

World Interfaith Harmony Week and Anti-Radicalisation

London, United Kingdom, February 7, 2017



By Daniel Lajda

Universal Peace Federation is very keen to support the World Interfaith Harmony Week (WIHW) annual event because it has been a strong promoter of interfaith to defuse radicalisation. UPF has been an international supporter of the initiative from its inception in October 2010. There are several clips of the WIHW commemoration in the United Nations in the UPF introduction video which was shown during the programme. (Photo Dr Afzal Ashraf)

Dr Hojjat Ramzy: Oxford Islamic Information Centre, Muslim Council of Remzije Duli Jon Dal Din Britain, National Council Member. Dr. Ramzy talked about the important role of religious interfaith, which provides a platform for people to come together to share about their different beliefs. Next important point was made by Dr. Ramzy about respecting each other as a human being. In today's society people often forget that fundamentally we are all equals and therefore just to give respect to one another leads to a harmonious society.

[Watch Video Here](#)

Rev. Jon Dal Din: Director of Westminster Interfaith, since 2008, For further information. Rev. Jon Dal Din emphasised the importance of prayer,



as he pointed out to be a useful tool to bring more tolerance and peace into the society. Another point, Rev. Jon Dal Din made that each of us have fundamental goodness within us and that is important to nourish and develop it by helping in a community and/or support charities.

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Dr Afzal Ashraf: a consultant fellow at the Royal United Services Institute (RUSI). He was a senior officer in the RAF and worked as counterterrorism and counterinsurgency strategist for the US commanding general and US ambassador in Iraq as well as head of political military section in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. Dr. Ashraf pointed out the influence of mass media and publicity, which is often a case of



misleading the reality. It is oriented to destroy religion and structure of political power. Further he mentioned the importance of liberty and how we cannot achieve liberty without violence. According to the history, people always been fighting to achieve peace and freedom in the society.

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Remzije Duli: project co-leader for the British Albanian Kosovar Council, which runs the cross-cultural family learning programme Strengthening Families, Strengthening Communities, and undertakes youth work with the children of the families who participate. Mrs. Duli outlined the situation in Kosovo and what needs to be done to raise the living conditions. Additionally she provided details about her project in Kosovo as how it helps to improve stability in families with different culture, religion and race and what action steps are taken to help those families to overcome those challenges.

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Evening with Farrukh Dhondy and Matteo Bergamini

London, United Kingdom, February 19, 2017



By Robin Marsh

Farrukh Dhondy and **Matteo Bergamini** were interviewed in the latest of the 'Evening With' series of inspirational interviews. Gul Khan, of the All Ladies League - London, interviewed Farrukh Dhondy, former Commissioning Editor of Channel 4 and Matteo Bergamini, Shout Out UK founder, was interviewed by Quince Garcia of Roadworks Media. The event was a partnership between All Ladies League and the Universal Peace Federation.

While Farrukh Dhondy spoke of his desire to promote free speech and human rights of the under-privileged, Matteo Bergamini explained his passion for youth political engagement, general political literacy and cutting edge documentaries such as Shout Out UK's documentary on the growing underground movement, 'Anonymous'.

[Watch Video here](#)

Farrukh Dhondy is an Indian-born British writer, playwright, screenwriter and left-wing activist of Parsi descent, who resides in the United Kingdom. He is well known not only for his writing, but also for his film and TV work.

Dhondy's literary output is vast, including books for children, textbooks and biographies, as well as plays for theatre and scripts film and television.



Matteo Bergamini and Farrukh Dhondy

He is also a columnist, a biographer (of C. L. R. James; 2001), and media and executive (Channel Four Commissioning Editor 1984–97). During his time with Channel Four, he wrote the comedy series Tandoori Nights (1985–87) for the channel, which concerned the rivalry of two curry house owners.

Awards: Children's Rights Workshop Other award: 1977, for East End at Your Feet, and 1979, for Come to Mecca, and Other Stories. - Collins/Fontana Award for Come to Mecca, and Other Stories. - Received the Samuel Beckett Award for the television play Romance, Romance. - Works represented in Children's Fiction

in Britain, 1900-1990 exhibition, British Council's Literature Department, 1990. - Whitbread Award for first novel, 1990, for Bombay Duck.

Matteo Bergamini completed his undergraduate degree in Politics & History at the UNIVERSITY OF BRUNEL in 2014 and a Graduate diploma in Law in 2015. During this time, he launched his own multi-media network called SHOUT OUT UK.

