

Welcome to the fourth edition of the Feminist Library Newsletter and our first of 2009.

International Women's Day 2009 is on Sunday 8 March and celebrates the economic, political and social achievements of women past, present and future. It is an exciting and busy time in the feminist calendar, with lots of great things happening nationally and internationally. Our listings inside contains a few of the many events going on this weekend and over the next few weeks to celebrate International Women's Day.

The Feminist Library contains over 10,000 books, over 700 sets of periodicals, over 2,000 pamphlets and ephemera, and much, much more. The library is completely run by volunteers and is open every Saturday from 11am to 4:45pm, and at other times by appointment.

2008, like many years in the history of The Feminist Library, was full of ups and downs, and it looks like 2009 will be no different. We are still looking for a new home for the library. Our current home in Southwark, where we've been for over twenty years, is cramped, damp and increasingly expensive, and our time there is quickly running out.

The aim of the trustees and management committee of the Feminist Library has always been for the library to remain as an autonomous whole; however, it is looking increasingly unlikely that we will be able to achieve that, despite investigating many options over the past few years. The Feminist Library collection is massive and has been painstakingly collected over 32 years by many volunteers. The material has been donated by feminist writers, academics and activists, and much of it is unique. It is therefore extremely important that this material is not lost forever. The condition of the building that houses the library is not at all suited for storing such precious and historically important material. We are afraid that if we do not act now, the unsuitable conditions will destroy the more fragile material.

Because we think it is crucial that the work of so many feminists be preserved for future generations, even if this means splitting the Feminist Library collection, we are currently in negotiation with an institution in London to house the entire pamphlet collection. It is a well-established library and archive which is already home to much radical material. They have the facilities and expertise to care for and preserve our precious pamphlet collection and will be able to make it available for everybody to view and use. Within this institution it will remain as an autonomous whole and will forever be "The Feminist Library Pamphlet Collection".

This is not a decision that we have taken lightly, however we do think that in the long run it is the right decision. Nothing has been finalised as yet, and we will inform the feminist and wider community when we have more information.

Before any material is handed over, it will be fully integrated into the digital catalogue that we are currently working on for the whole Feminist Library. When this is completed, anyone will be able to see what the Feminist Library collection consists of, and where it can be found.

The future of the rest of the collection is still uncertain, but we are working hard to find a new home for everything. Until then we are open every Saturday from 11 til 4:45 (except Saturday 7th March), and at other times by appointment, so please do come down and catch us all in one place while you can. We also welcome more volunteers to help us with the cataloguing, fundraising, and all the other tasks connected with the collection.

Lambeth Libraries: On the 2nd of March The Feminist Library was glad to welcome members of Lambeth Libraries for a tour of the collection and archive and an interesting discussion on the history and future of the Feminist Library. The visit was part of Lambeth Libraries International Women's Day celebrations. Lambeth Libraries will be holding an International Women's Day event on Friday 6th of March 2009 at Brixton Tate Library from 6:30 to 9pm. There will be a debate with panelists including Ego Ahaïwe from Lambeth Women's project, Dr. Lucy Bland and Dr. Helen Crowley of London Metropolitan University and Jean Kerrigan of Women's International League for Peace. There will also be a poetry reading by Comfort, a screening of the unveiling of the Bronze Woman Sculpture and the launch of the Lambeth Libraries Women's Reading Group as well as various information stalls. For more information about the event contact Lambeth Arts on 020 79260760 or email artsweb@lambeth.gov.uk.

We would like to thank Lambeth Libraries for the visit and support and wish them well with their International Women's Day event; it looks like it will be amazing!

Discovering the treasure trove that is The Feminist Library

By Sarah O'Mahoney

I first came across the feminist library when trawling the internet for volunteer opportunities, last November 2008. As an ex-librarian and book lover I was excited at finding it; but more amazed that I had never known it existed before. By chance a Volunteer Open Day was scheduled for December so it seemed that I should go. I came away from that day wanting to be involved, and committed to promoting the Feminist Library as a valuable resource. It is at this time in the library's history that volunteers are most needed as there are lots of crucial projects underway.

