

The institutionalisation of Islamic education has been a serious concern for Muslims in Europe generally and in Britain particularly. An increasing number of private and state-funded Islamic schools are being opened to counterbalance the cultural effects of education on the young generation as 'some Muslims regard "separate" schools as essential not only for the religious instruction of their children but for their cultural survival' (Haw 1994). Despite local opposition, Muslims in The Netherlands succeeded in opening state-funded Islamic schools in Rotterdam and Eindhoven in 1988,

and over the last six years the number of Islamic schools in The Netherlands has steadily increased to six in 1989–90, 22 in 1991–2 (Shadid and van Koningsveld 1992) and 29 in the 1993–4 school year. All of these are primary schools (Dwyer and Meyer 1995). Not only Muslims but also the Hindu community, which was driven by similar concerns for its children, opened similar schools in the Netherlands (Jackson and Nesbitt 1993).

Muslims in Britain are also exerting efforts to provide Islamic education for their children. The Union of Muslim Organisations (UMO), The UK Islamic Mission and The Muslim Educational Trust were established to address educational concerns of Muslims at an organisational level (Nielsen 1989). However, the awareness of Muslim parents regarding the religious education of the younger generation was heightened by the 1988 Education Act which requires new agreed syllabuses to 'reflect the fact that the religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian whilst taking account of the teaching and practices of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain' (UK Parliament 1988, Section 8 (3)). These developments generated new discussions about religious education and its likely impacts on the identity of pupils (Hart 1991; Parker-Jenkins 1992; Copley 1997).

The daily act of collective worship and the content of religious education have become important concerns for Muslim parents. One of the responses of Muslims to the recent developments was to establish their own private and independent Islamic schools where not only secular subjects but also cultural and religious subjects would be taught. The number of schools opened and run by Muslims has reached 60 in recent years.

Muslims in Britain are not alone in trying to open their independent schools. The Jewish community, for example, had already established several independent schools of which 24 have been receiving state funds. Hindus also opened an independent school and supplementary schools to transmit their religious and traditional cultural values to the younger generation (Jackson and Nesbitt 1993). Sikhs, too, have opened supplementary schools and used gurdwaras to facilitate cultural and religious education of the younger generation (Nesbitt and Jackson 1993). Reports on a Jewish grant maintained school[1] and a Hindu independent school[2] suggest that they contribute to the students' formation of a distinct identity.

For many years the Muslim community in Britain wanted to make use of the state funds, which were available to denominational and Jewish schools. In order to become voluntary aided schools, the Zakaria Girls School in Batley and the Islamia School in London, for example, made applications in 1982. However, the Zakaria Girls School failed to receive recognition as a voluntary aided school. The Islamia School, whose application was rejected in 1993 after ten years of campaigning, also failed initially to receive funding (Dwyer and Meyer 1995). By 1994 there were almost 40 schools demanding the same rights enjoyed by Jewish and Christian schools (Copley 1997). Despite earlier rejections of its application, the Islamia School persisted in its effort to receive state funds. In a letter published in the education supplement of *The Guardian*, leading figures campaigning for this state funding appealed to the Secretary of State for Education and Employment, David Blunkett, for Muslims to be treated equally with others in Britain (2 December 1997). It is argued in the letter that Government backing of Muslim schools would promote shared values and good citizenship for all communities equally. In response to Muslims' demands, the Government decided (9 January 1998) to grant state funding to Islamia School

in London and Al Furqan School in Birmingham. The same day, two more Jewish Schools, Mathilda Marks Kennedy and Jewish Progressive primary schools were also given grant maintained status.

FROM MOSQUE EDUCATION TO SCHOOLING

The first generation of immigrant Muslims, who are convinced that they are no longer immigrants but settlers, is now much more concerned with facilitating the religio-cultural education of the younger generation (Anwar 1995; Parker-Jenkins 1995). Turkish Muslims are also becoming increasingly concerned with the education of their children in an Islamic environment. In order to achieve this objective, the Aziziye Mosque, which was established by the United Kingdom Turkish Islamic Association (Ingiltere Turk Islam Birligi) in the early 1980s in north-east London, decided to open a school to facilitate the religious education of children.

