

# **WFWP Women's Peace Meeting in Birmingham, UK.**

**Patricia Earle, Tuesday March 26, 2019**

## **Breaking the Silence surrounding 'Honour Crime'.**

The Women's Peace Meeting has been taking place on a regular basis at 123 Bournbrook Road, the home of Patricia Earle, for just over 25 years, covering a wide variety of issues and topics which affect all of us in present-day society. However, no topic has been more emotionally sensitive than the one we dealt with last Tuesday, that of 'Honour Crime' and, in the extreme, 'Honour Killing'. Honour Killing is the term used to describe a family's decision to deliberately take the life of one of their children, usually a daughter, who is considered to have brought shame to the family's 'honour', either through their behaviour or by refusing to marry the person chosen by the parents. It is estimated that 12 young people's lives are taken every year, in the UK, in this way.

However, this is the tip of the iceberg in terms of the suffocating conditions and lifestyle which many women are forced to undergo, largely in Asian communities, and usually where there is male domination.

Following the tragic death of one young woman from a Pakistani family, 3 young Muslim women decided to make a film about the case, hoping to raise awareness and also bring about a change of attitude in the relevant communities, both to liberate women from the terrible constraints under which many are forced to live and, ultimately, to save lives.

The 3 young women managed to obtain the funding necessary to make the film and, following its first public showing in February, Patricia managed to have the second showing in her home on the evening of March 26th. A 'tidal wave' of 140 women attended the showing, filling the main meeting room, an extension room, the overflow television room, and even the dining room! The house was packed to capacity, reflecting the intensity of interest and emotion surrounding the topic. About 60 women were from a Muslim background, 50 were Christian, and the remaining 30 or so were from both Sikh and Hindu background, representative of much of the Asian community and culture in our Birmingham / West Midlands region of Britain.





**The 3 young Muslim women who made the film and, right, Raj, our guest speaker.**

First the film, 'Daddy's Little Izzat', was shown (izzat = honour, prestige), and many women were in tears, visibly moved by the intensity and subject matter of the film. Some women were in shock, not being aware of what happens behind closed doors, and the vulnerability of women in such situations.



Our guest speaker, Raj, then shared for 20 minutes about her personal life experience, which included two attempts to kill her, and how she escaped to begin a long journey of recovery from so many years of abuse. Hers is the most amazing testimony to the power of the human spirit to triumph over adversity.

We passed a donations box around as she spoke, and collected 200 pounds for her charity 'Breaking the Silence'. This was followed by questions and sharing from the floor, when a number of women had the chance to express their heart and feelings, although some women were clearly so deeply affected that they could not even speak.

We had a brief time of complete silence, reflecting on the film and thinking about the situation of so many women in our troubled world, followed by a time of prayer, and concluding with a beautiful, most appropriate song from Julia. Many conversations were had during the time of refreshments, and some women remained, sharing and discussing, until very late in the evening. This Peace Meeting has genuinely opened the door for further showing of the film in different communities and, in spite of the difficult nature of such an emotionally charged topic, many women have since expressed their gratitude to have attended the evening, and wish to continue to help raising awareness, in the hope of gradually changing attitudes and cultural practices for the benefit of future generations.



**Our time of prayer and reflection**

