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Dear Sir,

It is of no surprise to us that your Political Editor, Martin Bright, should contemptuously view ENGAGE and its position as secretariat to the newly created All Party Parliamentary Group on Islamophobia ('Anti-Islamophobia parliamentary group drop 'Islamist' secretariat', JC, 10th December 2010).

Mr Bright is of course author of the notorious essay "The Great Koran Con Trick" and has made a particular habit of discerning his own "enemies inside and outside the Muslim community," pursuing with a vengeance British Muslims who do not subscribe to his preferred viewpoints. His preference is actually for an "apolitical Islam." The sort espoused by his "friends" inside and outside the Muslim community.

It seems ironic to us that Bright should accuse us of looking to "close down the debate" while castigating us for holding "an explicit anti-Zionist agenda;" "campaign[ing] against "Zionist" teachings at Jewish schools;" and "regular[ly] post[ing] about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict". Espousing anti-Zionist views is not illegal in this country. Or is Bright seriously suggesting that only pro-Zionist views be represented in our political debates?

It is the machinations of journalists like Martin Bright who have through their disreputable work sought to advance the "good (apolitical) Muslim"/"bad (politically active) Muslim" dichotomy that has created a situation in which Muslims who challenge and demur from the sham discourse on "Islamism" are derisively treated and cast beyond the pale. It will be a long time before we take lessons on democratic engagement and widening the parameters of political participation from individuals like Martin Bright and we will continue to work to empower British Muslims to actively participate in our politics and media.

Yours sincerely,

Mohammed Asif
CEO