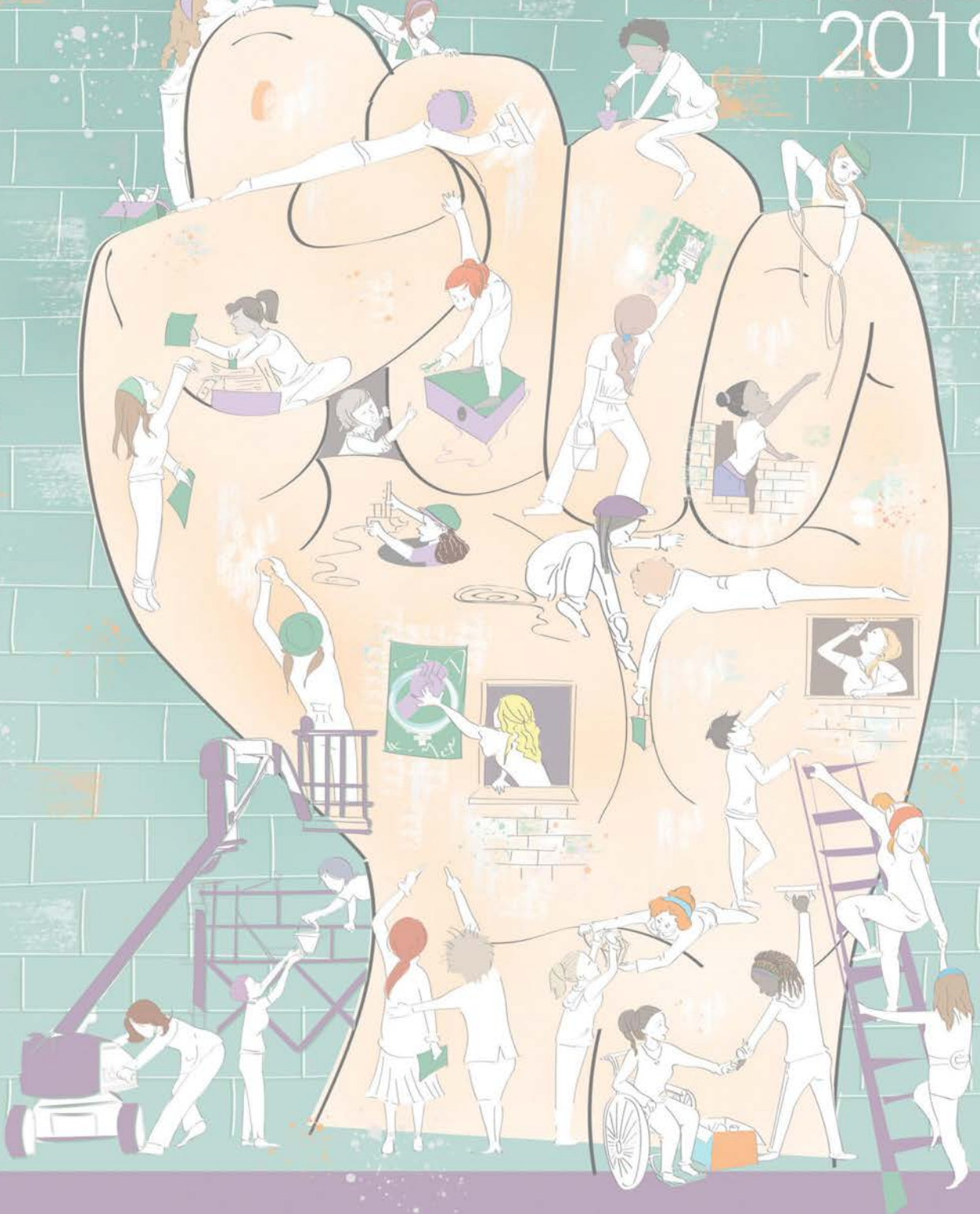




# FiLiA

October  
2019



# FiLiA

- Amplifying the Voices of Women
- Building Sisterhood and Solidarity
- Defending Women's Human Rights

More information and tickets at [www.filia.org.uk](http://www.filia.org.uk)



# Introduction

What an incredible year it has been for FiLiA! What have we been up to? Learning together is an important part of our culture so we continued with our educational meetings, inviting speakers in to support us with this. Surrogacy, breast ironing and Women's Sex-based rights are just three of the many topics that were covered.

We spent a couple of weekends away – one at Horton Women's Holiday Centre and one in Bradford making connections with local organisations – thanks to Bradford Women for making us feel so welcomed!

We are developing our podcasting and guest blogs – this includes interviews on the caste system, prostitution, family courts and domestic abuse as well as blogs on Violence against Lesbians, publishing and immigration among others. Watch this space as we do more to amplify the voices of the incredible Women we meet.

Volunteers join us and create their own roles – one such role has been our Latin American Liaison. With trips to Argentina, Brazil, Panama and a joint fundraising exhibition in France for our Argentinian Sisters she has been incredibly busy (as we write this two weeks before the conference she is in Buenos Aires forging new links with Feminist groups!). The results are that we have Sisters from Argentina, Guatemala and Brazil joining us this year for the FiLiA2019 conference. Our aim for the coming years is to do the same with other parts of the world.

We responded to various consultations including the Domestic Abuse Bill; joined in with many campaigns including supporting our Sisters in Iran who are rising up, and those fighting for Women's Sex-based protections here in the UK and throughout the world. We have begun discussions with some London boroughs on an updated approach to the sex trade and hope to develop this more widely.

And of course, we worked hard to create the space for the FiLiA2019 conference in Bradford, where over 100 speakers from many countries and hundreds of attendees converge to discuss, debate and connect. It's our contribution to the Women's Liberation Movement and something that provides an emotional rollercoaster for us all for many months of the year!

Thank you all for gifting your time as speakers, artists, stall holders and attendees to make FiLiA2019 happen.

Our team has grown to 62 Volunteers without whom this conference and all the other work would not be possible. Immense gratitude to them for giving so much and for creating the positive environment in which we are able get the work done. We were able to congratulate one of our volunteers on being recognised as a Refugee and look forward to continuing to work with her. We will be putting out FiLiA2020 Volunteer positions in November so please look out for those.

FiLiA

Building Sisterhood and Solidarity  
Amplifying the Voices of Women  
Defending Women's Human Rights



# FiLiA



## OCTOBER 2019



# The Three Main Obstacles to Female Friendship

## 1. Disassociation from the World

a. Therapism: women engage in psychological strip teases that fragment and exploit the inner life.

b. Relationism: the self is surrendered in favour of our definition in relation to someone else.

c. Perversions of "the personal is political" as "the personal is public knowledge."

## 2. Assimilation to the World

a. Sexual liberation: the construction of the "new woman" who is liberated through male-directed sexual practices.

b. The tyranny of tolerance: stripping our capacity of moral judgment.

c. The assimilation of silence: erasing wommon's historical companionship and love.

## 3. Victimization in the World

a. Mothers and Daughters: a generational lack of mother-daughter mentoring.

b. The politics of guilt and guilt-tripping: acting out of guilt, not responsibility.

c. Alienation from personal and political power: ambition and achievement is devalued.

