

Dame Margaret Hodge Interview with Sofia Collignon

00:29:

Sofia Collignon (SC):

Hello everybody. My name is Dr Sofia Collignon. I am very honoured to be here today with the Right Honourable Dame Margaret Hodge MP.

Margaret has been in politics for a very long time. She was elected to Islington Council in 1973 and in parliament was elected through by-elections following the death of another Labour feminist Jo Richardson in 1994. She has been the Labour MP for Barking ever since.

Today to mark the launch of Royal Holloway's Gender Institute, Margaret will tell us about her life as a woman in electoral politics, her motivations to stand for office, her experiences in Council and as an MP, and the challenges she has faced in local and national politics. Thank you very much for being with us, Margaret, today. Before, maybe we will have to start with some of your motivations to stand for public office. So, what inspired you to push your career in politics?

01:31:

Right Honourable Dame Margaret Hodge (MH):

In a sense it was all an accident. So, I am now getting on a bit in years, but my work when I was working, was in international research, so that involved a lot of travelling and I started having children in 1971. In those days, this was before any legislation, really, protecting maternity rights at all, had been enforced. It was a very different era. Women were expected to stay primarily at home until the children, at least, reached school age. I had always been an activist. I had been an activist for causes, really. So, I was a member of the campaign against nuclear disarmament, I was active in the anti-Vietnam War, I was an anti-Apartheid activist. Those were the sorts of issues I got involved in. But I was also a member of the Labour party and active in that capacity and I had my first child, and found, simply, that being a full-time mother at home just didn't do it for me enough. Although I love my children dearly, I've got four children and now twelve grandchildren, so I'm very blessed but it just wasn't enough. I had a close friend, who was at that time, on the local authority as a councillor on the local authority in Islington where I lived, and she had to move because of her husband's job. Just think about it, in those days. He got a job at Birmingham University, so she was expected to move with him. So, she said to me, 'go on the council, Margaret. Try and get my seat and it will keep you sane while you're changing nappies.' So, it was an accident that saw me into politics. But it's a sort of drug. I'd always wanted to change the world. I'm of that generation that really believed that we could change the world. We were a very, sort of, positive, determined generation, the generation of the Sixties. I just stayed there, every now and again I tried to give up but on the whole I've had a career in politics, a very rewarding, very stimulating, very varied career in politics since that accident of history. Changing nappies became a politician.

04:02:

SC:

That's really interesting. Thank you. But after twenty years as a councillor, then you decide to start for a seat in parliament. Why did you decide that?

04:12:

MH:

Actually, again, that's not quite accurate. So, I never wanted to become a Member of Parliament, partly because I had four children and I thought it was incredibly difficult to juggle your life between the childcare responsibilities and being a full-time MP. I still think it's a very, very challenging existence because you are 24/7 as an MP. And also, I was never really attracted to the Palace of Westminster. I thought it was rather pompous, I thought the debates were rather irrelevant, I felt it was living in a sort of, a little bubble away from the reality of life. I really enjoyed my work at local authority level. But I did that for twenty years, Labour lost four General Elections in a row starting from 1979, 1983, 1987 and then 1992. And I tried to give up politics. I decided that I'd done it all in local government, I'd been lead of the local authority for ten years and I'd really enjoyed that, but I decided that there was nothing new, really. I think ten years in a job for anybody is enough and you should move on. I went and took a job actually with Pricewaterhouse Coopers, simply to prove my capability credentials because we were very attacked in the London Labour councils in the 80s when I had been leader. And then, I'd always said to myself, 'if I really can't bear it, I will try and go back.' I'd always had my eye on Barking because it's close to where I live and I knew the leader of the council a little so I thought it would be, you know, it would work well. And I always thought that Jo Richardson, who was my predecessor, who was a brilliant feminist fighting for women's rights at the head, in a senior position, of the Labour party. I thought she might retire, so I'd have four or five years outside of politics, see if I liked it and then take a decision. Actually, tragically, she died during the middle of a parliament and I so remember coming home that night, and we live on a house which has got staircases up and down, an early Victorian, late Georgian house and the handrail going up the stairs was absolutely, full of post-it notes which were saying, 'Margaret, you've got to stand, you've got to stand, you've got to stand', because Jo had just died. And I remember actually my heart sinking and thinking 'oh my God, I don't think I'm ready for this.' My youngest daughter was 13 at the time. But, you know, in the days that followed, I just thought, 'I'll kick myself if I don't do this', and I stood and I was so fortunate and lucky, but I'll tell you about the challenges I faced in getting selected, but I was fortunate and lucky, got selected, and the rest is history.

