

WFWP UK's Conference on the Role of Women in post Brexit Britain

Mitty Tohma
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It was a privilege and an honour to attend the WFWP conference to mark the International Women's Day 2019 [#BalanceforBetter](#) on the 11th March, hosted by Rt. Hon. Shabana Mahmood MP at the UK Parliament.

The conference focused on 'The Role of Women in post Brexit Britain'.

The speakers at this conference comprised politicians, educators, peace activists and religious leaders. The focus was on how the relationship could be improved among diverse people in the UK and Europe.

Mrs. Martina Coombs chaired the sessions and welcomed everyone, she proceeded to introduce the guest speakers. The first speaker Mrs. Mitty Tohma, President of WFWP UK opened the event by speaking about Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon.

Mitty was moved by the metaphor of finding a needle in the desert sandstorm. Women need to find their identity and cooperate with men in leading the way forward for a better and safer society. Mothers and women need to tackle youth problems and the increasing knife crime on the streets of London. Mitty wants women to speak about religion and politics, people get involved in both fields as an answer to a calling. She stressed to build lasting peace by encouraging, collaborating with like minded women's organisations to come together to find solutions in our troubled world on the platform of the 'Global Women's Peace Network'.

Our second speaker:

Mrs. Marie Lyse Numuhoza, a Rwandan refugee, campaigned in London to support refugees and encouraged young people to take ownership of their own lives, to be leaders. Raising a family in London, she felt afraid for her children. After moving to the East of England, she encountered racial prejudice because many native English people had never seen minority ethnicities working in particular professions. After the Brexit referendum she experienced a lot of racist comments. She realized that a lot of racism comes from cuts to public services; people blame foreigners for lack of grassroots initiatives and government financial support. She believes that political leaders should be challenged to deliver better public services.

Our third speaker, Rev. Kim Plumbton has 5 children and 4 grandsons. She serves in two denominations - Methodist and United Reformed - and she does so intentionally. She spoke about Faith and Politics. She is thankful for the work of WFWP in the UK and around the world. She believes it's impossible for faith and politics not to be strongly connected. Her personal faith teaches her about the value and dignity of humanity, and politics is connected with our understanding of humanity. Societies can be judged on how

they treat the most vulnerable people. Our connectedness comes with responsibilities. Many churches run food banks to support those in urgent need, but it begs the question of why people are unable to feed themselves. In parts of the world there is extreme poverty. People of faith and politicians must challenge these issues together. Many people feel disempowered, without a political voice. Interaction between faith and politics must take place in the context of mutual respect and understanding. Jesus was lovingly disruptive.



Mrs. Shermara JJ Fletcher spoke about challenging the culture of selfish individualism. She asserts that hope is not a luxury but a necessity. People have the ability to digitally isolate themselves and prevent interaction with people with whom they disagree. She asserts the importance of civic institutions which allow the celebration of different lived experiences. Real life spaces (eg pubs) are declining. She spoke about the women's projects in East London that serve a wide spectrum of people in communities. Brexit will not quench women's ability to rise above the challenges. Women have a role to reshape the narrative of division, to actively create and bridge community. "Be the rainbow in someone else's cloud." (Mary Angelou)

Our final speaker Miss Angelika Buczynski, WFWP youth representative and a student at Kings College London studying international Peace and Security shared her opinion about how men and women need each other, echoing the founders words. Representation matters because it shapes policy. In Post-Brexit is essential for women to be involved not only in communities but also at the national level. Head-wing thinking coordinates the left and right wings - bringing Godism into government is about bringing love into government. Our creator God designed us to live in partnership. Something new and creative evolves when people bring their differences together. We break the cycle of hatred by collaborating and acting for the benefit of others. There's a unique opportunity in Brexit. Women can play a leading example. The greater equality there is in leading nations, the more other nations will follow. Gender disparity is evolving: There has been a 17% increase of involvement of women in the UK Parliament.

Everyone in the room was touched to various degrees. We concluded with session with a Q and A, followed by riveting networking.

Reported by

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