One of the major projects I am currently involved in is the cataloguing of all the library's materials, which will eventually be available online via the website and accessible to all, everything from zine style pamphlets and journals to posters and poetry. Also an amazing fiction and nonfiction collection with every key feminist book you could think of. Seeing the **Alberta Trilogy** by Cora Sandel, which I last read back when I was 19, reminded me how important women's writing was and is in providing women readers with relatable characters. Back then it felt like I had discovered someone who understood and reflected my own emotions.

As I sit there collating information for the catalogue it feels like my eyes are being reopened. It's like an ongoing education, discovering books, organizations and inspiring women that I had never come across before.

Some of my particular exciting new finds are:

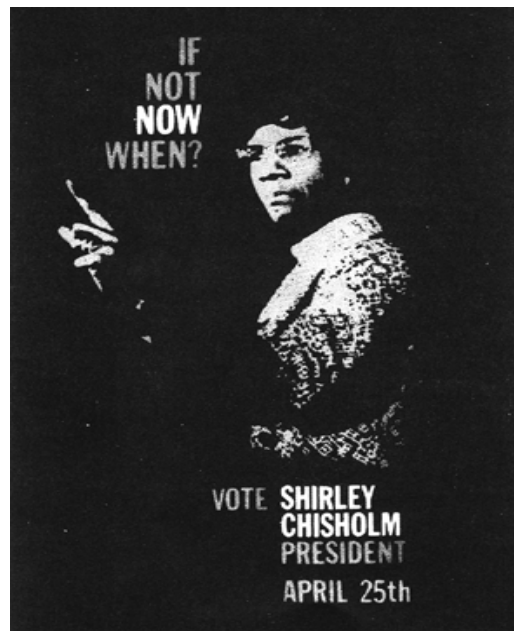
The Convert by Elizabeth Robins (Fiction) - an insider's view of the Edwardian period in the UK when women were struggling for the right to vote and forging sisterhood across the classlines.

The Life and Death of Emily Davison by Ann Morley and Liz Stanley (Biography) – an illuminating book about one of the most infamous suffragettes and what her motivations were.

Who's Choice? A-true-to-life Story (Pamphlet/zine) published by The National Abortion Campaign in the 1970's, a comic strip style information pamphlet about where to get abortion advice. Very to the point and accessible to young women.

Imposing evidence (Newsletter) from the Sophia Smith collection in the US. This is a current publication with great prints of posters and photos held within the collection. One which caught my eye was a poster of Shirley Chisholm who ran for President in 1972.

Inspiring or what!



New additions to the library:

Feminism and War: Confronting U.S. Imperialism was born out of a conference on Feminism and War held in the Syracuse University in the US in 2006 and inspired by the way concepts and language of women's liberation were (and continue to be) co-opted in the justification for wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Editors Robin L. Riley, Chandra Talpade Monanty and Minnie Bruce Pratt have amassed writers such as Angela Y. Davis and Cynthia Enloe to cover a broad range of issues relating to the 'imperial feminism' evoked in US military initiatives. The book looks at the complex relationships between gender and war from many angles. Shigematsu speaks to veterans about their experiences as women of colour within the US military forces while Sinno explores the role of bloggers such as Riverbend in providing alternatives to traditional war reporting. Published by Zed Books, this is a great (and vital) addition to the anti-imperialist feminism canon.

Raise Some Hell – A Feminist Childrearing Zine for Everyone. Made by the CRAP Collective (Child Rearing Against Patriarchy) this much needed zine is full of poetry, articles, reflections etc on childrearing issues from a feminist and anticapitalist perspective. If you are interested in contributing to future editions or to get a copy of this amazing zine visit www.feministchildrearing.blogspot.com or email feministchildrearing@riseup.net.