## The Necessary Conditions for Female Friendship

1. Thoughtfulness: thinking considerateness & considerate thinking.

2. Passion: thoughtful passion ensures that a friend does not lose her Self.

3. Worldliness: the construction of the world as women imagine it can be.

4. Happiness: striving for the full use of one's power.

THE WHOLE TRUTH IS THAT, IN A WOMAN-HATING WORLD, WOMEN WILL INTERNALIZE AND EXTERNALIZE ANTIWOMAN VALUES AND BEHAVIOUR. THE BEST THAT WOMEN CAN MAKE OF THIS IS TO KNOW PRECISELY THAT THIS BEHAVIOUR WILL OCCUR, FACE THIS KNOWLEDGE HEAD-ON (BUT PERHAPS MORE IMPORTANTLY "HEART-ON"), AND ACT IN A MORE GYN/AFFECTIVE WAY BECAUSE OF AND IN SPITE OF THIS KNOWLEDGE OF THE MIND AND HEART.

*Order this book from your local feminist bookstore, library or press!*

Janice G. Raymond, "A Passion for Friends : Toward a Philosophy of Female Affection" (Boston: Beacon Press, 1986).

Image compiled by Bec Wonders for FiLiA, 2019.



# PERSONS AGAINST NST NON-STATE TORTURE

Linda MacDonald and Jeanne Sarson, co-founders of Persons Against Non-State Torture, are pioneers, nurses, feminists, grass roots activists, writers and researchers who are continually reaching out to find ways to make connections to listen to the stories of women who have survived non-State torture, both as children or as adult women. They include such important voices of women who have survived NST in their participatory research and writings. You can read about their work on their website:

[www.nonstatetorture.org](http://www.nonstatetorture.org)

Non-State torture is torture committed by everyday persons such as parents, spouses, trusted adults, strangers, human traffickers, pimps and buyers in prostitution and pornographers and happens in every day places such as homes, basements, hotels, barns, offices, boats, planes or where ever people gather.

NST is a global crime and human rights violation predominately against women and girls. To date very few countries have laws that recognize NST as a specific crime. Linda and Jeanne are lobbying to improve such laws.

To participate in their ongoing research you can access their different questionnaires on their website research page <http://www.nonstatetorture.org/research/participate>

And they will be developing news questionnaire in the coming months for pending publications on non-State torture.

You can reach them at [contact@nonstatetorture.org](mailto:contact@nonstatetorture.org)

## Where are the black girls?

Jahnine Davis

How can we ensure that we amplify the voices of the those who are often less heard and at times ignored? The voices of Black women and girls are missing from research, policy and therefore most likely impacting on practice. The upcoming conference will provide some insight into the research I conducted on questioning whether there are connections between racialised sexualisation and the under-identification of child sexual abuse amongst Black women and girls.

Some of the themes identified as factors possibly impacting on identification and disclosure were:

- The undervaluing of Black girlhood and over-valuing of Black boyhood
- The assumed access to Black women and girls' bodies
- Limited safe spaces to speak about abuse within and outside of the home
- Adultification of Black girls

Whilst the research only focused on interviewing a small number of practitioners and researchers, over half of them were victim-survivors of child sexual abuse.



The Women's Health Network (WHN) is a collective of people living and/or working in Bradford who have an interest in issues affecting the health and wellbeing of women and their families, with a particular focus on the engagement of seldom heard voices.

WHN operates under CNet's Engaging People project.

New members are always welcome. If you are interested in attending please email [yazmin@cnet.org.uk](mailto:yazmin@cnet.org.uk).

# Why secularism is a feminist issue

Megan Manson, campaigns officer, National Secular Society



It is no coincidence that one of the first leading members of the National Secular Society was also a leading women's rights advocate, Annie Besant. She was involved with the suffragettes, the 1888 'Matchgirls' Strike' against appalling working conditions experienced by women in match factories, and regularly spoke out for women's equality. She and NSS founder Charles Bradlaugh were put on trial for publishing a book on birth control that greatly offended the Church of England.

It is also no coincidence that many other pioneers of secularism in the UK spoke out for women's rights. Richard Carlile, the first person to establish a permanent secularist campaigning organisation in the UK, argued that "equality between the sexes" should be the objective of all reformers. In 1826 he published *Every Woman's Book*, which advocated birth control and the sexual emancipation of women. And it is no coincidence that today, women's equality is still a priority for secularists.

Secularists campaign for separation of religion from state, and equality for all in society regardless of religion or belief – or, of course, sex. Secularists recognise that religion has long been a major contributor to female subjugation. When states reject democracy and embrace theocracy, women are among the first to suffer.

Patriarchal religious institutions try to maintain the status quo by exerting control over women's bodies. The denial of a woman's right to make decisions about family planning is one of the most common forms of this control, through the prohibition of contraception and abortion. Sadly, the right to a safe and legal abortion is slipping away in the US, a country where the constitutional separation of religion and state is under attack by the Christian right. Female genital mutilation, taboos around menstruation and 'modesty culture' (in which women are always required to cover more of their bodies than men) are other examples of patriarchal control over women's bodies that is endorsed and supported by religion.

Religious institutions also extend their control to women's place in society. Fundamentalist religious laws invariably grant men a higher status in society than women. Thus we see religions complicit in denying women around the world authority roles, employment, political participation, educational opportunities, equality in marriage and access to fair justice. Women who belong to marginalised groups, such as women from minority communities or LGBT+ women, often suffer the most from religious oppression.

These inequalities are frequently difficult to tackle because many people are afraid to criticise religion. Those who speak out against harmful religious ideologies and practices, even those raised within religious communities who have been directly affected, find themselves labelled 'intolerant' or 'bigoted' when they speak out. Even some politicians and activists who pride themselves in promoting progressive, liberal values are silent on religion's contribution to women's inequality, and may deny religion plays any role at all.

Freedom of religion is a qualified right, and it cannot be allowed to trump other basic human rights. The National Secular Society exists to challenge this religious privilege, and to ensure women and men can live equally, fairly and with dignity in society. If you feel the same way, please do consider joining the NSS.

You can find out more information at [www.secularism.org.uk](http://www.secularism.org.uk).

# The serial perp and me

Zoe Dronfield

In 2014 I was almost murdered by someone known to police. This was my charming ex. He has slipped through the net time and time again. I met Smith in 2012, we began dating and he seemed like a nice guy, the usual story until the cracks started to show. It is like these types of offenders have a blueprint. Every survivor I speak to, its as if they all go to the same abuser school. You'd laugh if it actually wasn't so serious as 2 women a week die at the hands of an ex or intimate partner and this figure is skewed in my view as this doesn't take into account those who take their own lives as a result of domestic abuse.

On calling the police I was told "well you need to find yourself a nice boyfriend." Seriously is this how they speak to victims who are vulnerable I was at home with my 2 young children 4 and 8 years at the time. He was threatening me but the police apparently couldn't do anything until 'he'd actually done something'. I felt like a sitting duck.

After this blasé response from the police, Smiths behaviour continued and I felt like I had nowhere to turn. I had to park my car a few streets away from where I lived so he didn't know I was working from home. He'd bang the door anyway. Every time I called the police it was the same response, minimising the effect this was having on my life.

I got exasperated with his constant behaviour and no action by the police and decided I'd meet Smith, talk some sense in to him. I now know I put myself in a huge amount of danger and I'm lucky to be alive.

Smith almost killed me stabbing me in the neck, broke my nose, stamped on my head until I was unrecognisable, slashed my face, snapped my right arm, stab wounds to my left hand where I had tried to defend myself. The thing is, this is bad...very bad, however what is worse, is that he was known to police for this type of behaviour. He is a serial perpetrator of Domestic Abuse. When my story went in to the National Papers I was contacted by 15 other women saying they had been in a relationship with Smith. He was controlling, their lives had been ruined by him. Most of them had intervention from Police and were placed on fast response. However, these crimes were never linked.