During 2015, Bergamini launched his first investigative documentary 'Anonymous: A Million Men'. The documentary includes interviews with Russel Brand, Conservative MP Chloe Smith and the secretive organisers of the Million Mask March itself. The film

was later acquired by Shorts International for worldwide distribution.

On the 28th April 2015, in collaboration with Channel 4 and ITN, Shout Out UK, launched Britain's first ever Youth Leaders' Debate. The event gathered 7 leaders of the seven largest British parties' youth wings to debate on political issues. After 10 minutes Youth Leaders was trending in the top six on twitter.

His journalist experiences expanded from the corridors of Westminster to the steps of the US Embassy, where he did a full 45-minute interview with the then Ambassador to the UK, Matthew Barzun. In May 2015, he was invited to become an ESRC Knowledge Exchange Fellow. In March 2016, he was declared the winner of the Harrow Business Den 2016. In 2016 he launched a Political Literacy Course in a growing number of schools, accredited by AQA, as part of Shout Out UK.

As a young person, passionate about politics, I realised that there is not enough political engagement amongst young people nowadays. I decided to introduce political debates at schools and try to encourage young people to get involved in politics and political literacy. These debates enhance basic understanding of political concepts and encourage people to become actively involved in their communities.

Syrian Refugees Visit to UPF

London, United Kingdom, February 19, 2017

By Daniel Lajda

For over a year now we have heard much about Syrian refugees, their suffering and amazing journeys; some at the risk of their lives and others losing their lives on the way to Europe. We saw devastating pictures of unaccompanied, lonely children whose parents could not make it! We have always been wondering "what it is like for the children, young couples, teenagers, and larger families to be uprooted from their homes?" and then coming to a completely different and unusual milieu in Europe and now England. Most young people cannot speak English. Besides their normal suffering, they are missing their food and culture and their own homes.

Therefore, it was an amazing opportunity for Universal Peace Federation (UPF), with our friends and Ambassadors of Peace, to welcome over 70 Syrian refugees to 43 Lancaster Gate; our UPF headquarters in the UK. The refugees were of differing backgrounds, ages and family circumstances. The actual concept developed when Margaret and a few Ambassadors of Peace went to visit Barnett Refugee Centre and met directors and some Syrian refugees and wondered of how we can help the refugees in some way and that is how the idea of welcoming the refugees developed.

We are extremely grateful to all our Ambassadors of Peace and friends who attended as well as gave financial contributions, which helped us to organise a most wonderful Middle Eastern dinner and provide great hospitality. There are many people to thank amongst our Ambassadors of Peace and I'm sure they know who they are. However, I would like to mention the special contribution of some UPF young achievers: Hannah, Daniela (and her sister too), Dominic and Matteo

who helped from beginning to end; Natasa, Karla and Irene who attended and brought lots of refreshments; and Hasina who contributed to the food.

For me, personally, the most touching moments was to see professional drummers (Arab drums DERBAKE) perform and they had extra drums for children to join in. It created a joyful atmosphere and soon after a group of young people decided to dance a folkloric dance called DABKE, which was so beautiful and lots of people were pulled in to dance. A friend told me how heartwarming it was to see them filled with joy and hope; so naturally feeling at home and at peace. I am sure that our Arabic speaking Ambassadors of Peace helped them to feel at home.

We were very grateful to Dr. Nazi Akbar who is the director of the refugee centre at Barnett and Farida who is one of the most dedicated representatives at the refugee centre and put in a lot of effort to bring the refugees. Both ladies were presented by UPF an Ambassador for Peace Award for their tremendous work. There was also a young father

who took such good care of the young unaccompanied teenagers in the Calais refugee camp, whom were leaving in inhumane circumstances. He too received an Ambassador for Peace Award. As a welcome gift families were presented with a small box of chocolates. Sheikh Ramzy of Oxford Islamic Centre and Mr. Khokhar of Muslim Aid also distributed some gifts to the children.

At the beginning, we felt lost; we didn't know exactly what must be done to make everyone feel welcomed, and yet looking back that is what we achieved. For the finale, we cut and shared a custom made "welcome to London" cake, a simple activity that pulled everyone even closer.

We said goodbye, but with the intention of seeing each other again. Many Ambassadors of Peace, and UPF are developing ideas for further interaction. Presently, we have accepted a recent invitation from the Barnett refugee centre to collaborate again for the upcoming EID party (in a few months) and both of us are looking forward to it; we cannot wait!

