

Strathclyde Delegate Report
Scottish Islamophobia Conference 2018

By Matin Rosyid

Name, Date & Conference Agenda:

Name: Scottish Islamophobia Conference 2018

Date: 15/12/2018

Location: Quaker Meeting House, 7 Victoria Street, Edinburgh

Agenda: To raise awareness of the misleading allegations of anti-Semitism that are being used to suppress the criticism of Israel that has been institutionalised by the UK and Scottish governments while at the same time real and deadly anti-Semitism is being promoted by far-right movements alongside Islamophobia. And to discuss the overlap of Pro-Israel hatred toward Palestinians with the far-right hatred of Muslims, Palestinian resistance to colonialism with the label of extremist and regressive, and how to counter them.

Summary:

The IHRA (International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance) definition "Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities." includes the targeting of the state of Israel as being anti-Semi which is not the case. Being critical of a state's wrong doing and oppression is not anti-Semitic and supporting and aiding a state's freedom is also not link to being an anti-Semi.

Islamophobia is different than racism as racism is started with a group of people showing discrimination and the government facing these issues, and islamophobia started with the government portraying Muslims as extremist and dangerous after the 9/11 incident and was used to further push political agendas.

It is necessary to educate that the views and actions of Israel does not represent the view of Jews as Israel is a political opinion amongst other opinions. And to further educate the history of the holocaust not to use it as a leverage for any political agenda.

Highlights

- The plenary discussing the relationship between Islamophobia, anti-Semitism and Zionism.
- David Jamieson talk on how Islamophobia was introduced and how it was used as a push for political agendas.
- Dr Massoud Shadjareh talk how the concept of otherness was used politically throughout history.

What would you like to take forward? / What did you take away?

The understanding that being anti-Israel or Pro-Palestine does not link to being an anti-Semi, as Israel is a political opinion and does not represent the ideas and values of Jews. But at the same being aware that being supportive of Palestine is seen as extremism and regressive and therefore encourage discussion and promote education to further illuminate the disconnection between being anti-Israel and anti-Semi, and Pro-Palestine and extremism.

The understanding that the issue of Islamophobia is political, and that awareness and active political engagement is necessary to minimise and dissolve Islamophobia. This understanding is fundamental in countering Islamophobia as it has resemblance with racism but have difference in its origin and therefore require additional attention in countering the issue.

What connections, learnings did you take from Conference and how can you realise them at Strathclyde?

The connection that unbiased history education is essential in understanding modern problems, and to be aware that certain agendas are being pushed using history itself. It is that by further strengthening our history education by promoting events that encourages exploration into history and illustrates these issues, that we can identify similarities, grasp better understanding, and discover indications to solutions that will act as a guide to confront the issues that we are currently facing.

Spreading awareness that Islamophobia started as a political issue and has direct consequences impacting the lives of Muslim all across the country. In order to successfully counter Islamophobia further encouragement of political activism and education regarding its origin in addition to spreading awareness and encouraging care and compassion is necessary to combat it.

What is an issue Strathclyde Students' of African, Asian, Caribbean, Arab, First Nation and Latinx descent should know about – what is the conversation among Black Students nationally?

That being critic of Israel does not link to being an anti-Semi and that being supportive of Palestine does not link to extremism and anti-Semitism. And to be aware of the difference between a political opinion and discrimination of a religion.

The awareness that certain agendas are being pushed to gain political leverage and the way to respond it is to be active on a political level and counter it by spreading the message, and demanding transparency and change in political standpoint and views.

To obtain a broader view in current issues by further reading and exploring history as certain concepts reappear and resemblances take place which gives a better understanding on how to face the situation and which actions can lead towards a solution.