



Feminist Library Newsletter

No. 15 Summer 2013

Its been a busy few months at the Feminist Library.

We launched our e-bulletin on 1st March and it has been a great success. The e-bulletin gets emailed out to all subscribers at the start of each month with updates on everything that will be happening at the Feminist Library that month. We have nearly 1,000 subscribers and we have received a lot of positive feedback on the e-bulletin. You can subscribe by emailing bulletin@feministlibrary.co.uk or by visiting feministlibrary.co.uk and entering your email address in the subscribe box.

International Women's Day saw the Feminist Library stall at the Women Of the World Festival at the Southbank Centre, Southwark Legal Action Network's International Women's Day event, and Million Women Rise. The Feminist Library stall and volunteers were also at *Looking back, looking forward, Women in Herstory*, an event to celebrate Women's History Month on 17th March.

We hosted a well-attended evening of spoken word and comedy on March 23rd at the Library with lots of performers stepping up to the open mic including Catherine Madden, Wanda Canton, Rachael Allen, Hel Gurney, Ann Domoney and many more. March also saw the Feminist Library featured in a cartoon in *Private Eye* (No.1335 8 March – 21 March 2013) about sexual harassment in the workplace.

In April the Feminist Library stall was at DIY Cultures, a day-long festival of zines, artists' books and comics at RichMix in Bethnal Green, and at Girl Germs, a feminist not-for-profit club night, which was also a fundraiser for the Feminist Library. Many thanks to Laura and Lydia of Girl Germs for making the evening such a success. We also hosted a symposium at the library for the Gender and Education Association Conference 2013, where a panel of speakers addressed issues about the relationship between activism and academia. Sarbjit Johal exhibited her paintings and gave a fascinating talk about how this work addresses the personal and the political.

May brought three well-attended Womens Studies Without Walls sessions: An introduction to Feminist Consciousness-Raising; London Irish Women's Network hosting an afternoon focussed on the Magdalene Laundries; and Women and Disability. We ran two stalls on the same day, Saturday 11 May, when we attended both the London Radical Bookfair and Sheffield Anarchist Bookfair.. At the Sheffield Anarchist Bookfair, Ruth from the Feminist Library and Marian Larragy of the London Irish Women's Network facilitated a session on our Women's Studies Without Walls initiative and the need for autonomous feminist studies.

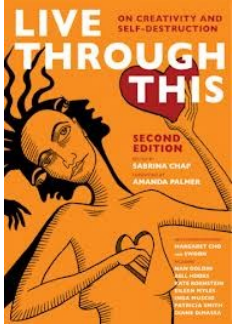
The past few months have seen a significant increase in visitors to the library, groups and organisations using the facilities, and volunteers getting involved in running and supporting our increased activity.

We have also welcomed Roberta Pisanu, who is visiting from Italy and doing an internship at the Feminist Library. She is working on archiving the Diana Leonard Collection. We are about to welcome Zeinab Shaker from Berlin for the Summer, who will be helping us develop our electronic resources.

We are pleased to announce that this Autumn we will be launching the Feminist Library Bookshop Project. Every Saturday we will be selling new, used and antiquarian fiction and non-fiction, as well as hosting readings and discussions. To help us with launching this initiative we are calling for donations - we would really appreciate any secondhand books, and also CDs and DVDs - preferably feminist, but any subject welcome! - as well as any feminist magazines and journals. As we have limited storage space at present, please write to us at bookshop@feministlibrary.co.uk to let us know what material you have, and we will contact you nearer the time.



Book Reviews



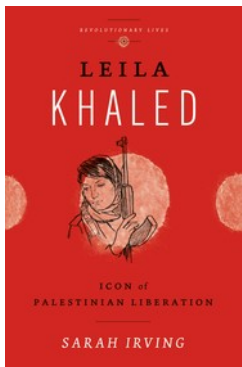
***Live Through This*, by Sabrina Chap (Seven Stories Press, 2012)**

This book is an edited collection of pieces by women artists, describing their creative journeys, with images of art work and memoirs of emotional experiences - including whilst writing this book.

