

MSA Meeting #8: Islamophobia
December 7th, 2011

3:45 - 3:55 : MSA gathers in room 214

3:55 - 4:05 : Recitation/Announcements

- Food Fair
- Eid Party
- Tryouts
- Hoodies (show submissions)
- ICNA Sisters Institute

http://www.quranenglish.com/tafheem_quran/094.htm

4:05 - 4:10 : Fears activity

4:10 - 4:15 : Skit

Students (Tania, Shahara, Samad) walk into the classroom

Alvi (teacher) is at the front of the room

Asks about two basic rights that Americans are granted

Samad calls out wrong answer (something silly)

Shahara (niqaabi) raises her hand

Alvi physically turns head & looks directly at Shahara. Pretends like he doesn't see her, assumes no one raised their hand

Tania points out that Shahara has her hand raised

Alvi has no choice but to choose Shahara

Shahara answers "freedom of speech, freedom of religion"

Alvi pretends as if he can't hear her. Asks her to take towel off her head

Shahara has no response

Alvi tells her that either she can leave the classroom or take off the niqaab

Shahara leaves the classroom & slams door

4:15 - 4:20 : NYPD surveillance (Shahara)

- NYPD had a multi-lingual and multi-ethnic "Demographics Unit" which participated in a "human mapping program" that covertly surveils Muslims in New York and the tri-state area
- Modeled on how Israeli authorities operate in the West Bank
- Produced an analytical report on every one of the 250 mosques within 100 miles of NYC (classifying by "ethnic orientation, leadership, and group affiliations"), and placed undercover officers and informants in many of them
- Monitoring most of the Islamic schools (including surveillance of children!!!)
- Used undercover officers and informants from within our communities (Pakistani-American officers in Pakistani neighborhoods, and Palestinians-American officers in Palestinian neighborhoods, etc.)
- Monitoring local businesses such as restaurants, cafes, hookah lounges, bookstores, beauty supply stores, internet cafes, and nightclubs, and making complete lists of them
- Spy on communities from a list of 28 (Muslim) countries that, along with "American Black Muslim"
- Undercovers and Informants listening to sermons in masjid
- Targeting taxi drivers and street vendors (Making lists, or harassing them to pressure them to become informants)
- Keeping tabs on university-based Muslim student associations
- Monitoring of prominent Muslim leaders and masjid/schools even as they decried terrorism, cooperated with the police, and met with Mayor Michael Bloomberg

- Present in prisons, and promise better living conditions and help or money on the outside in return for cooperating
- Monitoring of Muslims who change their names (From American to Muslim, or Muslim to American names), with comprehensive background checks that include reviewing travel records, criminal histories, business licenses and immigration documents
- The reports confirm exactly what many communities, organizations, and leaders have been saying for years, and this whole time NYPD lied to, denied, or dismissed our communities' voices and concerns

4:20 - 4:25 : Controversy over the construction of mosques (Shahara)

- Park 51

- community center built for all faiths

- Sheepshead bay

- Staten Island MAS center (former church → mosque)

- protests towards building of mosque were supported by SIOA - "Stop

Islamization of America"

*Congressional hearings

4:25 - 4:35 : Viewpoints in media (Alvi/Samad)

4:30 - 4:45 : Solutions (Tania)

Solutions

- "be the best you can be"
 - Its part of being a Muslim to attain excellence. Ihsan.
 - Show peacefulness through your actions
 - Occupy wall street. They have big jamaats there. People
 - Get yourself out there. No one will know about islam if you don't show them.
 - One of the major reasons why people are islamophobic is because of the media
 - don't fight fire with fire. There's no retaliate or get angry.
 - Represent the Muslim positively.
 - People see muslims as being isolated. We need to represent.
 - Go to Non muslim events where you can relate to
 - Know why their opinions are not true. Become more knowledgeable about Islam and teach others.
 - Most important thing is for us to make dua. Always turn back to Allah.
- "so whenever you are free, strive with devotion and turn back to your lord with longing." (Surah Inshirah)