07:26

So, I've always been a feminist. I went to the very early consciousness-raising groups in the 1960s because, really, I got into feminism because I was discriminated against in a place of work. So, I was not the best of students, but I managed to get a job as a graduate trainee in Unilever, in their economics department and arrived there, well-paid job, but I found that women were never allowed to write the reports. The men wrote the reports, and the women gathered the information. I was furious and went to see HR who basically said to me, 'that's how it is, if you don't like it get out'. So, I have to admit, I got out. But I also started going to women's consciousness-raising groups in Hackney with Sheila Rowbotham and characters like that. So, it's always been with me. Equality has always been a driving

force and gender equality is a part of that. Racial equality, as well has been another aspect of that driving force, and of course, income and class have been really important to me. But when I got onto the council, we started trying, particularly when I became leader in 1982, we tried to take some steps to move the gender equality forward and it was just interesting what was difficult. Actually before 1982, in 1978 when I had – in those days, they had, not a cabinet, but they had chairs of every committee responsible for delivering certain services. I chaired the housing committee, and I was pregnant. So, I went and asked for maternity leave and I remember the leader being absolutely shocked that I had the gall to ask for that. But, you know, couldn't refuse, really. But the way in which they punished me for taking my six months off, which I did, to have my third child, was when I came back, they had an election again, we had annual elections to confirm whether or not you remained in your position, and they kicked me out of my job. That's an interesting story about discrimination, then. When I then became leader in 1982, I was the woman leader, there were not many of us in local government in those days. And we also had a woman, feminist chair of our Labour group. But we had to battle for three years to change the timing of meetings in the evening because the meetings used to start at 7 and everyone with young children would know that that is a crucial time when you're trying to settle the babies in bed. So, we wanted to move it to half past 7. But of course, that gave the men half an hour less in the pub and it literally took us three years to persuade our colleagues that no meeting could start before 7:30 in the evening unless all members of the committee agreed to do that. A very small step forward, but just one of those things we did. And then in the eighties, when I was lead of the council we were seen as 'Loony Left' propagandists, mad, you know, politically correct authority. And we did do some pretty silly, sort of gesture-style politics, but we also took some important radical steps for which we got lambasted and I'll raise two with you:

11:10:

So, we opened up the first workplace nurseries in the mid-eighties. At that time, hardly anyone – actually, ironically – we modelled our provision on what HSBC was doing. So, it was beginning to emerge in the private sector. But we were so lambasted for wasting rate payer's money on that sort of a facility. And of course, today it's common place.

Something else we did is we got rid of the requirement to be in a workplace for a number of years before you could qualify for maternity leave and maternity rights. We just got rid of it. Everybody said 'oh, people come to Islington just to have their babies.' 'Course they didn't come to Islington, working, just to have their babies and we showed that. But it seemed to us a really important way to encourage women to stay in the labour force and progress. So that way highly controversial.

The third thing we did: in those days it was just the beginning of women's self-defence and we gave a grant – and I will never forget this one – we gave a grant; we gave out various grants to women's self-defence groups so that they could learn self-defence techniques. And we gave a grant to a group of lesbians, a £500 grant in a multi-million-pound budget. That was absolutely lampooned everywhere as being a total waste of the rate payer's money. So, we took – we did silly things – but we also took radical actions in those days that I think have now become accepted orthodoxy, but it's taken a generation to get there.

13:05:

SC:

And certainly, I have to say – thank you for being a force of change. A lot of those things are things that women now appreciate. Thank you for those changes.

So, if you want to tell us – what were the main challenges you faced in your first campaign as a local councillor and then also as an MP? Perhaps how you overcame them, as well.

13:33:

MH:

As a woman in politics? We are still, I mean, the Labour party is a party that is committed to equality and that promoting of gender equality is said to be at the heart of everything we're about. But I have to say that the fact that Labour is still not ready for a woman leader says a lot about the nature, not just of politics but of my political party. Why is Labour not ready for a woman leader? There's a huge number of really talented young women now who came into politics through our women shortlist, it brought in fantastic talent through that positive action we took. And yet, every time you try to promote someone as a leader you just don't get there. So, I think throughout my political career, it's been a fight to get your voice heard and it's been a battle to break down the glass ceilings and all the way through there had been obstacles in the way.