The police deal with each incident in isolation. They do not pick up on patterns in behaviour, they do not join the dots. The same with the CPS and the courts. So if you

are lucky to get a proactive police force that checks the background, it can quickly be disregarded by the court as historic. How can this be right?!

Past offending is a precursor to future risk surely? Looking at the reoffending rates in Domestic Violence it definitely is!

I have been campaigning for is Serial Stalker and Domestic Abuser Register which will work like the Sex Offenders Register. It will capture those who repeat offend meaning the police have the power to deal with the offence with the severity needed. By nature of this offending, if its goes undetected and without consequence then it escalates as the stalker believes they are 'getting away with it'

Please support our campaign on [Change.org](https://www.change.org); Serial Stalkers Register please sign the petition. We also need votes by MPs to push this through the Houses of Parliament. Please write to your local MP (info in the petition as to how).

Thank you

If you are experiencing stalking, please get professional advice. Your situation can be risk assessed and you can be given the correct safety advice.

Call Paladin NSAS on 020 3866 4107.



# The new direction of Swedish feminist activism.

Merly Asbogard

All the way from the age of enlightenment to the age of technology and information, our current age, feminism and feminist activism has continued to dismantle the patriarchy.

With a reformistic movement spreading across nations borders shattering norms of discrimination and truly embodying women's emancipation.

Although I am part of a proud lineage of Swedish feminists I cannot help but to hope for the sake of the activism Swedish feminists take another path then that was chosen during the social media entry.

During the 80's and 90's and 2010's the Swedish feminist movement went from being organized to individualized and some might say elitist. You could either join a political party and fight for feminism within a hostile

patriarchal structure with none or very small results. Or you could be a higher educated expert and feminist lobbyist who could draw the attention of media and pushing for change working towards formation of opinions.

Together the feminist politician and the lobbyist could make actual change happen as seen with the Swedish sex buyers' law.

As the struggle continues however it has become clear that we could only take the individual approach so far. In the age of social media, the Swedish feminist movement have been hijacked. What could serve as a brilliant way of highlighting and educating on serious issues, which it has, can also weaken and derail the importance of actual change and actual sacrifice and activism to reach thus far.







We have met a lot of challenges during our comparatively short lifetime. In September we launched the single biggest nationwide spread manifestation in modern day Sweden “#rightless”. The manifestation highlights the fact that out of 100% filed police reports concerning sexual assault 95% will be closed without further action. Only 5% will see some sort of justice in court. Before the manifestation is held someone will investigate how many open cases of sexual assault the police station has. Women will then gather outside of the local police station matching that number or more and put tape over their mouths with the text RIGHTLESS (sw rightless). Someone will hold a sign saying why the gather and how many open cases the police station has and what will happen to the vast majority of the cases. Then they will proceed to hold hand in silence. Paying a silent respect to all women who never see justice and their abuser held accountable.

In the age of social media, the Swedish feminist movement have been hijacked. What could serve as a brilliant way of highlighting and educating on serious issues, which it has, can also weaken and derail the importance of actual change and actual sacrifice and activism to reach thus far.

The manifestation itself has spread to over 30 Swedish cities generating in new feminist groups popping up all over Sweden with feminist breakfast, lectures and support groups.

In the dawn of #metoo when the smoke finally cleared we were many feminists who had lost a lot. The patriarchy had hit us where we had our livelihood namely to take away our jobs, careers or denying us both and continues to threaten to do so. While simultaneously deplatforming us on social media we started to go back to our roots, we started seeing what was lacking. And we weren't going to get there through likes or impressive amounts of followers however powerful and engaging they were. We needed to bring back activism.

It has now left the Swedish borders and we see #rightless in Iceland and soon more cities and countries will follow.

We started a network and educational platform called “Gardet”.

We are still represented on social media but have left the individual slightly elitist but also divisive approach.

We got tons of work ahead of us and the only way to face it is together.

One woman who joined Gardet wisely said – Stop clinching your fist in your pocket, lay it in the hands of a sister!



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“When things are going well, people get more tolerant as a rule, when things aren’t going well, they get more defensive as a rule. When people feel squeezed there is always a tendency to feel other people somewhere else are controlling everything and we have to wrench control back...”

*Margaret Atwood, author of The Handmaid’s Tale and The Testaments  
Today, BBC Radio 4, 10th September 2019*

Over the past three years the number of hate crimes being committed has increased. The rise in hate crime is across all protected characteristics; race, religion or belief, disability, sexuality or gender identity.

Our society has also seen hate crimes spike after events, for example, the increase in hate directed at communities living within our society after the 2016 Brexit referendum and the terrorist attacks in 2017.

Bradford Hate Crime Alliance works across Bradford District to end hate, in all its forms. We work with all communities to support communities in identifying hate crime and how to report it. We also support victims of hate crime.

If you would like more information about what constitutes hate crime and the reporting pathways in Bradford District, or would like a chat about your experiences of hate, then please do come visit our stall.

Safety4Sisters was established in Manchester, in 2009 by a small, dynamic group of feminist and anti-racist activists who have roots and histories within both the Violence Against Women and Girls and anti-deportation movements.

Our aim is to respond to the extra-ordinary barriers and discriminatory practices that women with no recourse to public funds /irregular immigration status face when seeking access to support, safety and protection from VAWG.

Highlighting the human rights failures that accompany their attempts to live free from gender-based violence, and their heightened exposure to patriarchy, racism, exploitation and poverty, Safety4Sisters is immersed in campaigning on multiple levels.

Against the backdrop of Brexit, the rise of anti-immigrant politics, dismantlement of the VAWG movement and the dire impact of the hostile environment, our organisation we try and carve urgent spaces for sisterhood.



This year we celebrate our 10th Anniversary. Our current projects focus on casework and advocacy and transformative groupwork with the aim of progressing individual women’s experiences of survival into a collective strength.

We believe that the experiences and voices of migrant survivors should be at the very heart of the Women’s Liberation Movement and that immigration is indeed a feminist issue!

[www.safety4sisters.org](http://www.safety4sisters.org)  
[@safety4sisters](https://twitter.com/safety4sisters)

“What is this stupid culture that men talk about to which we must submit? This culture that will send us to our death. I will not – I will create my own”

*Safety4Sisters Women’s Group Member*

# Testimony tailors

Jamila Hanan

## Who are they?

Testimony Tailors is a sewing cooperative of Rohingya women refugees living in the camps of Bangladesh. Some of the women are from amongst the 740,000 stateless Rohingya who fled systematic violence and persecution perpetrated by the Myanmar's military in Rakhine State in August 2017. Others came to Bangladesh during previous influxes again precipitated by catastrophic violence.

These women have a unique model of earning income, helping their families and their neighbours (other refugees). They draw financial support from concerned people all over the world.

## Are they safe now?

The humanitarian response to the Rohingya crises has been patchy. Finance gaps prevail and these naturally have an impact on nutrition, health, the environment and indeed every aspect of Rohingya life in the camps. Figures on infant malnutrition remain at emergency levels. Maternal mortality exceeds levels seen elsewhere.

Ranging from age 16 and upwards, many of the cooperative members have been subject to sexual violence. Psychiatric support/counselling services are extremely limited. Of the 70 women in our cooperative, only one has received counselling and even that was just for one day.

