

The Voice of Faith and the Challenge of Democratic Multiculturalism

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How is democratic multiculturalism or liberal integration to respond to the phenomena of assertive minority religious communities? This assertiveness is the latest – especially in my part of the world, Britain and Western Europe more generally – in a line of demands for equality and a share of the public space led by women, black people, gays and so on. The latest and in some ways the most difficult challenge comes from religious groups such as Muslims. The particular difficulty that the latter raises, which was not an issue in relation to women, blacks and gays, is that it cuts across the widespread and core democratic commitment to secularism. This is the challenge that I wish to explore.

By secularism, or more specifically political secularism, I mean institutional arrangements such that religious authority and religious reasons for action, on the one hand, and political authority and political reasons for action, are distinguished; so, political authority does not rest on religious authority and the latter does not dominate political authority. Support for such arrangements can be derived from a religion or a religious authority, and certainly are supported by many religious people.¹ On this very broad conception of political secularism, there is no necessary, absolute separation of religion and political rule, let alone that the state should be hostile to religion. Many different institutional arrangements and many different political views and ideologies are consistent with this minimal conception of secularism: which is basically the non-domination of political authority by religious authority.

This idea is central to modernity and is one of the dominant ideas of the twentieth century. I do not mean that everybody in modern societies agrees with this view, and of course like all ideas it is not perfectly or purely manifested in any actual case, and people will disagree about the specific cases. Nevertheless, like democracy, political secularism is an idea that most people actively and passively support and few argue against in a full-throated way.

An increasing number of academics think that in recent years something highly significant, possibly epochal, has happened to this state of affairs. Established modern societies are producing critics of this taken for granted idea in their midst and emergent modern societies do not seem to be smoothly following in the path that led to the historical ascendancy of political secularism. My interest is specifically in Western Europe. Jurgen Habermas, who has Western

¹ “Render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar’s, and unto God the things that are God’s” is of course a political view, or about politics, based on the authority of St. Matthew’s Gospel.

Europe very much at the forefront of his mind, has famously announced we are currently witnessing a transition from a secular to a 'post-secular society' in which 'secular citizens' have to express a previously denied respect for 'religious citizens', who should be allowed, even encouraged, to critique aspects of contemporary society and to find solutions to its problems from within their religious views (Habermas). Some have gone further and speak of a global crisis of secularism.

It is a fact that across the globe, religious groups are protesting against perceived demotion or marginalisation in the public space. Yet, while in most parts of the world, the protestors seek to restore a real, or more probably imagined past, a golden age before the marginalisation, this is not the case in Western Europe.² More fundamentally, while in the other regions there is a sense that a religious majority has been or is being marginalised, in Western Europe, the group most expressing its sense of marginalisation is a minority. So, while the religionist agitation in the US, the Muslim world and India is about the status and re-empowerment of the religious majority, of making the country in the image of the religious majority, the issue in Europe is about the status of a minority and its right to change the countries that it has recently become part of or is trying to be accepted as part of. In so far as the dominant religion, Christianity, exhibits a new found political assertiveness it is in reaction – sympathetic or hostile – to the minority presence and politics and in a context of continuing decline in Christian religiosity and church membership.

The Accommodation of Muslims in Western Europe

In recent decades Western Europe has come to share the post-immigration racial and ethnic urban diversity, which has long been a characteristic of the United States.³ Currently most of the largest, especially the capital, cities of Northwest Europe are about 20-35% non-white (i.e. people of non-European descent, including Turks). Even without further large-scale immigration, being a young, fertile population, these proportions will grow for at least one or two generations more before they stabilise, reaching or exceeding 50% in some cities in the next few decades or sooner. The trend will include some of the larger urban centres of Southern Europe. A significant difference between Western Europe and the US, however, is that the majority of non-whites in the countries of Europe are Muslims. With estimates of 12 to over 17 million Muslims in Western Europe today, the Muslim population is only about 3-5% and is relatively evenly distributed across the larger states (Peach 2007; Pew Forum 2010). In the larger cities, the proportion which is Muslim, however, is several times larger and growing at a faster rate than most of the population

² Peter Berger expressly mentions 'Europe, west of what used to be called the Iron Curtain' as an exception to his desecularisation thesis (1999: 9).

³ Of course the presence of black people in the US as a whole is a consequence not of immigration but slavery, but the urban racial and ethnic mix is due to internal migration as well as to many waves of immigration.