15:03

So, you know, I talked to you a little bit about even getting the timing of meetings right. I well remember the battles in the 1980s when I was leader of Islington and Margaret Thatcher had opened up, sort of, really, aggressive action against two fronts that she thought were holding Britain back. One was the trade union movement and the other was local authorities, So, she was capping the expenditure of the local authorities which was a huge onslaught, really, onto local democracy and local freedoms. And we were battling against that. And the local authorities were trying to act together because, obviously our strength came from acting together. I'm afraid that wasn't maintained. People broke away. But I remember one particular story which I will tell you.

16:08

There was a meeting of local authority leaders who were under the attack and assault of Margaret Thatcher. She was threatening to take action against us for illegality, for failing to set a budget, because we didn't want to set a budget within the framework and cost limits that she had imposed from central government. A guy called Derek Hatton, he's very famous in UK politics, who was a militant, he was in the extreme left, he was a militant leader in Liverpool, was at this meeting and one by one the local authorities were pulling away, didn't want to break the law so were setting budgets and then caving in. One leader got up at this meeting saying, you know, we're going to have a meeting tonight, we're going to set a rate i.e., we're going to come within the law and Derek Hatton gets up and starts screaming, 'you're all betraying socialism, betraying our ideology, betraying the cause.' I was very tired that morning because I had little babies and they had been up all night. I thought he was a complete hypocrite because he himself had actually obeyed the law the previous year in Liverpool. So, I just said 'oh, cut the nonsense, Derek. Just shut up.' To which he

turned round and said to me, 'if it's too hot for you, Margaret, get back in the kitchen.' Now, you're a bit shocked by that? This was 1985. But it shows that on the extreme left of politics, which is where he was a militant, sexism, misogyny and gender inequality were rife. It's a very, very – of course there were a number of women in the room who were as shocked as you are today. But nevertheless, he felt it was OK to say it.

18:10:

SC:

Wow. So, before we move on to other questions perhaps you can tell us – whether you think, if you think about the beginning of your career and where we are now – do you think that you are still facing the same challenges that you faced at the beginning? Or how have they changed?

18:38:

MH:

No, I think there's been fantastic progress. But I also always say, you can never take your foot off the accelerator. So, you can never presume that the gains you have made will be sustained. They are always under threat. So, you not only want to move the agenda forward, but you also have to conserve and preserve and just nurture the gains you've already made. Let me give you an example of that.

So, I said to you when I first had children there were no maternity rights. There now is a strong legislative framework for maternity rights and I put a lot of that down to the women who were active ministers in the Labour government from 1997 to 2010, of whom I was one. We worked together very, very closely on developing a whole range of better maternity rights, better maternity pay, paternity rights, the right to request flexible working which I think was a key change, which I think has really changed women's lives at work. It's enabled them to be much more flexible about caring at home and progressing at work. So, we did all that. I now I look at my children who are all in the workplace and it's just salutary that one of my daughters worked for a local authority and she, in the middle of the austerity cuts from 2010 to 2020, she was pregnant, and they tried to sack her when she was on maternity leave, and it was only because I supported a bit of legal action that we got that reinstated. But that's shocking.

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My daughter-in-law worked for a private sector lawyer in Leeds and they gave her an offer she couldn't refuse on literally the day in which she gave birth to her first child. And then my niece, so that's a private sector and a public sector, and then my niece who worked for a voluntary organisation in London, she needed IVF treatment and so she had to have time off work to have that treatment and they tried to sack her. They did actually sack her when she was on her treatment. That story really reflects, although, you know, we think we've made advances and we've certainly got a better legal statutory framework in place, you really have to be vigilant to ensure that those rights that we took a long time to secure are being maintained.

21:23

SC:

If you can perhaps tell us, what would you recommend to our students who want to push for a career in politics and feel, you know, are curious, what would you tell them?

