

PO Box 2278
Ilford
Essex
IG1 9XT

T: 020 7330 8796
E: info@iengage.org.uk
W: www.iengage.org.uk

Diana Lazarus
Chair of Governors
King Solomon High School
Forest Road
Barkingside
Ilford
Essex IG6 3HB

8th July 2010

Dear Ms Lazarus,

Thank you for your reply to my letter of 14th May 2010.

I am grateful for your pointing out the long history and spiritual connection to Zion, or Jerusalem, in the Jewish tradition. While Jerusalem may feature prominently and frequently in Jewish texts and prayers books, I would contend that modern Zionism is not a continuation of the Jewish connection to Jerusalem but a distinct point of departure in Jewish history. Modern Zionism, unlike a religious or spiritual connection to the Holy Land, is an ideology of state-building and nationhood for the Jewish people.

This disjuncture is manifest in the different Jewish perspectives on Israel beginning from the socialist, secular and liberal attitudes of the early waves of Jewish immigrants to the present day construction of Israel as 'the Jewish state', and further evidenced by those Jewish groups that are adamant that Zionism is not part of the Jewish tradition at all.

I find it difficult to accept that in teaching students at King Solomon High School of the establishment of state of Israel you do not teach any particular narrative nor enter into political issues. I would, moreover, consider this a gross breach of educational standards were it to be the case.

As you will be well aware, the establishment of the state of Israel came at the expense of the loss of Palestine independence at the end of the British Mandate and has since been mired in political controversies on the right of return of Palestinian refugees, illegal occupation of Palestinian Territories, illegal settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, including East Jerusalem, and the rights of Arab Israelis within Israel itself.

It would seem to me pretty impossible to avoid a particular narrative on teaching students about the establishment on the state of Israel unless that narrative wholly and purposefully avoids the political and civil rights of Palestinians and their aspirations to live in the land of *their* forefathers.

I look forward to your reply.

Yours sincerely

Mohammed Asif
CEO