(Lutz, Skirbekk and Testa 2007). In this context, with the riots in the *banlieues* of Paris and elsewhere, the Danish cartoon affair and other issues about offence and freedom of speech, and the proliferating bans on various forms of female Muslim dress just being a few in a series of conflicts focused on minority-majority relations, questions about integration, equality, racism and Islam—and their relation to terrorism, security and foreign policy—have become central to European politics.

The issue, then, driving the sense of a crisis of secularism that some sense in Western Europe is the place of religious identities, or identities that are or are perceived to be ethno-religious (like British Asian Muslim or Arab Muslim in France) in the public life of the countries of the region. This multicultural challenge to secularism is amongst the most profound political and long term issues to arise from the post-war Western European hunger for labour migrants, and the reversal of the population flows of European colonialism. The challenge is far from confined to secularism. It is a broad one: from socio-economic disadvantage and discrimination in the labour markets at one end to a constitutional status or corporate relationship with the state at the other. Moreover, the awareness of this challenge is not due to terrorism as it began to manifest itself and was perceived before events such as 9/11.

Nor is it due to (Muslim) conservative values, especially in relation to gender and sexuality, though it is related to it. The core element of the challenge is the primacy given to religion as the basis of identity, organisation, political representation, normative justification etc. These matters were thought to be more or less settled (except in a few exceptional cases like Northern Ireland) until some Muslims started to assert themselves as Muslims in the public sphere of various West European countries. Some have thought that primacy could be given to, say, gender, ethnicity or class as identity self-concepts, but very few thought that religion should be in the select set (Modood, 2005; Modood, Triandafyllidou and Zapata-Barrero, 2006).

Multiculturalism

It is not the mere presence of Muslims or Islam that creates a challenge all by itself. It is the presence of Muslims mediated by or in interaction with contemporary values of European states and politics. In particular, we should attend to two key complexes of political ideas, norms and practices which predate and are independent of Muslim immigrant politics, but which make available a certain political opportunity structure for Muslims to make claims that create majoritarian and secularist anxieties.

The first one of these is not to do with secularism or desecularisation or publicly assertive religiosity per se, but with claims for accommodation from within Western polities and normative viewpoints in relation to minorities generally. Let us call these debates and activities 'multiculturalism'. These

discourses and practices of non-discrimination, rights, equal accommodation and respect are largely discourses from within Western European normative debates, norms and laws. They are picked up post-immigration and when Muslims or other groups utilise them, the reference is to the status and resources available to other groups in the West, not 'homelands'.⁴ The second complex I have in mind is the religion-state linkages and support structures that exist in Western European countries, which I will call 'moderate secularism'.

Multicultural citizenship refers to the presence of ideas, ethos and politics of 'difference', which allows for the articulation and legitimacy (and illegitimacy) of dealing with certain kind of claims, in ways that are deemed acceptable and satisfactory. Briefly, I mean three things here (for further details, see Modood 2007).

Firstly, there is the critique of those portrayals of political systems, including contemporary liberal democratic states like those of Western Europe, as consisting of universal norms and rights. The critique is that such norms and rights are inflected by particular historical traditions and national cultures which give distinctive interpretations to ideas such as individual and group, public and private, rights and obligations and so create a de facto second class citizenship for those who do not identify with that culture or are not privileged within it.

Secondly, that despite legal definitions and idealised norms of equality between all individuals, many people see either themselves and/or other citizens not just as individuals or citizens but in terms of membership of groups such as women, black people or Muslims. These identities are often imposed upon individuals as markers of social inferiority but equally (and simultaneously) can be forms of self-identity and pride and indeed resistance to inferiorisation.

Given this, then thirdly, the challenge of creating equality between historically privileged and disadvantaged groups within a citizenry is unlikely to be achieved by acting as if group identities no longer exist. In relation to colour-racism, such pretence is called the pursuit of colour-blind policies, and by analogy, one can speak of gender blindness and Muslim blindness in relation to citizenship equality. It is contended that full civic equality will require not just policies treating all citizens as individuals but additionally, policies, institutions and discourses which 'recognise' (Taylor, 1994) that certain group identities are victims of negative treatment, are not going to disappear and should not be required to disappear, and so the best approach is a politics of respect which turns these negative identities into positively valued ones and to remake the sense of common citizenship and nationality to include them. This is my

⁴ Though new discourses of Islam emerge that develop these concepts and see the ideals of some contemporary western publics (eg., feminists, multiculturalists, anti-imperialists etc) as ideals within Islam too that have regrettably been obscured in the past.

understanding of political multiculturalism based on the ideas of political theorists such as Charles Taylor, Bhikhu Parekh, Iris Young and Will Kymlicka (clearly not what many Western European politicians, journalists and social commentators who are critical of multiculturalism may mean by multiculturalism) (Modood, 2007 and 2011).