One writer who stood out for me was 'Fly', who was very open and honest about her manic depression – this was a refreshing and interesting read. She talks of the extremes of her bipolarity and the difficulties she had in carrying on making her art despite being either deeply depressed or manic. Drawing became a 'stabilising force' within her life and she was always documenting her emotions and experiences through her art. I also enjoyed Cristy C. Road writing about using cocaine, the human connections whilst on the drugs, then the after-effects, where she describes herself as a 'corpse with a newly opened can of worms'. Her language is bold and to the point and the graphic images that accompany her writing are similar to that of graphic novels. The honesty in her descriptions of her recreational drug use is very informative and paint an interesting picture of her different emotional and psychological states.

More information about this book can be found at <http://sabrinachap.com/>

Reviewed by Shelley Jamaine



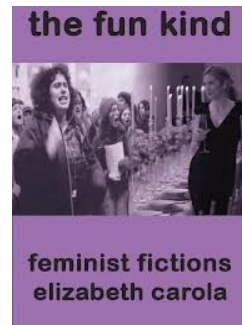
***Leila Khaled: Icon of Palestinian Liberation*, by Sarah Irving (Pluto Press 2012)**

Female revolutionaries with as high a profile as Palestinian militant Leila Khaled are thin on the ground. In this short but thorough study, English writer and Palestine solidarity activist, Sarah Irving, attempts to "tread that fine line" between focusing on Khaled as an

inspirational person whose life can "teach us about personal paths through political struggle", and avoiding holding her up as an exceptional hero. She succeeds in this through diligent historicisation and attention to ethical ambiguities. This book is not a hagiographical account of an individual's endeavours, but a nuanced historical biography based on thorough historical research together with extensive interviews with Leila Khaled and those close to her. In this way, Khaled is the figure around whom the book is structured, but much of the content is not directly about her. Rather, her life story functions as a crucible through which to explore the history of the Palestinian diaspora and resistance, including issues of: women in the Palestinian resistance struggle; divisions within the Palestinian and Pan-Arab nationalist

movements; ethical and tactical questions around strategies for resistance, and the relationship with international media and politics. This is particularly useful considering the surprising dearth of scholarship on Palestinian factional politics and militant figures. (Fuller review is on our website)

Review by Tali Janner-Klausner, lilithlaughed.co.uk/?p=126



***The Fun Kind: Feminist Fictions*, by Elizabeth Carola (Siren Press, 2012)**

This collection of short stories by radical feminist Elizabeth Carola is an easy and enjoyable read. Although fiction, the characters and scenarios described are recognisable and will feel familiar to anyone involved in feminist activism.

I particularly enjoyed the first story *Funfems* which is a comment on the significance of political difference and its impact on relationships, and the last story, *Not as we know*, which is an intimate exploration of dealing with serious ill-health and resulting dependency on on-line relationships and e-lists.

All the stories in this book feel very current, referencing protest, activism, trade unionism, power dynamics, class, relationships and of course feminism, and are told in a moving, witty and insightful way.

Reviewed by Una Byrne

Recent Acquisitions

The Straight Mind and other essays - Monique Wittig (Beacon Press, 1992)

Clara Zetkin: National and International Contexts - Marilyn J. Boxer, John S. Partington (eds) (Socialist History Society, 2013)

Irish Lifelines: An anthology of poetry by Irish Women survivors in London - Eamer O'Keeffe (ed) (London Irish Women's Centre, 2008)

Reclaiming the F Word - Catherine Redfern and Kristin Aune, 2nd Edition (Zed Books, 2013)

Memoirs of an Early Arab Feminist - Anbara Salam Khalidi (Pluto Press, 2013)

How a century of war changed the lives of women - Lindsey German (Pluto Press, 2013)

Making Peace with the Earth - Vandana Shiva (Pluto Press, 2012)

Shadow Lives: The Forgotten Women of the War of Terror - Victoria Brittain (Pluto Press, 2013)

Textonic Mustangs - Eamer O'Keeffe (Cicatrix, 1993)

War Chronicle - Eamer O'Keeffe (Cicatrix, 1999)

Esneson: a collection of nonsense poetry and prose - Eamer O'Keeffe (Cicatrix, 2004)

Carmina's Poetry Tease - Carmina Masoliver (Self-published, 2011)

Eileen Cadman: a materialist with a soaring imagination

16th October 1950 – 17th March 2013



Eileen Cadman circa 1987

I became friends with Eileen when, together with Agnes Pivot, we wrote *Rolling Our Own: women as printers, publishers, and distributors*, published in 1981, which documents the wide range of activity round feminist publications of that era. Eileen earned most of her living as a writer and editor in commercial publishing, but her heart lay in the practicalities and politics of nurturing her own and her friends' creativity, a vital part of which was the Waverley 8th housing co-op, which she helped to set up and lived in all those years.

