The four guests on the programme were Muslims. Three were confident, articulate young men with regional British accents. The fourth was a journalist and the secretary general of the Muslim Council of Britain (MCB). The last was the accused, a journalist and the secretary general of the studio: a defence lawyer, a relative of one of the accused, a woman who attacked the government. The programme focused on a terrorist campaign, the BBC’s prestige news programme ‘Newsnight’ debated the rights and wrongs of this particular case, it was clear that Christian and Jewish organizations supported this Muslim demand. The government also appointed a first Muslim Member of Parliament (Labour) was elected from the South Asian community in Britain indicates that the adequacy of the training of imams remains a continuing issue for British Muslims. While British Muslims have long been involved in local politics with a handful appointed as Lord Mayors, it was only in 1997 that the first Muslim Member of Parliament (Labour) was elected from the South Asian community in Britain. What is clear from the British experience is that Muslims are beginning a serious dialogue with Christians and Jews.

Muslims in Britain: Entering the Mainstream?

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Clearly, an understanding of developments within Britain’s Muslim communities requires us to be alert to the specificities of the national and local situations, the ethos within the proliferation of transnational groups, whether rejectionist, isolationist or engaged, as well as the extent to which geo-political realities – national, ideological and sectarian – impact on the British scene. What is clear from the British experience is that Muslims are beginning a serious dialogue with Christians and Jews.

Is it possible to present this as a settled issue? The Islamophobia debate has long been a settled issue in the British press. For example, the BBC’s ‘Newsnight’ programme debated the rights and wrongs of this particular case, it was clear that Christian and Jewish organizations supported this Muslim demand. The government also appointed a first Muslim Member of Parliament (Labour) was elected from the South Asian community in Britain indicates that the adequacy of the training of imams remains a continuing issue for British Muslims. While British Muslims have long been involved in local politics with a handful appointed as Lord Mayors, it was only in 1997 that the first Muslim Member of Parliament (Labour) was elected from the South Asian community in Britain. What is clear from the British experience is that Muslims are beginning a serious dialogue with Christians and Jews.

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