My point is that it is the presence, adaptation and disputation of these ideas and rhetorics which give the question of the accommodation of Muslims the character it has, namely a multiculturalist character. The result is that to talk about the integration of Muslims in Western Europe today is to argue about multiculturalism.

Indeed, the converse has also become true. To talk about multiculturalism today in Western Europe is to talk about – pro and con – the accommodation of Muslims.

Moderate Secularism

I turn to the second complex that I think relates to the sense of crisis of secularism. It is undeniably true that in terms of vocabulary, concepts and institutional practices, each country in Western Europe is a secular state but each has its own distinctive take on what this means. Nevertheless, there are two historical strands, a main one and a lesser strand. The latter is principally manifested in French *laïcité*, which seeks to create a public space in which religion is virtually banished in the name of reason and emancipation, and religious organisations are monitored by the state through consultative national mechanisms. The main Western European approach, however, which I call moderate secularism, sees organised religion as not just a private benefit but as a potential public good or national resource, which the state can in some circumstances assist to realise – even through an ‘established’ church (Modood, 2010). These public benefits can be direct such as a contribution to education and social care through autonomous church-based organisations funded by the taxpayer; or indirect, such as the production of attitudes that create economic hope or family stability; and they can be to do with national identity, cultural heritage, ethical voice and national ceremonies.

Western Europe has been a site of a historical struggle between public churches and political secularists, which for the most part was not deeply conflictual during the nineteenth and especially the twentieth century, especially in Protestant majority societies, and was undertaken through various shifting compromises. The compromises consisted of a successful accommodation of an expanding number of Christian churches within the business and symbolic workings of the state, yet marked by a gradual but decisive weakening of the public and political character of the churches. The 1960s until the end of the century saw a particularly strong movement of opinion and politics in favour of the secularists. In Western Europe, the cultural

revolution of the 1960s has been broadly accepted; not only has there been no major, sustained counter-movement, but it broadened out from Northwestern Protestant/secular Europe into Catholic Europe.

Of course, this has not meant that public religion—even the formal connexions to the state and direct access to governments—disappeared altogether. There has been a trend towards less public recognition but it has not led to anything like a terminal endpoint, not even in France. Nor, on the other hand, has there been much political challenge from organised religion, or political conflict involving religion (Northern Ireland’s exceptional character proving the rule). The place of religion in Western Europe has been relatively uncontroversial in the last decades of the twentieth century because religion has not been particularly visible, and there has been a general assumption – perhaps shared by many religious people, perhaps even by religious lobbies – that the decreasing public presence of religion is irreversible, and it is better to flow with it than either a political fight to reverse the trend or decisive action to take it to its endpoint. Religion did not cease to be public, but because it was not felt to be too challenging or threatening it was noticed less. For example, a political campaign on a religious matter or led by religious people was less likely to be reported by the media than, say, an anti-racist or environmentalist protest.

Responding to Muslim Assertiveness

This is the context, then, in which non-Christian migrants have been arriving and settling, and in which they and the next generation have become active members of their societies, including making political claims of equality and accommodation. The important point is that the rising multicultural challenge and the gradual weakening of the political status of Christian churches, in particular the national churches, were taking place at the same time. The intersection of these two trajectories is nicely captured in two policy initiatives in the Netherlands in 1983. In that year in which the national system of ‘pillarisation’, which had at one time made the country a bi-religious communal state, was formally wound up, a new Minorities Policy (Nota Minderhedenbeleid) was announced (see Lentin and Titley, 107-108; Bader ref in BA chp) that created post-immigration ethnic minorities as a de facto mini-pillar, giving them state funding for faith schools, ethno-religious radio and TV broadcasting and other forms of cultural maintenance (Bader, 2011). Some of that policy began to be reversed in the 1990s, but looking beyond the Netherlands, the pivotal moment was 1988-89 and was marked by two events. These created national and international storms, and set in motion political developments that have not been reversed, and offer contrasting ways in which the two Western European secularisms are responding to the Muslim presence. The events were the protests in Britain against *The Satanic Verses* by Sir Salman Rushdie; and in France, the decision by a school head-teacher to prohibit entry to three girls unless they were willing to take off their

headscarves in school premises.