21:39

MH:

Well, you never get better highs than you do in politics. If you believe in changing the world, if that motivates you, politics is a powerful way in which you can transform and equalise life chances. So, there are a lot of downs but there are a lot of ups and I've made some brilliant friends in politics and I've had the most fascinating of fascinating lives, learning a lot about things I knew nothing about, meeting people that I've been hugely privileged to meet, engaging in issues which have been really difficult but trying to find a solution which promotes gender equality through it. The one thing I'd say is different today, which makes it more difficult today and is one of my current campaigns is the online abuse that you get through politics. I've had more than my belly full of that, particularly in the anti-Semitism campaign that I've been engaged in during the Corbyn years in the Labour party. So, if I just give you some idea of it: in the two months of October and November last year which saw the publication of a report by the Equality and Human Rights Commission on anti-Semitism in the Labour party and then saw a rather silly reaction by Jeremy Corbyn to do with that, so it was up in the news during that time. I don't look at my own social media, but an organisation called Community Security Trust monitors it for me. I had 90,000 mentions in those two months, not all of them hostile – they couldn't quite break them down – but very, many of them hostile. Hugely anti-Semitic, racist, and also very misogynistic, and for me as well I get a bit of ageism knocked in, so the intersectionality of those three issues comes to bear. So that, I think is a real difficulty. I've learnt how to – I call it compartmentalising my life. So, I know it's not the real me that they're attacking but it is very uncomfortable when there are just actual lies about you, not just abuse but lies. The whole thrust of it is to try, it's an almost Orwellian mission to undermine your credibility and integrity. Therefore, if you do make any statements on anti-Semitism or anything – tax justice is another issue I'm active in – you cannot be believed because you cannot be trusted because you're a bad person. That is very difficult.

24:36

So, that is the one thing that I feel is very different today from when I became an MP and I think that is a challenge for women. We've got a bill that is coming to parliament called the 'Online Harassment Bill' and I'm campaigning to get some changes introduced that the government have not yet accepted which I think would stop this online abuse and hate which I think is very difficult for women particularly because it is so misogynistic. It is difficult for women to put themselves forward in public life.

25:16:

SC:

As a force of change, maybe you could tell us, how has your experience within a political party been?

25:24:

MH:

So, I've described a little bit the Derek Hatton incident. Going into parliament, I'll talk to you a little bit about that which is beyond the political party a bit. Are you happy with me to do that? OK. So, I arrive in parliament, I'm the 156th woman EVER to be elected to parliament and that was 1994. My close friend, Harriet Harman, I think was probably, she must have been 30th or something? She and I remain close friends. But there are very few women. There weren't enough women's lavatories, they were all male toilets. There was one iron and ironing board in the whole of the Palace of Westminster – it was in the women's loos. When the journalists and sketch writers write about parliament, they'd write about what the men said, and they'd write about what the women looked like. They'd discuss their cleavage, their bald patch, whatever it was, their high pitch voices. It was never the content of the contribution it was always something peripheral to it. I didn't have, sort of, blatant sexism, a lot of it levelled at me. Partly, I arrived when I was 50 and I think that says something about, you know, life particularly for women. I always say, 'it's a marathon, it's not a sprint'. I probably had the best years of my life professionally in my sixties. So, people shouldn't think you have to jump that ladder in the early days, that you've got to get to the top of the ladder. There's plenty of time, we're all living longer, there's plenty of time to develop your potential and break those glass ceilings and contribute right the way through. I always think old age shouldn't be about the support, it should be about the opportunities as equally important. So, I never faced that type of sexism but women never, ever, you know, it's cultural, it's deep. If there's election, women are always, always, always at a disadvantage. And one of the best things Labour did, the most important thing was introduce all-women's shortlists. If you just look at the evidence, which I'm sure you have done, if you don't have an all-women's shortlist, even though you may have women on that shortlist, they never get through. They always select a man. It was only through having this positive action and ensuring all-women's shortlists that women have come through. The interesting – everyone said you won't get much for the calibre of women – the calibre of women who have come into parliament on the back of all-women's shortlists are a zillion times better than the calibre of men who come through the traditional means. We've got some really brilliantly talented women now sitting as MPS and they're beginning to emerge. Think of Annalise Dodds as our Shadow Chancellor, Bridget Phillipson in charge of Public Spending, Rachel Reeves looking at the way the government has chosen to spend our money during the Covid crisis. Lisa Nandy – Liz Kendall doing care for old people in the community. Lisa Nandy doing a foreign office portfolio and I've missed out lots. They're probably deeply offended with me. Jess Phillips taking the women's briefs. There's a lot of really, really, really talented women and I'm proud to be in there with them. I am full of funny stories, like, women always have to balance their lives. We all get angst from it, thinking you're not doing the caring side properly, and then you're not putting enough into work. But we just do it and we do it well.