The camps of Bangladesh present a most challenging environment for Rohingya women. Vulnerable refugee populations are often prey to traffickers, and the Rohingya camps are no exception. Cooperative members have experienced gender-based sexual violence, trafficking, and wife abandonment.

## How does the cooperative work?

The camps of Bangladesh provide little in the way of job opportunities for Rohingya women. Employment is formally banned. Rohingya are not recognised as refugees and therefore rights of education, employment, freedom of movement etc do not exist. People are given tokens for rations of oil, rice, lentils and sugar and salt. They are expected to sit idly and survive on these meagre rations.

Cooperative members have been supplied with sewing machines donated by concerned people who want to express their solidarity with Rohingya women. Some have received training on how to use them. Many women already knew how to sew. With the help of Hands4Rohingya, they sell the traditional clothes they make on the internet. The major part of the sale price goes to the tailor, and the item purchased goes to a refugee (a woman or a child). Any cash left over helps build the cooperative, providing essential household goods, sewing equipment and material for further clothes making.

Cooperative members have reported that with this source of income, they are able to buy food, including fresh vegetables and fish. Women have been able to buy mobile phones to communicate with their relatives who are spread across the camps, and their income has enabled them to provide schooling for their children. There is a sense of solidarity amongst the cooperative members and they are eager to do more together to help themselves and their neighbours. The cooperative is a fledgling one, and the struggle now is to provide a minimum amount of income for all the cooperative members on a continuous basis so that their nutritional and other household expenditures needs are met.

<https://testimonytailors.com/>



# The feminist resistance to femicide

Karen Ingala Smith

On New Year's Day 2012, a young woman in Hackney, East London, received a text message from her abusive ex-boyfriend. 20-year-old Kirsty Treloar was trying to extricate herself from the relationship and had been referred to nia, the small charity where I work, just a few weeks before. Miles Williams told her that his New Year's resolution was that he would never hit her again, not this year, not next year or the year after. Kirsty knew by then that his promises were meaningless and told him that she didn't want to see him.

By January 2nd, she was dead.

He had abducted her from her family home and stabbed her more than 20 times and dumped her body by wheelie bins.

Kirsty's murder prompted me to start recording the names of women killed by men in the UK. Later, Clarissa O'Callaghan, who then worked at the international law firm Freshfields and was interested in exploring the extent of state failure to respond to domestic violence contacted me because my blog, Counting Dead Women was the most complete information about men's fatal violence against women in the UK that she could find.

In 2015, in partnership with Freshfields, Deloitte, and Women's Aid, we launched the Femicide Census, the most comprehensive single source of UK information about women who have been killed and the men who have killed them.

The information we have collected for the Femicide Census tells us that for almost a decade, a woman has been killed by a man on average every 3 days, on average a woman is killed by a partner or ex-partner every 4 days.

We know that one third of these 'intimate partner femicides' are committed by a man whom the victim has left, and of those about a third are killed within the first month after a separation and three-quarters within a year. We know this but one of the first questions that come out of people's mouths when we talk about domestic violence and abuse is 'Why doesn't she just leave?'

She doesn't 'just leave' because staying with him is all too often a survival strategy. She doesn't just leave because she's tried before and all the refuges are full. She doesn't just leave because he's told her that she's worthless and convinced her that she can't cope without him. She doesn't just leave because he's told her that social services will take the children off her if she does and it's social services that run the local domestic violence support service. She doesn't just leave because he controls the money and her access to it, whether it's wages or universal credit. She doesn't just leave because all her energy is taken up by just surviving. She doesn't just leave because he's told her that he will find her and he will kill her if she dares.

We need to listen to women. We need to listen to victim-survivors of men's violence who tell us that they find it more helpful and reassuring to reach out to specialist organisations run by women for women. We need to listen to specialist women's charities who say that we're breaking under the scale of cuts and can't meet the level of demand. We need to listen to women like Kirsty Treloar's mum, who is calling for a national register of domestic abusers and stalkers.

We need to take seriously the years of research on the links between sex-roles and stereotypes, sex inequality, prostitution, pornography and men's sexual and domestic violence and abuse. We need to act on emerging research on coercive control and stalking as precursors to murder. We need to recognise that the conditions for men's violence against women go beyond what happens in the family, or policing, and look seriously at wider society. We need to stop accepting men's violence against women as natural and inevitable.

We need to reject language that eliminates the perpetrator's actions and choices and renders sex differences in domestic and sexual violence invisible.



# greater manchester DOULAS community interest company

Doulas are trained women with personal experience of pregnancy and birth, providing continuous physical, emotional and informational support in pregnancy. Greater Manchester Doulas CIC is unique in that we support women through all outcomes of pregnancy, and at the heart of our work is a recognition that human rights abuse in birth is a global epidemic.

We are a grassroots social enterprise seeking to end obstetric violence and the abuse of pregnant women. We provide holistic support to women from pre-conception right through into motherhood, offer education about women's rights and their bodies, and support healing from birth trauma.

Having served women for 10 years we are all too aware of how frequent and normalised abuse is within NHS maternity services. It takes many forms; hostile attitudes of staff, women not being listened to, believed or respected, staff not sharing full information and preventing women from making informed decisions, withholding treatment, pain relief and food, women being manipulated and coerced into intervention, forced examinations and monitoring, routine touching of women's genitalia, unnecessary procedures for the sake of convenience, lying, bullying, threatening... the list goes on.

Some may read this list and come to the conclusion that the system is broken. But it is doing exactly what it's designed to do. It renders broken women, long term dependency on technocratic models, fosters deep disconnection, and convinces us that this is not abuse but a necessary part of bringing new life into the world.

However, our experience of supporting women shows otherwise. Women are the ultimate knowledge on their bodies and babies, and birth is not inherently a medical event. A fulfilling, euphoric, ecstatic birth is our birth rite! That's how we're meant to start motherhood, but is childbirth ever described or depicted as anything other than excruciating and humiliating, something to

be feared? This is yet another way in which women are oppressed on a daily basis.

It is clear that things need to change - drastically and urgently - and this won't come from the systems in power, who disrupt women's sense of self and autonomy, their right to self determination, and the bond between mothers and babies, to fuel patriarchy.

Against the odds, we see women give birth in their full power, with complete autonomy, despite the system - and they are fierce. Through education and unwavering support mothers are born too, with absolute belief in their bodies, and confidence in their intuition and parenting. This is why we do what we do!

Greater Manchester Doulas CIC are part of a revolution and we invite you to join us. We support women to rise up, choose the third way, and live and birth in power, despite oppressive systems.

To learn more about what we do, find radical birth keepers Lauren Parker & Elle James at [www.greatermanchesterdoulas.com](http://www.greatermanchesterdoulas.com) or email [hello@greatermanchesterdoulas.com](mailto:hello@greatermanchesterdoulas.com)

We are also [@greatermanchesterdoulas](https://www.facebook.com/greatermanchesterdoulas) on Facebook and Instagram.



# A Feminist Discourse and Global Implications of Indian Surrogacy

Dr. Sheela Saravanan, Independent Researcher, Germany

The transnational Indian surrogacy markets is a classic case of how rampant violations of human and child rights, women's bodily integrity and medical ethics thrives on global structural inequalities. In the garb of reproductive liberty, the surrogacy practice promotes deeply embedded pronatalist, patriarch, racial and ableist hegemony.

Recently India banned commercial surrogacy, making it available only for heterosexual married couples who experience infertility issues. India banned surrogacy on reported deaths of surrogate mothers and egg donors, custody battles for children, abandonment of disabled and undesired children and exploitation of women, apart from trafficking for surrogacy.