A big thanks once again goes to the lovely folks at Dissident Island Radio. The Feminist Library was invited back to the station for their last show of 2008, which was a look back on some of the events of the year. It was a great show and we really appreciate all the support that dissident island has given the Feminist Library. Dissident Island produces an on-line radio show and broadcasts twice a month from 9pm, on the first and third Friday of the month. You can listen to the show live at www.dissidentisland.org or chose a show from their archive to listen to anytime.

Listings

Here are few of the many events happening across London and the country on or around International Women's Day. For a full listing of events celebrating IWD visit www.internationalwomensday.com or www.iwd2009.wordpress.com.

5 – 13 March Birds Eye View Film Festival 2009

Celebrating the best women filmmakers from around the globe, Birds Eye View will once again be screening world-class films from world-class talent, with events taking place at the BFI Southbank, ICA, The Gate cinema (Notting Hill), and Picturehouse Cinemas across the UK on International Women's Day. For full details, programme and booking details visit www.birds-eye-view.co.uk.

7 – 8 March, Seeds of Change – A Weekend of Inspirational Workshops for women, in celebration of International Women's Day at Over the Rainbow, Plas Tyllwyd, Tanygroes, Ceredigion, Wales.

The workshops are based on the theme of new beginnings and include willow weaving, belly dance, massage, crafts, story telling felting and more. For more details and booking info ring 01239 811155 or visit www.overtherainbowwales.co.uk/news.html

7 March 19:00 – 21:00 Reclaim the Night Liverpool

A demonstration through Liverpool calling for an end to violence against women in all its forms, international peace and equality. Bands, dancing and fun afterwards! March starts from St. George's Plateau, Lime Street going to Liverpool Guild of Students, Mount Pleasant for the after-march party. Men are welcome to support this women's march by marching at the back.

Further details visit www.iwdmerseyside.co.uk

4 – 28 March - Wisewords

Coinciding with International Women's Day and Women's History Month, wisewords celebrates women's writing and explores a wide range of issues and ideas with diverse authors, poets, comics, artists, actors, journalists and musicians. This year's wisewords can be enjoyed in eight different East End venues from Frontline Women Reporters to a hilarious Comedy Night at The Women's Library, London. For more info on the many events taking place during wisewords contact alternative arts at 020 73750441 or info@alternativearts.co.uk, or visit www.alternativearts.co.uk

7 March Million Women Rise 2009 – National women and children only demonstration against male violence. Meet 12pm at Portman Square, London (nearest tubes: Bond St, Marble Arch, Baker St) for march through central London, with rally and celebration from 2:30 – 5:30pm at Waterloo Place (tube stations: Piccadilly Circus, Leicester Sq, Charing Cross).

After March Love Celebration and Fundraiser – The 52 Club, 52 Gower St, London WC1E 6EB (basement entrance, lift available). Doors open 6pm to 1am. Films, food, live music and lots of dancing! Also sauna and swimming pool (last swim 9pm – bring a swimming hat). Suggested donation on the door well waged £12, low waged £5, unwaged donation. For more information contact Ange on 07717 579651 or visit www.millionwomenrise.com.

11 March CoolTan Arts Women's Conference

CoolTan Arts Independent Gallery, Walworth Rd, London SE17 1RL

Arts and mental health charity CoolTan Arts celebrates IWD with a special women's conference about women, mental health and arts. It will be an exciting afternoon with speakers about women and mental health, hands-on arts activities and a social event for all to enjoy regardless of whether the person has mental health issues. Further information on this free event available at 020 77012696, info@cooltanarts.org.uk and www.cooltanarts.org.uk

Glasgow Women's Library, 81 Parnie Street, Glasgow Follow the Thread

Three storytelling workshops to help celebrate International Women's Day, running on Monday 2nd March, Monday 9th March and Friday 20 March.