30:15:

One of my really funny stories was when I came in in 1994, when I first became an MP. In those days, getting a seat behind the leader of your party at Prime Minister's Questions was gold dust because then everyone would see you on television and although you were doing nothing, they'd think you were working very hard. So, Tony Blair had just been elected leader of the Labour party. I went into the chamber half an hour early to grab my seat behind him for Prime Minister's Questions, sat down feeling very pleased with myself, the questions started, and, in those days, we didn't have mobiles, we had pagers. I suddenly get a pager message from my daughter who was at home studying for her GCSEs saying 'Mum, ring home. Crisis.' And I think, 'Crumbs! What's happened? Has she set the house on fire? Is she gonna tell me she's pregnant?' Rush out of the house, giving up my seat, ring her up, and say 'Anna, what is it?' To which she says, 'oh Mum, I just wanted to see whether or not you had your pager on silent.' So, I lost my place behind Tony Blair but that's a symbolic story that describes the tensions, really, that we all face in our daily lives.

31:38:

What do I think? I think what has helped us enormously – let me talk about two things. One is networking. I think networks are so important in helping to build confidence and in building those structures that you can then support each other through the difficult times. I just think they're crucial and I've always been in women's networks and always talked in women's networks whenever I can. I think that is very, very important. I just know that the Labour government, the 1997 to 2010 Labour government, achieved a huge number of changes for women. Not just in the maternity rights, not just in flexible working but in all sorts around domestic violence and a whole range of issues. And we did it because the women worked together. I remember the argument about should we introduce the right to request flexible working and Tony Blair and Gordon Brown were both opposed to it because they thought businesses would be hostile to the measure and see it as not enabling them to maximise their profits. It was an assault on both Tony and Gordon, not just from a group of women and ministers, but also from the women who were working in number 10 Downing Street and one or two of the NGOs outside just working together in a really coherent way that we forced them to concede and I think it's been one of the most effective measures.

33:21:

The final bit of cooperation I'd like to talk about it, cross-party cooperation. I think we now work really, really hard across the parties. Labour is much, much better than the Tories. The Tories, although they've had a woman Prime Minister, they have absolutely failed, really, on getting equality of representation or moving forward at an acceptably fast rate on that. They have also failed, really, putting women now, certainly under the Johnson government. Think about which women you see on television talking about Covid. Occasionally Priti Patel when they let her out, but very rarely do you see a woman up at the top of the present administration. So, working across parliament has been really important. Working on issues now about sexual harassment is a really important one, improving maternity leave for MPs is another where we're currently engaged with. But it's that cross-parliamentary comradeship and friendship, really, which ensures that we can still make progress. But it's always a struggle.

34:50:

SC:

Thank you. Yeah, as you say, it's interesting that in the last election, Labour was for the first time the party that proposed more women as candidates. It's just the first time where not only the party but more women are standing.

35:09:

MH:

The party ended up with a male leader. Rwanda is much better at women's representation than the UK. We're something like, on the UN list we're 45th or something, I can't remember. It's a lot of the developing countries that beat us to it on gender equality.

35:31:

SC:

It certainly speaks a lot about how much more work needs to be done in that regard. Talking about representation, maybe you can tell us in which policy areas do you think women's interests are represented the best and the worst within parliament?

35:55:

MH:

There is still a battle to be won on trying to break down gender disparity. I think Annalise Dodds being the first woman to hold the position of Shadow Chancellor is really important. But you see how she's being undermined a lot. I don't know how closely you follow it, but she's been undermined not for what she says but for what she looks like. And for how she speaks. So, again, it's no different from when I came in in 1994 and the sketch writers only focused on that. And that only shows the extent of the challenges that we face. So, you know, women tend to be given the portfolios that reflect their traditional roles in society so whether it's education, social care, health, those tend to be the portfolios that they reflect. We're at a very dangerous moment because the, sort of, rise of the 'Woke' movement is being used now by the current Conservative administration to really, really undermine gender equality and I think Liz Truss, who currently holds that portfolio, is doing a massive disservice to gender equality by deprioritising it and pretending that it isn't an issue we need to tackle. It's an outrage, really. She should never be in that job and the government should not be pursuing its anti-feminist, anti-gender equality policies that it is engaging in. And they do it all on the back of 'Woke', it's just awful. They play to people's worst instincts, to follow policies that engrain inequality.