Instead of banning surrogacy altogether, India has followed the UK system of altruistic surrogacy. The downside of altruistic surrogacy is already well known. It is known that couples from the UK have been one of the main clients seeking surrogacy services in India.

As Nepal, India, Thailand, Mexico and Cambodia limited or prohibited commercial surrogacy, the practice has moved to Laos, Malaysia, Kenya, Nigeria, Ghana, South Africa, Argentina and Guatemala. This pattern of globally moving markets that is based on exploitative capitalisation and the control over human reproductive biomaterial by the rich using global inequalities and vulnerabilities is a form of recolonisation of women's bodies and labour.

Capitalism is taking new forms of recolonization of women's bodies and labour through existing global inequalities. Capitalization has racialized and sexualized women's bodies for profits. It also raises globally relevant questions of geneticisation, alienation of the gestational role, human and child rights violations, trafficking and reproductive injustice.

I conducted one study in India in 2009-10 and another follow-up study recently in 2019 to understand the impact of surrogacy on women's physical, emotional well-being and financial benefits. The illegal networks trafficking young girls into prostitution and domestic work from poor localities in India are now also being used for surrogacy.

The surrogacy practice maintains patriarchy through familial persuasion and contracts that controls and exploits women's bodies and triple-alienation; from the children born, from their own body and physical alienation.

My recent study also revealed that; the very poor women had to repeat surrogacy at least twice to come out of poverty, almost all surrogate mothers (93%) think the surrogacy process is a form of slavery and most (67%) felt the process was similar to a form of sexual exploitation of their reproductive organs.

The physical health and emotional impact of surrogacy has been immense on their lives. Applying the reproductive justice framework, I argue that surrogacy is likely to put the surrogate mother through multiple forms of indignity and injustice along with life risk and hence cannot be considered the intended parent's reproductive right.



# Is Egg “Donation” and Surrogacy the Newest Form of Human Trafficking?

Jennifer Lahl, CBC President on September 18, 2019

I’m in Spain at the time of this writing, where I have been invited to speak on the topic of “Reproductive Exploitation.” One of the slides in my talk made the claim that reproductive exploitation is the newest form of human trafficking. Another speaker at the conference, an attorney, disagreed with my claim. This attorney believes that egg donation and surrogacy is definitely exploitative and perhaps violates the human rights of the individual woman and the child, but these practices could not and should not be described as trafficking. I disagreed with her – let me explain why.

Let’s revisit what the United Nations says human trafficking is and allow me to make my case. I think you’ll see that egg “donation” and surrogacy fits within the protocol of what defines human trafficking per the United Nations.

In November of 2000 the United Nations ratified the “Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime.” This lengthy document, known as the “Trafficking Protocol” defines the acts of trafficking, the means of trafficking, and the purposes of trafficking as well as how to prevent trafficking and assist and protect victims of human trafficking. Looking at their definition (which is not meant to be a comprehensive list of the ways and means of trafficking in persons) we can extrapolate their definition and apply it to women who “donate” their eggs or women who serve as surrogate mothers.

Acts of trafficking, include recruitment of persons. Young women are heavily recruited for their eggs and their wombs. Advertisements offering large sums of money to sell their eggs or rent their wombs are a direct means of recruitment.

Means of trafficking, such as forms of threat or coercion, fraud, deception, the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability, or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits. Egg donors and surrogate mothers are coerced by the offer of large sums of money and deceived about the risks and harms. If these risks are mentioned they are downplayed. There is a clear abuse of power over the economically disadvantaged donor or surrogate. The contracts these women sign is full of threats of



breach of contract language for any non-compliance. Calla Papademas, in “Eggsploration,” suffered a stroke in her attempt to sell her eggs. She was told she failed to disclose a pre-existing medical condition (which she was unaware of therefore unable to disclose it) and therefore was paid only \$750 for failure to complete her donation cycle. Her contract had promised her \$15,000. Calla will never be able to have her own children due to her stroke. Kelly Martinez, in “#BigFertility,” was lied to repeatedly in one surrogacy arrangement and told if she didn’t go along with a scheme the agency and intended parents cooked up, she’d have to pay the money back and keep the children. People in position of power abuse the vulnerable women they recruit.

Purposes of trafficking: exploitation, which is at the heart of trafficking, for the purpose of forced labor or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude, or the removal of organs. I often say, read a surrogate contract and tell me she isn’t enslaved for the duration of the pregnancy! Watch our films, “Eggsploration” or “Breeders: A Subclass of Women?”, or “Maggie’s Story” or “#BigFertility” and tell me these women weren’t recruited, enslaved, exploited, or deceived. These films alone show how egg donors and surrogate mothers are put in a vulnerable position by those with more power over them.

Egg donors and surrogate mothers are manipulated into vulnerable positions where the more powerful are motivated by the monied interest of their eggs or the baby(s) they are carrying.

For those who might say that women have given their consent, the Trafficking Protocol says, consent is



irrelevant where any means of the act of trafficking have been used.

So, if a woman has given her consent, but has been recruited, coerced, deceived, given money or gifts, and exploited, that nullifies any consent she has given. Of course, the case of women trafficked for their eggs or wombs, in the poorest of countries, is more evident. But the white-collar crime happening in wealthy countries like Canada and the U.S., still fits within the Trafficking Protocol definition.

I've written in the past that the industry of egg "donation" fits within the protocol of what defines human trafficking per the United Nations.

I believe this definition expands to the area of egg donation and surrogacy as well. While in Spain, I spoke with Mats Paulsson, head of the Human Trafficking Unit of the Gothenburg Police in Sweden. He had never

thought about egg "donation" and womb rental as a trafficking concern but had his eyes opened after hearing my presentation. He confirmed my belief that this most definitely can fit within the definition of trafficking. Paulsson suggested I reach out to Valiant Richey, Deputy Coordinator, Office to Combat Human Trafficking at OSCE. I contacted Mr. Richey through LinkedIn and we've had a private exchange about my concerns. He did say he had been hearing a lot about the surrogacy issue and I offered my assistance if he wanted to hear more.

I'm still standing by my claim, that not only are the human rights of these women violated (as well as the children born of their reproductive bodies, but that's for another piece!), but these women, per the U.N. definition of human trafficking, are also victims of this abuse as well. Just as we would agree to abolish (not regulate) slavery, the buying and selling of a human being, we must work to abolish the exploitation of women for their eggs and wombs.

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## Where was the art when I needed it most?

Jill Boyd

Visual Artist and Domestic Abuse Survivor

Women victims of domestic abuse rarely visit art galleries, art-specific spaces or environments that could show them another way of being, of a chance to get free of their male abuser, or even to raise a smile. Women are a monitored and controlled individual in an abusive relationship.

We are alone in our world of secrecy and pretence where we have been slowly manipulated to become an isolated being.

As a female survivor of domestic abuse, I want to see creativity in the supermarket where I was only allowed to go; in the school yard where I was allowed to pick up my child after school, and in the everyday life I had to exist within. I was the everyday 'on hold' artist who wanted to be with her art as before, to express and process the world around her. I wanted to communicate and cry out what I was feeling.

My way of coping was always to be creative and that was taken from me during my marriage. I eventually left, but am still struggling to rebuild who I was, but I am not alone anymore and I have my art back.



The Creative Butterfly Project CIC

Founded by Jill Boyd

Using creativity to recover and rebuild after abuse.