12 March, 7pm to 9pm

Women Writers Unite – Women and Animals

To mark IWD, the first in a series of writer's evenings. Creativity will be unleashed as Zoe Strachen and Elizabeth Reeder introduce writers to give readings of their work on the theme of Women and Animals. For full the full details and booking info on these and the many other events being held at Glasgow Women's Library see www.womenslibrary.org.uk or ring 0141 552 8345.

14 March 10am – 4pm Personal Safety Empowerment Workshop for women and girls celebrating International Women's Day

A workshop providing practical and simple real life information, tools and techniques in keeping women and girls safe, in the home, work and places of study. Taking place at Businessworks, The Women's Business Centre, High St South, East Ham, E6 6ER. £25 members, £40 non-members. To book and for more info ring 0208 257 4204 or visit www.herbusiness.co.uk

17 March Reclaim the Night – Cardiff.

March to end violence against women, all self-defined women welcome. Assemble 7pm Cardiff City Centre. A separate "End Violence Against Women" march will follow the main march and is open to all regardless of gender identity. For more details visit www.cymruwomen.org.uk

28 March 10am - 1:30pm Blowing The Cover The Women's Library, London E1 7NT

A day of talks exploring a variety of topics in the history of women's magazines. £20/£15 concs. For booking or more info ring 020 73202222, email moreinfo@thewomenslibrary.ac.uk .

Feminist Activist Forum is planning a gathering of people interested in issues of disability and feminism later this year. For more information contact Mair at disability@feministactivistforum.org.uk

Feminism, Disability and Activism: A Zine- Available April 2009. A new zine produced by Feminist Activist Forum addressing attitudes to disability within the uk movement. Featuring personal accounts, articles about feminism and disability, the history of disabled women's activism, practical advice on making events more accessible and inclusive, resources and much more.

FemAdLib Kolektiv is a non-hierarchical mix of artists making feminist art, some of whom are well-known in the art world and others who are activists or less mainstream. We are inter-generational as a group and a mix in terms of background, race, class, sexuality and so on. We are keen to work in a positive way, showing the advantages of working together on these intersections while always keeping feminism at the forefront of anything we do. FemAdLib aims to put on exhibitions of political explicitly feminist work by women-identified artists whose works overtly challenge power structures. The kolektiv is also staging direct actions that target the whitewash of feminism in art. We are raising money for these actions. Please come and support:

Feminist Café: 19th March, RampART, Rampart St (off Commercial Road). Includes feminist films, zine stall by Cherry Bomb Comics and lovely food. Donation for event inc. food, £5 minimum.

Party: 21st March at RampART, includes showings of feminist art, sound and video works interspersed with live music, djs etc. Showing work by Rosie Gunn, (ex-Exposures), Oriana Fox, Edita Pecotic, Alex Brew and Romy Northover. Music includes Maria and the Mirrors, Constantinoplex, and others to be confirmed. Minimum Donation £5. We would like to put a call out for performers, artists, sound engineer, PA system, drums, decks and also any help on the door/bar/kitchen would be greatly appreciated.

For more information on these events or FemAdLib Kolektiv please visit our website www.femadlibkolektiv.blogspot.com or email femadlibkolektiv@yahoo.co.uk.

Get involved in the Feminist Library cataloguing project

We are currently undertaking a massive cataloguing project to preserve the library's unique classification system and move to an online catalogue. This will create an up-to-date record of all items currently held in the collection and will also mean you can search the catalogue online. This is a great opportunity to get involved in the library, meet new people and maybe even learn some new skills at the same time. We will be holding workshops to teach people cataloguing basics so no prior library experience is required.

You can also follow the project on Twitter: <http://twitter.com/feministlibrary>.

For more details email admin@feministlibrary.co.uk or visit the library during Saturday opening hours (11 – 4:45pm).

Help support The Feminist Library by making a regular donation.

Please return this form to the address below. We will forward it to your bank and send you a copy.

To (name of your bank).....
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26060728, on / / and thereafter monthly, on the same date each month, the sum of £2/£5/£10/£20(delete as appropriate) or £..... (in figures)£..... (in words) until further notice.

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