38:08:

SC:

I am going to enter into my final two questions. The first one is perhaps, if you can tell us what can be done to encourage more women to stand for office?

38:20:

MH:

Well, I think, networking. I always go back to networking; I think it's very important. Networking and mentoring. I mentor a huge number of women. I love doing it, I really, really enjoy it. But I think it's really important that they hear a little bit about your experience. Of course, life today is different from when I started on this journey but nevertheless, sharing a little bit and just talking through and helping them through the challenges and the tensions and the conflicts that they face. I love doing it. So, networking, mentoring, I'm afraid I do think positive action policies are required in every political party and you can't drop that until it's very, very strongly and firmly embedded in our culture. And it's not. Promoting those women who have done well, so giving you the role models that you can kind of aspire to, I think is very important. And then doing some practical things. Practical things like, it's expensive to stand for office so can you support that? Politics remains in the UK pretty confrontational, so how can you present yourself well without doing it in 'that way'? You don't have to 'adopt' a traditional male model of engaging in politics, but you have to know how to handle it to promote yourself in a much more collaborative and calmer way. But training to support that I think is very important. But funding people to do it, training them, making sure that you do things like get hours that work for people.

40:22:

I'll tell you one thing which is another story of mine. We don't have jobshare MPs. Wouldn't it be wonderful if we had jobshare MPs? I suggested that in 1994 when I was a new MP and I happened to go out for lunch with a journalist and I said I can't see why we can't jobshare this job. You vote with the whip, everything else is perfectly possible to divide up so it's not as if you really very often vote on your conscience. It's usually, you vote on party lines not on conscience. And I'm sure we could sort it out where there is a conscience. But it might be a way where you can bring more women into politics. So, she wrote this up in the Sunday Times the following Sunday. There was me, a naïve new member of parliament with a photo of me up. And on Monday I went into the House of Commons and I was summoned into the Whip's office. They had this photo up of me on the wall and they were throwing darts at it. And they just said to me, 'lots of people want your job, Margaret. If you don't like it on the terms you've got it, get out.' So, again that demonstrates the difficulty of cultural change in what is an institution where a lot of its strength comes from its history and its traditions but as you move into a contemporary work you have you modernise in a way that enables. Not just gender equality, but of course, race equality and all sorts of other inequalities. We've got too many people from Eton and Oxbridge and not enough people who really represent the ordinary man and woman in an ordinary community across Britain.

42:21

SC:

Thank you. Just to close up, my final question – as a politician, as a woman in politics, what are you most proud of?

42:35:

MH:

I mean, I've had a really privileged life. So, the things I've done – I was a minister under the Blair/Brown years, all through those years. I'd like to think in every job I did I left something of which I'm proud often around gender equality. Often around gender equality. So, I've done a lot of things. I suppose what I'd pick out in local government, we built a huge housing program by renovating old homes. We were very early – not slum clearance and building these horrid estates that haven't stood the test of time. But we acquired a lot of residential properties, street properties, and renovated them. So, you had people living in decent homes that had a price they could afford with a council rent next door to very wealthy bankers and lawyers. And that sort of, social integration, is my dream of social democracy. So, I'm very proud of that. And we had the biggest program in the country of this renovation, and I think it was a very socially cohesive as well as providing decent homes at a price that people could afford for all people. I'm proud of that. I'm proud of what I did as the first Children's Minister because I developed the Sure Start children centre policy for Labour in opposition and then as Children's Minister, I had a couple of years implementing it – never enough. Tony Blair didn't keep us in our jobs long enough, sadly. But that was a really important... giving children the best start in life, building services around the needs of children not around professional boundaries. That was a really innovative – and equalising life chances through early intervention – all that was a very important, innovative set of initiatives I'm proud of. I'm proud of my battle against the fascists in my constituency. In 2010, when I fought off the BNP, who were a real threat at that time and could have undermined... could have, you know, I could have lost to the leader of the BNP in Barking. I'm proud of the work I did as chair of the Public Accounts Committee, especially around tax justice and fighting tax avoidance, tax evasion and crime. And I'm now most proud of the work I've done within the Labour party, in rooting out anti-Semitism from a party whose values should have been always about inequality, anti-racism and international solidarity.

45:29:

SC:

Thank you very much. Well, I would like to thank you for accepting our invitation and for supporting the Gender Institute and for continuing to fight for addressing inequalities that continue to make British society. So, thank you very much for being a force for change.