I now share what I do with other women through the Creative Butterfly Project CIC ([www.thecreativebutterflyproject.com](http://www.thecreativebutterflyproject.com)) . It's just a way of coping that may help.

The new adventure is the Lioness Course with the support of the Safer Communities Fund. Women are lionesses trying to protect and help their cubs. They need support and to be with other women



# **SURVIVOR UPRISING**

**Survivors, Allies, Activists and Organisations are uniting together in condemnation and protest of the UK Family Court's treatment of Domestic Abuse survivors!**

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OF THE CHANGE**



# Family courts: The elephant in the room

Anonymous: 'Mel'

I used to wonder why mothers and their children who have experienced domestic violence seemed to have a horrendous experience when the family courts became involved. I could not understand why perpetrators of abuse were getting contact based on their needs, and changes in residency were granted in favour of them. I could not understand how rights of contact were more important than the risk of continued violence, why mothers' allegations were repeatedly ignored or why they fell silent when they entered the family court domain.

It was only through my personal experience of the family court, and the impact this had on my family members, that I understood. The experience opened my eyes to an institution which I was led to believe was set up to protect victims, support parents and their children and ensure that decisions were safe, that they were in a child's best interests.

Instead, I've found that family courts are a deeply flawed archaic system set up by men for men. Discrimination against women is institutionalised. They are not fit for purpose.

I became an unwitting observer of how the police, CAF/CASS, social workers, solicitors, barristers, the family courts and, most notably, the judiciary handle contact and residency, and how outdated and out of touch they are. I found a system that rewards perpetrators of abuse; one that is deeply flawed, traumatic and victimising, focused on profit. It is sexist: its philosophy of 'gender-blindness' actually means men's needs and maleness are the normative and needs specific to women are not taken into account.

So when it comes to addressing the fact that domestic violence is disproportionately violence of men against women, in family courts a gender-neutral stance is taken, whereby gender-based violence is seen as mutual and equal (Macdonald 2017).

Two thirds of child custody cases involve allegations of domestic abuse or violence (Birchall & Choudhry 2018). Abusive fathers are twice more likely to seek custody than non-abusive men (Bancroft 2018). This is routinely ignored as there is a preconceived idea that the majority of women lie or have brainwashed or programmed their children to denigrate the other parent (Gardner 2002, Meier 2013). This is known as Parent Alienation Syndrome. It has become an underpinning component of

decision making in the family court arena: all reports of abuse are false (Goldstein 2017, Goldstein 2017a, Meier 2013, Saunders et al. 2011).

"The willingness to pathologize capable mothers even extends to mothers' "warm, involved" parenting—which they assert can powerfully fuel alienation in a child". (Johnson et al., 2005, p.208: Kelly and Johnson 2001 cited in Meier 2013)

"...virtually any loving parenting by the mother can be labelled a form of "alienation" Meier (2013)

Parent Alienation Syndrome seeks to remove the importance of the unique role of the mother/child bond and seeks to justify the behaviour of the father by neutralizing and undermining the seriousness or validity of allegations of abuse (Meier). The outcome is to remove the child from their mother and break the bond, to place the child with the alleged abuser and deny a normal relationship with the primary attachment figure (their mother) (Goldstein 2017).

This strange remedy paralyzes victims, who are scared to raise allegations of domestic abuse in family courts for fear of retribution from the courts through unsafe contact and change of residency.

Consequently, courts enable perpetrators of abuse to use the court system to continue this abuse, putting mothers and their children at risk. Embedded ideologies marginalise safeguarding issues (Macdonald 2017).

Family courts as they stand are prejudiced, stigmatizing, victimising and traumatising. They replicate the inequalities of society by treating mothers differently. The statement of the father has more bearing on the case than the statement of the mother. In a reflection of society's scrutiny of mothers, there is less pressure on men than on women to 'prove' their parenting skills. If the relationship between the mother and the father breaks down, the mother is scrutinised, and the onus is on her to ensure the relationship with the father continues regardless of consequences.

Thus, women are made to feel like criminals for trying to protect their children. Any action they take is seen as trying to thwart contact – alienation. Humiliation and disbelief are routine, as is coercion to force contact.

These approaches destroy family life and fail to protect the child. For the mother, the experience often leads to PTSD and other long-term negative effects on her physical and mental well-being. For the child, it is an Adverse Childhood Experience and the effects are lifelong. There is no recourse and no accountability. But this is seen as an inevitable consequence for which the mother is usually blamed, even when the decision to go to court was a necessary one: "What do you expect when you go to court over a child custody dispute? That's the risk you take!"

Just as no one is accountable for the long-term detriment to parents' and children's mental health, no one in the family courts is accountable for unsafe decisions. You can complain about a Judge's attitude, whether they swear or if they fall asleep, but you can't complain about dubious unsafe decision making. Fiction becomes fact, affecting judgements made further on in the process. As Macdonald found in her research, CAFCASS routinely ignore historical evidence and demonstrate poor investigation. Parental Alienation Syndrome stops any further investigation into allegations of domestic abuse and post contact abuse.

Family courts are in denial of the fact that domestic violence is disproportionately violence of men against women and if you abuse the parent, you abuse the child. Family courts cannot accept that the court system is being used as a haven for perpetrators of abuse.

Family courts must reform to better support women and their children. Domestic violence allegations must be thoroughly investigated, and victims supported. They have a right to feel and be safe. They need to urgently implement a zero-tolerance approach to domestic abuse and violence by urgently addressing this. A child is not a package. Best interests should not be determined based on contact and residency because an abusive father demands this. If a child's welfare is paramount, contact at all costs does not fit into the equation of promoting a relationship. A child has a right to a non-abusive relationship with a non-abusive father.

Unless the family courts change how they treat women and children, then perpetrators of domestic violence will go unpunished and the risk they pose to women and their children will continue.

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# Gracie Greylag the Protofeminist

Suniti Namjoshi

Geese have no sense. Their liver is delicious. They lay golden eggs. Their purpose in life is to be fattened for Christmas. It was all nonsense, or should have been nonsense. She was sick of being typecast. True, there were choices on offer. But such choices! Most of them lethal!

She decided she would deconstruct her destiny, and then reconstruct it. At the very least she would declare which lies – or possibly truths - on the nature of geese would henceforth be told.

"Geese are egalitarian," she began. "When they come across something particularly delicious, they share it with other geese and also with ganders."

"Geese are high fliers. And they have the wit and the wisdom, the stamina and stoicism, to go vast distances and navigate through weather."

"There was once a goose," she went on, "who managed to save the entire planet. The weather had been bad. It got worse and worse. Extremes of heat were followed by extremes of cold. The sun was acting up, the winds were uncontrolled. It was then that Gracie Greylag spread her wings and took to the air. She buffeted the winds till they settled down. She soothed the waves until at last they were unruffled. She flew higher and higher and had a word with the sun. Once everything was serene again, she informed the world, 'Geese are your guardians. Respect and revere them. Do not exploit them. Golden eggs are mythical.'"

It took a while for the message to get through, but eventually it did, so that thanks to Gracie the lot of geese was much improved.



# The German Model on prostitution is becoming a thing of the past

Manuela Schon, sociologist and feminist activist in Abolition 2014 – For a world without prostitution

Abolitionism has a long tradition in Germany: The brave activists of the so called first wave of the women's movement were eager to destroy the moral double standards and spread Josephine Butler's ideas in Germany. Their efforts were successful, but activism came to a halt when the Nazis took over and re-invented brothels in Germany.