The novel *The Satanic Verses* was not banned in the UK as the protestors demanded, and the conduct of some Muslims, especially those threatening the life of the author, certainly shocked and alienated many from the campaign. In that sense, the Muslim campaign clearly failed. In other respects, however, it galvanised many into seeking a democratic multiculturalism that was inclusive of Muslims. A national body was created to lobby on behalf of Muslims in the corridors of power. This new body, the Muslim Council of Britain (MCB), was accepted as a consultee by the New Labour government of 1997 until about the middle of the next decade, when it looked for new interlocutors. The MCB was very successful in relation to its founding agenda (Modood, 2011). By 2001, it had achieved its aim of having Muslim issues and Muslims as a group recognised separately from issues of race and ethnicity; and of being itself accepted by government, media and civil society as the spokesperson for Muslims. The MCB had to wait a bit longer to get the legislative protection it sought. Laws against religious discrimination were introduced in 2003, strengthened in 2007 and again in 2010, making them much stronger than anything available in the rest of the European Union. Incitement to Religious Hatred, the legislation most closely connected to the protests over *The Satanic Verses*, was introduced in 2006—though there is no suggestion that it would have caught that novel. Indeed, the protestors' original demand that the blasphemy law be extended to cover Islam has been made inapplicable as the blasphemy law was abolished in 2008, with very little protest from anybody. Legislators were persuaded of the need to protect religious individuals and communities from hatred and discrimination but not from offense directed at their beliefs.

So, that is one path of development from 1988-89. As can be seen, it was a mobilisation of a minority and the extension of minority policies from race to religion in order to accommodate the religious minority. The other development, namely the one arising from *l'affaire foulard* was one of top-down state action to prohibit certain minority practices. From the start, the majority of the country – whether it be media, the public intellectuals, the politicians or public opinion – were supportive of the head-teacher who refused to have religious headscarves in school (Bowen, 2007; Scott, 2007). Muslims either did not wish to or lacked the capacity to challenge this dominant view with anything like the publicity, organisation, clamour or international assistance that Muslims in Britain bore to bear on Rushdie's novel.

The other approach – radical secularism – has moved from banning 'ostentatious' religious dress, specifically the headscarf, in public schools to the banning of face covering, specifically by Muslims, in public places – not just in France, but also Belgium and the Netherlands: and Italy is nearly there, too. What is less well known is that this restrictionist approach is accompanied by the state creating religious—specifically Muslim—organisations as national partners, or at least consultees. President Sarkozy did this in relation to

Conseil Francais du Culte Musulman in 2003, and Chancellor Merkel did so with the Islam Confrenz in 2006. So, we must not be misled by the rhetoric of the radical secularists: 'separation' may be their favourite word, but it is usually accompanied by state regulation and top-down control of organised religion.

Additional Responses: Christian Values and Muscular Liberalism

Beyond these two responses, two other sentiments can also be identified: a Christianist and an intolerant or 'muscular' liberalism. By this I do not mean to say that Christians and liberals were not party to the first two approaches. The churches, especially the Church of England, have been actively involved in supporting British multiculturalism and developing interfaith dialogue, networks and policy coalitions with Muslims and other minorities. Similarly, what I refer to as liberal intolerance overlaps with the secularist intolerance that has already been discussed. What is distinctive about the following two responses to Muslims is that one makes an explicit appeal to Christianity, and the other makes an explicit appeal to the limits of the prized value of toleration.

The emergence of a new, sometimes politically assertive, cultural identification with Christianity has been noted in Denmark (Mouritsen 2006), and in Germany, Chancellor Merkel has recently asserted that '[t]hose who don't accept [Christian values] don't have a place [in Germany]' (cited in Presseurop 2010, reported as 'Muslims in her country should adopt Christian values'), since when several senior Bavarian politicians have made the link between German nationalism and Christianity even more emphatically (Fekete, 2011: 46). Similar sentiments are voiced in the ongoing debate about Turkey as a future European Union member (Casanova 2009). These assertions of Christianity are not necessarily accompanied by any increase in expressions of faith or church attendance, which continue to decline across Europe. What is at work is not the repudiation of a status-quo secularism (op. cit.) in favour of Christianity but a response to the challenge of multiculturalism (as Merkel made explicit by asserting that 'multi-kulti' had failed and was not wanted back).

