

Civic education in pluralist societies

Margrete Søvik

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Civic education in past and present

- Public schools in the 19. century: integrating children into the national community, preparing them for the role as loyal citizens
- Western European schools no longer transmit simplistic messages of nationalism
- Civic education today: democratic participation, solidarity, peaceful resolution of conflicts

Political liberalism in pluralist societies – some dilemmas

- Political liberalism: belief in human progress, reason and universal values (human rights)
- Political liberalism in debates on minority integration:
 - Minorities expected to attain liberal skills and attitudes
 - Integration policies: inclusion and tolerance towards difference
- Political liberalism not practiced in a "pure form":
 - The notion of people as an inclusive community of citizens vs. the people as an exclusive community based on a shared history and culture
 - State neutrality vs. the de facto normative foundations of the state
- New boundaries and forms of exclusion: the "illiberal other"

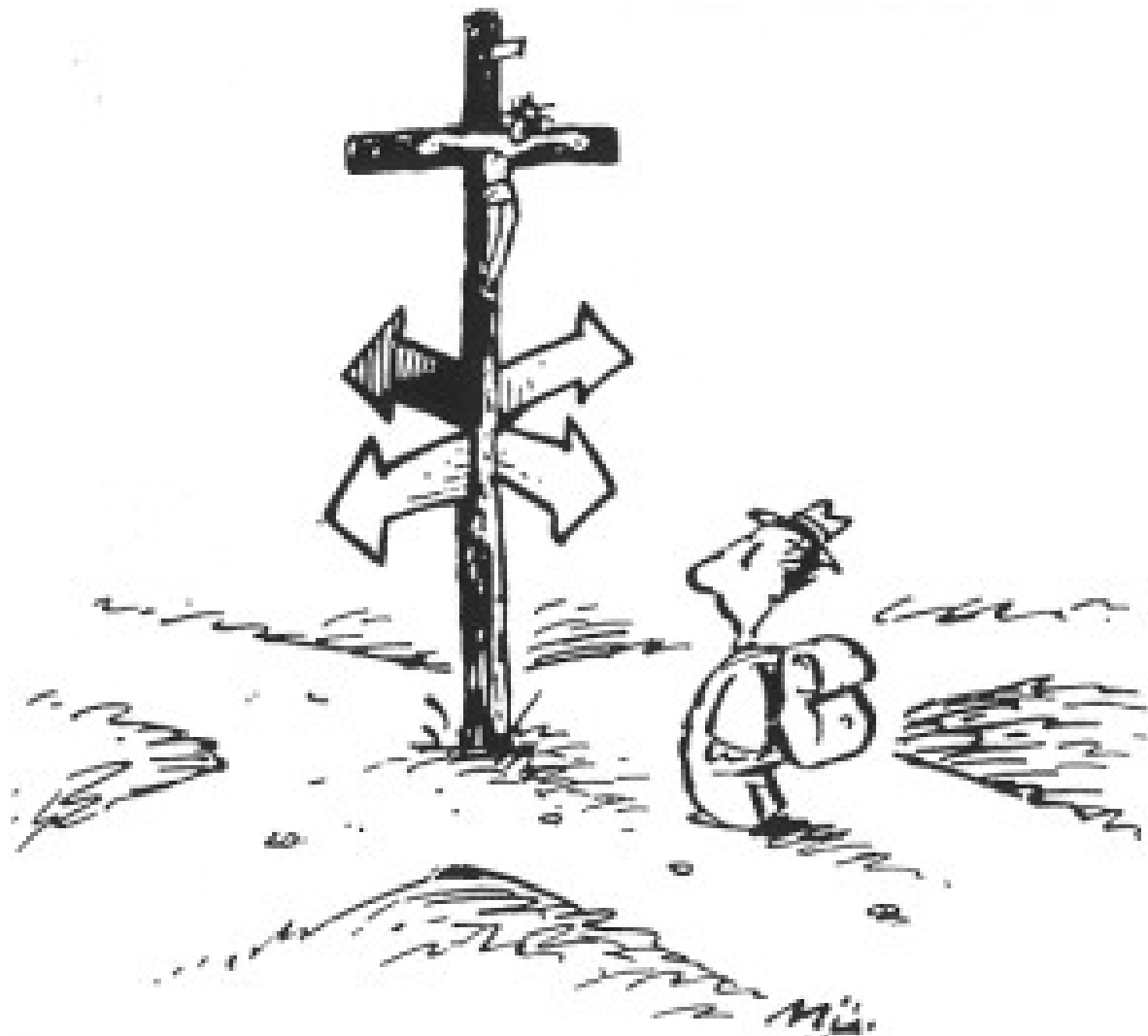
Islam and French public schools

- 2004: law prohibiting visible religious signs in public schools
- Background: a strict separation between private and public spheres – the latter based upon a secular ethics
- The mission of the school: enlighten, civilize and emancipate, not reproduce socio-cultural divisions



Islam and German public schools

- Islamic instruction in public schools: the main controversy
- Reflects a different relationship between state and church and different notions of education and citizenship compared with France
- Religious instruction:
 - freedom of belief as a positive freedom
 - a benefit to state and society: sustaining the morality of citizens and providing a source of life-orientation and personal development



Islam and German public schools

- Reluctance in acknowledging Muslim organizations as state partners
- Islam as represented by Muslim organizations does not fit into the image of socially useful religion
- The challenge: make Islam fit into the pre-defined space and function of public religion



Summary

- **France:**

- The nation: a political community of citizens
- A strict separation between private and public domains, to secure the equality of citizens
- Civic education: teaching the political principles of the Republic
- Privatization of Islam

- **Germany:**

- The nation: a cultural community
- No strict separation between private and public ethics
- Civic education: to enhance good morals and social responsibility through acquaintance with one's history, culture and religion
- Domestication of Islam