When the abolitionist movement became a thing again in 2013 it was extremely uncomfortable to raise your voice against prostitution in Germany. It was such an outlaw position, that voicing it made you feel like a complete freak. Feminism was dominated by its liberal brand, portraying everyone who spoke out as a "whorephobic". Activists who fought this fight in "the belly of the beast" feared for their reputation, their jobs, their livelihoods.

Only seven years later the situation is completely different: not only has the movement gained traction and is becoming bigger and more powerful. Also political circles, that used to be extremely opposed to the idea of the Nordic Model and the criminalization of johns, have become more open to it. Namely the political left, university groups and parts of the media seem to be in a mind-changing-progress.

Change within the political parties spread slowly from the grassroots to those in the top positions.

While the Nordic Model wasn't even up for a discussion in the 2016 legislation process (that led as a result to a mandatory registration and health counseling for prostituted persons), now more and more members of the Bundestag (the national parliament) are coming out publicly in favor of an abolitionist stance.

Before summer break the social democrats announced they will initiate a intergroup working committee to work towards the Nordic Model. In September the conservative governmental party group came out in favor of this policy. A voting majority in the Bundestag is now within our grasp.

The battle isn't won yet, but to see – starting from a handful of online activists that found each other – how our many grassroots have spread and come into blossoming is so encouraging. Today we can say more confident than ever: We will bring to an end, what our sisters started more than 100 years ago.



# Centre for Women's Justice

The Centre for Women's Justice was set up in 2016 with the aim of holding the state to account on violence against women. We aim to help women and girls who are subject to male violence get better access to legal remedies to defend and enhance their rights. Women experience serious structural disadvantage within the criminal justice system. Although the women's movement has effected huge change over the past thirty years, statements of intent have not always translated into substantive change, and, as we have seen in the recent precipitous drop in charges being brought in rape cases, there is always the danger of things slipping backwards.

We bring strategic legal challenges to enforce and strengthen the law on violence against women. Cases that we have brought include a successful judicial review of the parole board's decision to release the serial rapist John Worboys (now known as John Radford) after less than ten years of an indeterminate sentence; a judicial review of the CPS decision not to bring charges against the man suspected of killing Jourdain John Baptiste, who fell to her death from her seventh floor flat after being heard screaming for help during an argument with her boyfriend; and a super-complaint against police chiefs in relation to a number of failings to protect women who report rapes to police. We are also in the process of bringing a judicial review of the practice of requiring rape complainants to give police full access to their phones and other sensitive personal data as part of the standard process of investigating rapes and other sexual assaults.



Most recently, on 24th of September, we have lodged a judicial review of the CPS policy on rape, on behalf of the End Violence Against Women Coalition. Despite the CPS' claims that there has been no change of policy we have amassed a large body of evidence to show that the CPS' withdrawal of their 'merits-based approach' is a significant factor in the 44% drop in the number of rape prosecutions since 2014.

We are raising money to help us bring this crucial challenge. We need money for court fees, for expert reports, and because of the risk that EVAW might be ordered to pay the Government's costs if we lose the case.

Please consider contributing at <https://www.crowdjustice.com/case/justice-after-rape/>

***"Rape is the only crime where the victims become the accused – the whole investigation was about me, my medical records, my previous behaviour, my character".***



Rebecca\*,  
Survivor

\*Not her real name



# My SODA Story

Samantha Billingham

Our relationship had been on and off for 3 years, I say on and off because there had been many times that I had left but he always had this way of being so charming and caring toward me, saying the right things that I needed to hear, that I would always go back to him.

He controlled every aspect of my life from what I wore, who I spoke to, even when I slept but he did it in such a way that it made me feel as though he was treating me this way because he cared for me. I never saw it as control.

My ex-partner slapped me, splitting my lip as I held our ten-month-old daughter in my arms and it was at that point of our 3 year relationship that I knew something had to change. I knew I had to leave, for the sake of my daughter.

I finally found the courage to leave him in November 2006 and it was only when I left the relationship that I realised I had been a victim of domestic abuse. My support had been to attend an 8-week awareness course of everything I had survived!



So in May 2009 I set up an online support group called SODA, Survivors of Domestic Abuse. It is a safe haven for those who have experienced domestic abuse to come together without judgement, it raises awareness and reduces isolation. It offers support nationwide.

SODA gives me the opportunity to share my stories at various events across the country, such as conferences to raise awareness within the community not only for victims but also professionals working with victims of domestic abuse.

I now use the media as a platform to share my story with others in the hope that it inspires them that if they are in an abusive relationship, there is life after domestic abuse.

I continually raise awareness through my column that I write for a local newspaper called the Express & Star. 1 in 4 women and 1 in 6 men will experience domestic abuse at some point during their lifetime so for me, raising awareness is vital.

My story has taken me from victim, to creator of SODA to Ambassador for a Charity called The Haven Wolverhampton, where I get involved in various events to help raise the profile of the work that they do. On 1st July 2019 I set up a petition to make domestic abuse policies mandatory in the workplace, here is the link, please feel free to share and sign:

<https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/263104>

**We need your help...**

We need **HANDBAGS, TOILETRIES, SANITARY PRODUCTS** and old but working **MOBILE PHONES** to give to those fleeing domestic abuse.

[www.sodahq.uk](http://www.sodahq.uk)



# The Older Feminist Network

## Campaigning with our Flags Flying

*Older Feminist Network women marching in support of Million Women Rise*



The Older\* Feminist Network (OFN) was formed in 1982 as an initiative from Spare Rib magazine's collective and has met regularly ever since. Many of us had experienced ageist attitudes and behaviours in the movement as well as in society generally and we wanted to do something about it. Ageism still prevails, so we continue our work to counter the negative stereotypes of ageism and sexism that older women experience. We work to create links with younger and older women in other organisations and in other countries by exchanging newsletters and information. We also act in solidarity with younger women and wider feminist issues.

*(\*Note: Older is a self defined description).*

The OFN meets on the second Saturday of every month from 11.30am to 4.30pm at the wheelchair accessible Millman Street Community Centre in London. We have speakers, discussions, workshops, actions (and parties!) We bring food to share for lunch and everyone is very welcome. We print the OFN Newsletter six times a year to ensure that women who don't have access to, or who can't use, computers are not left out. It is also available digitally. For more information please send an email to: [ofn.newsletter@gmail.com](mailto:ofn.newsletter@gmail.com).

At the time of writing we are redesigning our website: <http://www.olderfeminist.org>.

*Photograph © Mary Thompson*



The Sheila McKechnie Foundation is the UK's leading provider of training and support to those seeking to bring about positive social change. We act as a powerful voice for this community, and celebrate excellence through our National Campaigner Awards.



## Training & Consultancy

We deliver a wide range of training including one-day campaign workshops, our five-day influencing Change programme, intensive masterclasses and a range of consultancy support in all aspects of planning, delivering and evaluating campaigns.

*"Great course, thank you so much. I've learned absolutely loads and feel so much more prepared and able to take on 'campaigning'! Great trainer too, perfectly pitched and good balance of learning exercises."*

## Connecting and Celebrating

We bring the campaign community together and celebrate success. The SMK National Campaigner Awards are a highlight in the campaign community calendar. Each year, we celebrate the best in campaigning, change-making and activism. Previous winners include: The Hillsborough Campaign, Amika George and Patrick Vernon.