Such political views, however, are also being expressed by Christian organisations, especially by the Catholic Church. Early in his Papacy, Pope Benedict XVI (in a speech at the Bavarian Catholic University at Regensburg) suggested that while reason was central to Christian divinity, this was not the case with the God of Islam, which licensed conversion by the sword and was deeply antithetical to the European tradition of rationality (Nov 2006 <http://www.zenit.org/article-16955?l=english>). He retracted that shortly afterwards and in recent years has argued that Europe is too much in the grip of rationalists and secularists. What I wish to draw attention to is how these Papal interventions are indicative of the place of Christianity in Europe relative to radical secularism; that it emerged as a third, not a first or second trend. That is to say, it joined a debate in which the running had been mainly made by

an accommodationist multiculturalism and an exclusionist secularism allied with nationalism. Yet, while there is little sign of a Christian right in Europe of the kind that is strong in the USA, there is to some degree a reinforcing or renewing of a sense that Europe is 'secular Christian', analogous to the term 'secular Jew' to describe someone of Jewish descent who has a sense of Jewish identity but is not religiously practising and may even be an atheist.

A fourth trend focuses on Muslims' conservative or illiberal moral values and practices. These are likely to centre on issues of gender and sexuality and so this trend overlaps with that which has led to legal restrictions on the wearing of the headscarf and the face veil, but is worth identifying separately as it goes much wider and can be independent of questions of religion-state relations. It is alleged that the state needs to take special action against Muslims because their attitudes to—for example but not only gender equality and sexual orientation equality—are less than and threatening to reverse what has been achieved in Western countries. This argument is found across the region and across the political and intellectual spectrum, but is particularly strong in the Netherlands. It aspires perhaps to be what Charles Taylor once called liberalism as 'a fighting creed', or what British Prime Minister David Cameron has called 'muscular liberalism'. Its actual political dynamic has been to create and lead popular anti-Muslim hostility, as in the form of Geert Wilders' comparison of the Qur'an with *Mein Kampf* and campaign to ban the former as long as the latter is banned. His campaign against the 'Islamisation of Europe' has many echoes across Western Europe and not just across the Netherlands, where the party he founded in 2005—the Party for Freedom—became the third largest party in the 2010 elections, and a negotiating partner in the formation of a government (REF).

Islamophobia: A meta-analysis of opinion polls between 1998 and 2006 in Britain concluded that 'between one in five and one in four Britons now exhibits a strong dislike of, and prejudice against, Islam and Muslims' (Field, 2007: 465). A Pew survey in 2008 confirmed the higher figure and found its equivalent in France to be nearly forty and in Germany just over fifty per cent (Pew, 2008). These views are growing, are finding expression in the rise of extreme rightwing parties, and even in terrorism, as happened in Oslo and the island of Utøya in July 2011. This, to put it mildly, is not a favourable context for accommodating Muslims, and underscores the point that the so-called crisis of secularism is really about the presence and integration of Muslims, which of course partly depends upon how some Muslims behave.

Despite these different distinct strands, the real choice is not primarily about secularism. It is between a pluralist, multifaith nationality or Europeanism and a monoculturalist nationalism or Europeanism.

Or, to put it another way, the crisis of secularism is best understood within a framework of multiculturalism. Of course, multiculturalism currently has few advocates at the moment and the term is highly damaged. Yet the repeated

