



CLEAR FOCUS PRODUCTIONS

Project: Open University

AD252 Islam in the West

Reaction to 9-11.

Narrator: While Muslims in the west enjoy relative freedom of speech. They often experience a different kind of pressure. Since 9-11 attacks on Muslims have increased across western Europe and America. Simon Niab a research scientist at a university in London describes her personal experience.

SN: I did have some not very pleasant experiences immediately after 9-11 I would say. Because I am wearing Hijab. I may be representing something which is.. some of the bad people who have given us a bad name. So I do really understand where it's coming from. But I did hear some rude remarks on the bus. And once in the station I was spat at. So it was not very pleasant. But I completely ignored it. And I do know why it happened. The reason behind it. And I think the person who did it, was drunk as well.

Female: The Islamic Human Rights Commission but Amnesty International too, they site 300% increase in Islamophobic attitudes.

Narrator: Wahid Ashafi from Bradford puts the problem in a wider context. Beginning with the British National Party influence in disturbances in cities across the north of England, in the summer of 2001. Including in Bradford on the 7th July.

WA: Firstly on that day itself you had the BMP presence. People like Nick Griffin. The National Front which were prominent in the 80's, but you've got the BMP which is growing in numbers. Especially where you have young white disenfranchised young men, on certain estates up and down the country. Love him or hate him, Nick Griffin is an extremely charismatic individual. And he stirs emotions within people within communities that feel alienated. Because some of these communities feel that the Asians are taking over. Actually there is a lot of myths around the housing situation for Asians and the rest of it. So in that sense, there's anger in terms of the rising. People like BMP coming to the fore and speaking terribly about Islam and Muslims. He perceives them as 'the problem'. And he's not afraid in openly saying that. But again, if you're living within a community, and it's having such a massive impact, then I think we've got to deal with it responsibly and not react.

IN that particular situation the usual question that we get Lesley around 'why does a person choose to become a suicide bomber?' You know. The reasons are many fold. And I think sometimes we become stuck, because we want to.. we live in a world where everybody wants to box in and label.

Narrator: For Muslim convert Hugh Proda, a source of frustration is BMP leader Nick Griffin's acquittal on Incitement to Hatred Charges in 2006.

HP: He's one of the causes of extremism of young Muslims. Because he takes something that he doesn't know about. Has no understanding. Has no authority to talk upon, and twists and turns it. and makes it into what he wants for political reasons. And it's that hatred that kindles the fire for young Muslims. Who look at him and think 'Oh look what the British democracy is doing.' They try to take him to court, nothing's happening. We'll take it into our hands.