Eileen tackled her bowel cancer with the same combination of practicality and humour as everything else in her life, so I was glad to help her sort her papers in the months before her death. Although it was incredibly sad, we had fun reminiscing about the old days in Women's Liberation as we looked through the pamphlets, minutes, conference papers, and personal papers, including her journals. Her book collection included such great titles as *The Feminine in Fairy Tales*, a reflection of her interest in myths and fairy tales, which also shines through her novel, *Reflections of a Vampire*, which she managed to publish as an e-book shortly before she died -- her friends are working on a print version, which will be available shortly. Eileen's collection of books and papers will provide a fascinating insight into the life and thoughts of a grassroots feminist, once her kind donation becomes available at the Feminist Library – Gail Chester.

Women's Studies Without Walls is an initiative born out of the Feminist Library in Autumn 2012. It was launched with a weekend of workshops, talks and skill-shares at the Feminist Library in January 2013, on the theme of 'The Personal is Political'. A diverse range of women attended and took part in discussions – women from all generations, from within academia and without, and from all round the country.

The impetus for WSWW was a concern that much of what is now taught in universities as Gender Studies has lost touch with grassroots feminist activism, coupled with a fear that the neo-liberal and cuts agenda across education will remove any possibility of radical education at any stage of learning. WSWW aims to return Women's Studies to its rightful place, encouraging women to take radical feminist action through learning and sharing skills, experience and knowledge. The WSWW weekend has been followed up with a regular series of WSWW events at the Feminist Library. Topics already covered have been on consciousness raising, Magdalene Laundries and institutional abuse in Ireland, and women and disability.

Join us for the remaining sessions of our Summer programme:

Thursday 27th June 7pm. Stuff Your Sexist Boss!: South London Solidarity Federation

London SolFed is producing a pamphlet about practical methods of resisting sexual harassment in the workplace. So come along, share experiences, and exchange ideas on tactics for working collectively against workplace harassment and discrimination.

Sunday 7th July 3pm – 6pm. London Irish Women's Network hosts an afternoon on the Making and Breaking of Images of Irish Women

Who do we carry around in our heads? We will be going on a journey around what we've absorbed, what we've made or left unmade, and whether we should be doing anything about it. A participative event.

Thursday 11th July 7pm. Film Show and discussion about a significant episode in recent feminist history:

The Great Grunwick Strike 1976 – 78: A History (Brent Trades Union Council, 2008).

Thursday 18th July 7pm. Review, Planning and Party

Review of activities so far, and all your ideas for our autumn series, followed by food, drink and music.

All sessions last approximately two hours and will take place at the Feminist Library, which is fully wheelchair accessible

For more information on Women's Studies Without Walls visit feministlibrary.co.uk/womens-studies-without-walls-2 Find out about our plans for the Autumn and how WSWW is spreading round the country.



Mary Lodato talking about the Magdalene Laundries in front of her artwork

Listings

Tuesday 18th June 2013, 6 pm. 'Culture', the Cuts and Violence Against Women and Girls.

Room V211, (2nd floor), SOAS Vernon Square Campus (off Pentonville Road, not Russell Square), London WC1H 0XG
Public meeting to discuss sexual abuse, grooming, and other forms of violence against women and girls, how cuts to services and legal aid affect violence against women and girls, with particular reference to services for Black and minority women and the selective invocation of 'race' and 'culture' in media discussions of violence against women and girls. Organised by Freedom Without Fear Platform.