The first independent Turkish Primary School, the Ikra, was opened on 12 September 1994. The opening of the Ikra was a significant development because the school project illustrated Aziziye's political stance on religious education and the concerns of the families regarding the formation of Islamic identity and its maintenance through education. The developments surrounding the opening of the Ikra Primary School suggest that the Aziziye Jama'a (congregation) realised that the weekends-only religious education in the mosque environment was not conducive to creating a strong Muslim identity among the young generation. The experiences since the establishment of the mosque have revealed the shortcomings of traditional mosque education. These considerations seem to have played an important role in introducing a more systematic way of teaching children which requires a proper school and expertise. As explained by the project workers, the Ikra Primary School project was launched to fill the institutional vacuum in the field of education.

The Ikra Primary School began with eight registered pupils whose ages ranged from six to nine. The number of students increased to 13 in the second week. At the time of its opening, Ikra employed six part-time teachers to teach National Curriculum subjects with some additional Islamic classes. As far as the Turkish community was concerned, my findings suggest that almost nobody out of the Aziziye Jama'a was aware of the developments for the establishment of a school within their neighbourhood. The mosque administration did not try to appeal to a wider audience of parents. Some parents were pleased to see the opening of the first Turkish Muslim primary school with an additional curriculum covering Turkish language and the teaching of Islamic topics. One of the informants who sent his child to Ikra said:

> I have been living in this country for more than twenty years and I have established myself as a citizen in England. I do not see any reason to give up all these achievements and return to Turkey. Neither do I want to abandon my Turkish and Islamic identity. I came to this country as a Muslim Turk and I will do everything to remain so. It is also my responsibility to provide my children with an Islamic education. I had to send my first son to a school in Turkey where he could have a good religious education because there is no such place in England where my children can go to learn Turkish language, traditions and Islamic values. I believe that our children should be educated here. Therefore, I regarded the opening of Ikra as a first step towards the foundation of an educational institution that enables our children to learn their own language and culture while living in England.

This typical response reveals the expectations of parents of the staff and teaching programme of the school. Parents send their children to Ikra Primary School with the hope that their children will be educated not only in line with the National Curriculum but also in accordance with traditional values. They hope that the classes on Turkish culture and Islamic principles will evoke a sense of identity and belonging to the Turkish-Muslim community as is the case with some other minorities in Britain.

Some families send their children to Turkey where they are either placed in boarding schools or entrusted to close kin and relatives to receive secondary education. Those who cannot afford this kind of arrangement have spent considerable time and money to send their children to Turkey in the summer holidays so that they keep in touch with the religious and cultural atmosphere. One father who sees England as his permanent home supported the school project and sent one of his children to Ikra. When asked during our interview why he supported the project he replied:

> England is my home. I believe that my children feel more attached to this country. It is time that we establish our own institutions. Jews and Hindus have successful examples of combining religious and formal education of their children. I think that their children are developing strong Jewish and Hindu identity. The key is education. If we can provide similar environment to our children instead of sending them to our countries of origin, we would give them a strong sense of belonging to our community. Now, I believe that we lack these institutions, therefore I supported this school project.

It seemed that at least some parents were more concerned with the school's additional subjects than with its academic competence. When reminded of the staff's lack of teaching experience, one respondent who had registered his son with the school argued:

> Well, this is a new venture and I believe in it. In the beginning, naturally, there might be problems but in time the staff will overcome all because there is a noble case here and that is what is important. When I decided to bring my son to Ikra I knew the imperfections as many other schools have, but I had a firm belief in the sincerity of people involved in the project and most important of all was that this school was prepared to offer classes on Turkish culture and Islamic ethics that my son cannot receive in a state school.

Any answer to the question of how far such a school education can construct or strengthen Turkish Muslim identity must be tentative, and one can only speculate about the nature of its likely effect on the attitudes and behaviour of children by looking at the stated policy of the school, the contents of the lessons and the selection of teachers. The Ikra Primary School announced that:

> The aim of establishing a primary school is to provide and educate Muslim children according to the highest educational standards and principles of Islam. Good education is essential for Muslim children to enable them to live, study and work in a multi-cultural, multi-religious environment. The aim of the Ikra Primary School is to teach the National Curriculum and some additional topics related to religio-moral values. (Ikra Primary School Prospectus, 1994–5, 2)

In order to achieve its aims the school curriculum was designed to meet the requirements of the National Curriculum and religious education. It is stated in the prospectus (3) that 'the School follows the National Curriculum while maintaining its basic Islamic ethos. It follows the National Curriculum with some additional Islamic subjects.' The National Curriculum subjects (18 hours a week) comprise 75 per cent of educational activities. The rest is allocated to Turkish culture and Islamic subjects (8 hours a week). It was the expectation of both parents and the teachers that classes on Islam, the Qur'an, Turkish and Arabic would instil a sense of identity among children moulded by religious ethics and traditional values to withstand the cultural effects of the larger society.