declarations from the senior politicians of the region that ‘multiculturalism is dead’ (Fekete, 2011) are a reaction to the continuing potency of multiculturalism which renders obsolete liberal takes on assimilation and integration with new forms of public gender and public ethnicity, and now public religion. Muslims are late joiners of this movement, but as they do so, it slowly becomes apparent that the secularist status quo, with certain residual privileges for Christians, is untenable as it stands. We can call this the challenge of integration rather than multiculturalism, as long as it is understood that we are not just talking about an integration into the day-to-day life of a society but also into its institutional architecture, grand narratives and macro-symbolic sense of itself (Modood, forthcoming 2012). If these issues were dead – as the rhetoric of ‘multiculturalism is dead’ insists – we would not be having a debate about the role of public religion or coming up with proposals for dialogue with Muslims and the accommodation of Islam. The dynamic for change is not directly to do with the historic religion nor the historic secularism of Western Europe; rather the novelty, which then has implications for Christians and secularists and to which they are reacting, is the appearance of an assertive multiculturalism which cannot be contained within a matrix of individual rights, conscience, religion freedom and so on. If any of these were different, the problems would be other than they are. Just as today we look at issues to do with, say, women or homosexuality not simply in terms of rights but in a political environment influenced by feminism and gay liberation, within a socio-political-intellectual culture in which the ‘assertion of positive difference’ or ‘identity’ is a shaping and forceful presence. It does not mean everybody is a feminist now, but a heightened consciousness of gender and gender equality creates a certain gender-equality sensibility. Similarly, my claim is that a multiculturalist sensibility today is present in Western Europe, and yet it is not comfortable with extending itself to accommodate Muslims – nor able to find reasons for not extending to Muslims without self-contradiction.

Conclusion

Political secularism has been destabilised, in particular the historical flow from a moderate to radical secularism and the expectation of its continuation has been jolted. This is not because of any Christian desecularisation or a ‘return of the repressed’. Rather, the jolt is created by the triple contingency of the arrival and settlement of a significant number of Muslims; a multiculturalist sensibility which respects ‘difference’; and a moderate secularism, namely that the historical compromises between the state and a church or churches in relation to public recognition and accommodation are still in place to some extent. To speak of a ‘crisis of secularism’ is exaggerated, especially in relation to the state. It is true that the challenge is much greater for *laicite* or radical secularism as an ideology. As many social and political theorists are sympathetic to this ideology, and in any case, being more sensitive to abstract ideas, they are less able to see the *actually-existing-secularism* of Western

Europe, with the exception of France, is not the radical variant. They thus mistakenly project the incompatibility between their ideas and the accommodation of Muslims on to the Western European states. Indeed, as applied to Western Europe, 'crisis of secularism' is not only exaggerated but misleading.

As I hope I have shown, the problem is more defined by issues of post-immigration integration than by the religion-state relation per se. The 'crisis of secularism' is really the challenge of multiculturalism. Far from this entailing the end of secularism as we know it, moderate secularism offers some of the resources for accommodating Muslims. Political secularists should think pragmatically and institutionally on how to achieve this; namely how to multiculturalise moderate secularism, and avoid exacerbating the crisis and limiting the room for manoeuvre, by pressing for further, radical secularism.

Let me conclude with a consideration that Raymond Gaita raised. He asked if British Muslims were appreciative of what I am calling 'moderate secularism'. A response must begin by noting that 'secularism' amongst many Muslims is a highly negative term. It is taken to mean atheism and is politically associated with colonialism and the pro-Western and pro-Soviet dictatorships that have dominated North Africa and the Middle East after French and British withdrawal. Yet I think British Muslims are beginning to move beyond these views. For example, some years ago, the small organisation British Muslims for a Secular Democracy was founded on a definition of secularism as an absolute separation between religion and the state, but in recent years has moderated its views. On the other side, two years ago, the Islamic Foundation – founded by Pakistani Islamist exiles and funded by the Saudis – published a collection of essays arguing that the British model of secularism promised a reasonable accommodation of Muslims and should be explicitly embraced and defended against more radical secularists (Birt et al, 2010). Interestingly, members from these two groups were at the forefront of a Facebook group formed last Christmas, entitled 'HappyChristmas4All', which proclaimed that Muslims enjoyed Christmas and wished to disassociate themselves from those who wanted to ban Christmas celebration from state schools and local authorities in the manner of the US. At the same time, Prime Minister Cameron, who has confessed to not being a steadfast believer, made a major speech arguing that Britons should not be shy of asserting that Britain is a Christian country (<http://www.number10.gov.uk/news/king-james-bible>). While many secularists protested, the speech was welcomed by the chair of the Mosque and Community Affairs of the Muslim Council of Britain, Sheikh Ibrahim Mogra (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-16231223>).

The different views I have presented before you are still debating and feeling their way, and while it is not clear who will ally with whom, what is clear is that, in terms of practical politics in Britain, there is a gradual, incremental multi-faith institutional accommodation taking place. Not in the spirit of disestablishment and radical secularism, but marrying a multiculturalist sensibility with

intimations of the historic moderation in which democratic secularism found a place for public Christianity.



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