21 June 2013 7:30pm. Midsummer Night Picnic.

The Table on the Marsh, Coppermill Fields, Waltham Forest, London, E17

Waltham Forest Rising is a new grass roots organisation committed to taking action to end violence against women and girls in Waltham Forest. Please come and join us in our Midsummer Picnic at the Table on the Marsh for a fun, family-friendly event to reclaim the marshes for everyone with music and entertainment
walthamforestrising.wordpress.com/2013/06/05/midsummer-night-picnic-fri-21st-june

June 21 – 23. The Lady Doth Protest: Mapping Feminist Movements, Moments, and Mobilisations. Biennial Feminist and Women's Studies Association Conference.

University of Nottingham, University Park, Nottingham.
Come and visit the Feminist Library stall.
For more information visit: fwsaconference.wordpress.com.

7 July 2013 7pm. Comedy Fundraiser for Women's Organisations – Stand Up for Women

Garrick Theatre, Charing Cross Road, London.
Stand Up For Women is raising awareness and raising funds for women's organisations with a night of comedy with some of the nation's favourite comedians, including Andi Osho, Lucy Porter and Josie Long. Tickets from £25.00
www.womensgrid.org.uk/groups/?p=926

Saturday 20th July 2013, 11am to 7pm. Hackney Flea Market

Abney Public Hall, 73a Stoke Newington Church Street, London N16 0AS

The Feminist Library stall, with our iconic tote bags, badges, fridge magnets, Spare Ribs, and out of print feminist classics will be nestling among the vintage ceramics, clothes, jewellery; records, zines, artists, bike workshop, cakes, refreshments, & live music.

Monday 22nd July 6pm. She Grrrowls Spoken Word.

Part of the 'Creative Youth' International Youth Arts Festival at the Ram Jam Club, Grey Horse Pub, Kingston, KT2 5EE

Featuring: Robyn-Astrid, Tabby Farrar, Nikki Marrone, A.L.Michael and Bisha Ali (poetry, comedy & music)
Tickets, £5 from www.rosetheatre.com and 08444821556 (also available on the door).

<http://www.facebook.com/events/535620389814054>

Tuesday 23rd July, 1pm to 3pm. Mixing the Colours: Sectarianism, Your Stories.

Glasgow Women's Library, 15 Berkeley Street, Glasgow G3 7BW.

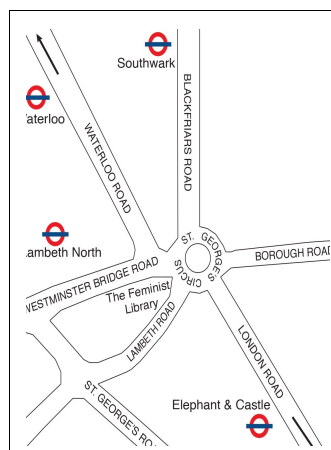
What is sectarianism? How does it affect women and what role can and do women play in tackling it? Explore these questions in a relaxed atmosphere and share your views on and experiences of sectarianism.

For more information and to book your place visit womenslibrary.org.uk or ring 0141 248 9969.

7th - 14th August. Idle WIT Camp

Lampeter, Wales.

The amazing Women In Tune crew are taking a well-deserved break, but women are invited to come to the site for Idle WIT Camp. In 2013 the planners and other crew are hoping to spend some time with their WIT friends! So this year organisation and other work will be kept to the bare minimum possible - there will be no crew, performers etc, and all who come to the Idle WIT camp will be asked to contribute to the costs - www.womenintune.co.uk.



The Feminist Library, 5a Westminster Bridge Rd, London SE1 7XW.

Phone 020 7261 0879

Email admin@feministlibrary.co.uk

Visit www.feministlibrary.co.uk.

Follow us on twitter @feministlibrary

Opening hours: The Feminist Library is open every Monday 2 – 5pm, Tuesday 11am -6pm, Thursdays 6.30-9.30pm and the 1st Saturday of the month 1.30-5.30pm. We are also open outside of these hours by appointment only. Please email admin@feministlibrary.co.uk or phone 0207 261 0879 if you would like to make an appointment. Please check www.feministlibrary.co.uk/hours for the most up-to-date information, including changes to opening hours.

The Feminist Library Newsletter, No.15 Summer 2013 - ISSN 0951-2837. Contributors: Una Byrne, Shelley Jamaine, Tali Janner-Klausner, Anna Piggott, Gail Chester.