Apart from these classes the personal involvement of teaching staff in religious activities is expected to provide the pupils with role models. Therefore the teaching staff were chosen from Muslim candidates. During my regular visits to the school, I observed that all the teachers were performing their daily prayers, setting an example for the pupils. During the lunch time pupils are supervised by one of the teachers and reminded of the manner in which Muslims behave while eating. In many instances children were reminded to wash their hands and to say *'Bismillah'* (in the name of God) before beginning their lunch and *'Elhamdulillah'* (thanks to God) at the end of it. When the lunch is over one of the children is encouraged to read an Islamic prayer (*yemek duasi*) to express appreciation and thanks to God. Then the children are encouraged to practise making their ablution (*abdest almak*) and performing prayer (*namaz*). The supervising teacher led children to the ablution area to show them how a proper ablution was made while asking children to imitate him. The same method was used to teach children the rules of prayer (*namaz*). As these observations show, children were in constant touch with Islamic symbols and practices while they were in school.

DIFFERENT VOICES IN THE COMMUNITY

As mentioned in the beginning of the article, there is a vast degree of diversity among Muslim communities. This is also true even for a micro-Islamic community which shares the same national, linguistic and ethnic origins. Turkish Muslims in Britain have ideological, religious and factional differences. There are different, and in many instances conflicting, religious and religio-political groups among Turkish Muslims. Aziziye Jama'a, Sheikh Nazim's Sufi organisation, the Suleymanci and Nurcu groups, National Vision (*Milli Gorus*) and Idealist Youth (*Ulkucu Genclik*) constitute not only a spectrum of diversity but also an array of factionalism among the Turkish community. All these groups compete with each other in the 'religious market' to increase their clientele and source of income as well as to widen their sphere of influence (Küçükcan 1996). Similar tendencies to belong to diverse traditions and movements also exist among Hindus (Jackson and Nesbitt 1993) and Sikh communities (Oberoi 1994). As expected, different views were expressed regarding the opening of the first Turkish Muslim school in London. It might be argued that factional cleavages have played a role not only in disassociating from the school, but also in discrediting the school project. One informant, for example, argued firmly that:

> I never send my children to such a school. I know it is good and desirable to give children some religious education but not by these people in the mosque. Everybody knows which *Tarikat* [Sufi Order, Mystical Organisation] they follow. They will teach our children the teachings of that particular *Tarikat* rather than the universal teaching of Islam. Then our children will view the world from this window only.

A father of three, who sends his daughter to Islamia Primary School in Brent, expressed his excitement and disappointment in the following statement:

> I have no formal or proper religious education. Whatever I learnt in the name of Islam is either a little knowledge I received from my parents years ago or from some circles in the mosque. When I realised that my children were growing up without learning their religion properly, I tried to find a place where they can at least learn the basics of Islam. Therefore I decided to take them to mosque circles which seemed to me narrow-minded and disappointing. Then I heard that Islamia Primary School was opened which seemed to me a good chance to send my daughter for her education at the expense of a considerable cost. There she gets a good Islamic education and learns to look at life from an Islamic point of view. They do not teach her one version of Islam as it might happen at Ikra Primary School because Islamia does not subscribe to one *Tarikat* or sect.

Apart from these concerns, some parents mentioned the facilities and teaching quality of the education offered at Ikra Primary School. One person stated that:

> This is a new school and it even does not have its own premises and proper classrooms with adequate facilities for children such as a library and a playground. Apart from these physical characteristics, nobody has a clear idea about the competency of teaching staff, whether they have appropriate qualifications and enough experience to trust the future of our children.

My observations at the Ikra Primary School since the teaching began in 1994 lend some support to the arguments of those who feel that the school is not able to provide a suitable environment and experienced teaching staff for a proper education. The teaching started to take place in rooms on the mosque's first floor which were not designed for school use and lacked the necessary equipment. Pupils were confined to three or four rooms and had no contact with the open air all day. Physical education classes were held in a small hall where prayers too were performed from time to time. Although this area was designated as a playground for children there was not even one piece of equipment available, at least at the time of my observation, to help children to discover their physical abilities and skills through play activities which require the provision of a suitable environment and equipment.

The qualifications and experience of the teachers were also matters of concern for those parents who hesitated to send their children to the school. They argued that staff had no proven record of expertise and experience of teaching in the British educational system. Five Turkish males and one English female convert, all with university degrees, were employed to teach eleven different classes ranging from mathematics to geography and English to Islamic studies. Although the teaching staff had university degrees, none had experience of teaching within a multicultural society and in a school where English is used as a language of instruction. It is worth noting here that, from time to time, Turkish was used as a teaching language. The case of the Imam as teacher of the Qur'an classes illustrates this situation: his English was not good enough to teach children in English and therefore he used Turkish during his teaching sessions, although the school prospectus claimed that the 'educational language will be English' (Ikra Primary School Prospectus 1994–5).

EXCLUSION AND THE FAILURE OF A GHETTOISED STRATEGY

Ikra Primary School was the first full time independent primary school to be established and run by Turks in Britain. The establishment of Ikra was seen as the beginning of institutionalisation in the field of education within the Turkish community in London. During the writing of this article a second primary school, Amina Hatun, was opened by a different Sufi group, led by Sheikh Nazim, a Turkish-Cypriot. However, the Ikra venture has failed to establish a viable educational institution and it closed its doors after a year. Many reasons lie behind this failure. The physical conditions, administrative deficiencies and a shortage of skills among the teaching staff played a part. More importantly, religious factionalism isolated the school from the larger society by preventing the participation of other Turkish groups.

Each religious faction or group opens its own mosques, prayer halls and welfare charities. One can see in north-east London, within a square mile, several mosques built in close proximity. Yet each mosque or organisation has its own members. This shows that the conflicting interests of different groups influence the nature of religious institutionalisation among the Turkish community. Almost all these groups have a connection with the homeland and have the potential for mobilising their members in the diaspora. However, religious and political particularism among the Turkish community in London seems to have resulted in fragmentation. Although there are some cases of Turkish Muslims' religious and political mobilisation being successful elsewhere, especially in Germany (Küçükcan 1996), it was clear that in the case of Ikra, those who had disassociated themselves from the Aziziye Jama'a would not send their children to this school because of Aziziye's affiliation to a Sufi group in Turkey. Factionalism and the particularistic differentiation of religious groups draw boundaries between Islamic groups even though they may have similar concerns regarding the education of Turkish children. This suggests that educational establishments that are to flourish in the Turkish community in London are unlikely to receive large support from the community as long as they carry the imprint of particular groups and their ideologies.

It may be argued, despite the examples from other faith communities, that educational establishments which are isolated from the mainstream educational system by their religious and ideological underpinning would fail to take root in a multicultural society. There are, however, almost sixty independent Muslim schools in Britain although many are unheard of because they cater for only a small and particular group of Muslims. Some of these schools may, like Ikra, have already ceased to exist. Although Islamic sentiments and belonging to a religious minority may initially motivate a particular group of parents concerned with the future of their children's identity to establish educational institutions, as long as particularism and factionalism shape the politics of such institutions, they are unlikely to succeed. Against the background of Islamic universalism, one can hardly envisage ghettoised approaches leading to successful and viable institutionalisation of Islamic education. This is especially ironic at a time when, by contrast, transnational interactions which transcend national, ethnic and religious borders are opening up new avenues of participation and co-operation. Similarly, it is likely that, in order to achieve sound educational structures, Muslims in Britain need to participate fully in civic life, while at the same time the larger society should assist members of the Muslim community to integrate and represent themselves in the multicultural project of Britain by providing equal opportunities in education, employment, political participation and citizenship.

NOTES

1 An 18 year old student at the Hasmonean Jewish grant maintained school in north London describes himself as a Zionist. He is more concerned with the events in Israel as his homeland than what is happening in England. His political view is also indicative of the kind of education he receives at this school. He states that 'I suppose I would vote for a party if they had some good policies for the Jews or Israel.' (*The Independent Magazine*, 25 May 1996) Another young student who is also studying at the same establishment and taking compulsory classes on Hebrew, the Talmud and the Bible portrays an identity choice of an 18 year old who seems to be happy following a code of modesty, no trousers, and uniforms covering elbows.

2 The Swaminarayan School in north-west London is the first Hindu school in the UK. It was founded in 1992. The school is 'the brainchild of Pramukh Swami Maharaj, guru of the Swaminarayan sect, who, on his visit from India, was alarmed by what he saw as Britain's moral decline'. This indicates that he ordered or advised his followers that their children should be protected from such a moral decline through the institutionalisation of Hindu education. The teaching of Hindu religion and values seems to be paying off as an 18 year old girl at the school asserts that '[I] get more moral guidance at a Hindus-only school . . . Now, being Hindu is more important to me. I have sense of belonging, whereas my friends who are not believers seem confused' (*The Independent Magazine*, 25 May 1996).

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