*"The Awards are a breath of fresh air for us; awards where real impact is acknowledged, celebrated and supported in a way that also helped to share knowledge and experience rather than pitting nominees against each other."*



## Thought Leadership

We work to ensure the public and policy environment for campaigning is supportive, and undertake research to inform thinking and practice in campaigning and social change. For instance, we launched the **Social Power Report** in 2018 which asks: "What we can learn about how social change is happening that can strengthen civil society's efforts?"

We have also set up **The Change Network**, which takes place every few months. We explore instances of successful change and offer campaigners and change-makers the opportunity to connect with others. We have a **Social Power Podcast** so that conversations that take place at this event are accessible to everyone!

# The *Copihue* and the Condor

Consuelo Rivera-Fuentes

Licanray loved diving naked in the river which flowed noisily near her house made of mud and straw. Her friends, the sparrow, the swift and the chucao, used to wake her up at dawn with their broken songs of freedom and joy. The willow and the mañío tree offered her their protection from the sun in the hot, humid summer. The tiny, brown pudu ate with no fear from her rough hand; the alpaca loved warming her up with her wet breath. The salmon and trout laughed with the sliding laughter of fish; happy to see the adolescent enjoy the hug of transparent waters.

Her favourite friend, however, was a puma of bright and deep eyes, beautiful soft fur and ferocious claws which could tear to pieces the bravest of the warriors. However, they were like the wings of a butterfly when they caressed the princess, who had given the feline the name of Maputen. She looked at herself in her eyes, caressed her back, kissed her face and ran with her in a perennial game of laughter and language that only the two of them could understand.

‘Why are you always so sad?’ asked Maputen, licking the round face of the woman.

‘It is not sadness; I’m always very angry because my lineage, whatever that means, has destined me to offer my drum of life to Guenechen, the cruel god of life and death.’

‘Can’t you just run away with me into the mountain?’

‘I wish I could, but my father and brothers would have to share the shame and the anger of Guenechen. My younger brother would never be elected as the cacique of the tribe and my other brothers and sisters could never become warriors or hunters.’

The puma didn’t ask any more questions, but she wondered why Licanray couldn’t just free herself from that responsibility. Life was supposed to be lived by everybody. She tore another bloody piece of flesh from the chulengo she had just caught that morning and stopped thinking about Licanray’s strange way of facing responsibilities and beliefs.

The princess enjoyed her transitory life trying to immerse her round hips in the green of the trees and ferns, and soak her soul in the blue transparency of the southern waters. She loved the smell of Maputen, and the blinding brightness of the snow in the nearby volcano, which from time to time threw up her rage in a murdering river of fire and lava.

One early afternoon, as she rested her head on Maputen’s warm belly, she saw one of the women warriors of the tribe entering the river to refresh her body, tired and bruised from the exercises of combat. She was shorter and stronger than the princess; her muscles had the hardness of oak and her skin showed the scars of some battle injury, smooth and beautifully dark.

Licanray’s eyes attracted the warrior’s who stared at the magnificent scene of the naked princess and the puma lying idly by the river.

‘Pachamama be with you, Licanray’, said the warrior. ‘I am Millaray.’

The princess was not surprised when the warrior called her by her name. Everybody knew who Licanray was. But she was amazed to feel fire flowing from her nape to her chest and then to her womb when Millaray slowly, very slowly approached her without uttering another word.

Millaray had been raised by her parents in the secrets of hunting and they had prepared her body for the struggle against the white invaders. She had grown up in the woods and frequently went hunting for guanacos. She played chueca and practised the mysteries of war every day. Although she was only 17 years old, she had gone on several raids to fight the intruders who had killed her mother and raped her sisters. The thought of the white knives penetrating her mother’s exhausted body always gave her the strength to plunge her fighting spear into the murderers’ flesh.

After their first encounter, the two women met every day by the river to chat and swim naked in the cold water.

‘Don’t look at me like that.’

‘Like what?’ asked Licanray

‘Like you are going to take my breath away in your eyes.’

‘Well, I’m going to, but not only in my eyes. In my lips, as well’, said the princess, sinking her hands

in the warrior's black hair and tenderly kissing her face, nose, eyes, neck many shivering times...feeling Millaray's strong heart beat in her throbbing mouth.

Maputen, the only witness of these encounters, cried with dry tears, did not hunt to eat and gradually lost away her silky fur, weight and the joy of living. Her piercing eyes only lit up when Licanray caressed her head or sang in her ear when the woman warrior was not present. She struggled against a strong, excruciating wish to tear off Millaray's breasts each time the two women laughed with the flowers they both adorned their hair with, after having turned love into a melting whirlpool of tongues and sighs.

The puma did not understand why Dawn and Sunset felt so happy for the daily meeting of the two lovers or why the butterflies scattered dust of stars on their shiny hair. She only wanted to take the skin off Millaray's hands each time she stroked the naked body of the princess. Still, she had to admit that the crops were abundant, probably due to the joy of living that the passionate young women transmitted to everything they touched.

Eventually, she learnt to live with her feelings, recovered her appetite and even accompanied Millaray when the woman went hunting or to battle against the metallic men who wanted to subjugate their people.

Summer and autumn died away. Rain, hail and frost silvered the avellanos leaves and burnt the crops. Mud covered the soft carpet of moss and the storm took possession of the heart of the machis who refused to treat the suffering people until a princess was sacrificed to placate the fury of Pillán, the god of rain, thunder and lightning. Despite the growing starvation and the mud surrounding their rucas, the two young women nourished each other with that untransferable love that transcends flesh, without suspecting that in the nearby village their fathers, brothers, Toquis and Caciques were deciding the death of their terrestrial love.

'Pillán is angry with us; we must send the spirit of our three virgin princesses to him to appease his fury. The huinca men will take possession of our land if his rage does not stop eating up the bodies of our young children, warriors and wise old men'. Licanray's father said this with his hoarse voice cracking like a chestnut shell and a wet look in his tired eyes.

The day came when Licanray saw her father dressed up for the ritual; his eyes glowing with emotion, pride and sadness. Then she knew...

She was not prepared for the surprise. She had always known that her shadow would live in the mountain of fire and that she would sleep a long and everlasting sleep. But now, her body, her mind, pleaded pity to her father and brothers...everything in vain, however; absolutely in vain.

Everybody and everything was ready for the sacrifice of the virgins. Now the rain would stop, there would be food for the tribe and the warriors would have the strength and wisdom to face the cruel and bloody struggle against the whites.

The machis, traditional healers and religious leaders, washed Licanray with rain water, combed her black hair and put on a headband made of red wool and a trarilonko (silver ornament) on her forehead. They dressed her with the black dress of the maidens and adorned her chest with a silver necklace called trapelacucha. The wrinkled ashy faces of the machis showed contempt and anger at the sight of the shaking, terrified princesses begging for their lives.

'You should be happy to have been chosen by our wise men to live forever with the god up there in the mountains. Why are you making such a fuss?' said a machi with the cold voice of women who have seen life and death too many times to be impressed by a weeping princess. 'Come on, walk now!'

Before walking to the sacrifice altar, where the cinnamon tree was waiting for her with its penetrating smell, Licanray, with no more tears to shed, talked to Maputen, who had tried to comfort her with a sad shadow of love in her feline eyes.

'Maputen, my love, bring Millaray to me, to the white mountain, run, Maputen! I need to see her once more.'

The high mountain was already throwing up thick and black smoke in a lustful happiness for the three souls it was going to swallow.

When the sun set, the priests raised their silver knives and three chests felt the thorn drilling, the blade penetrating, tearing tissues. The three virgins could feel the warm blood gushing out through the

open wound and the priests' hands poking in their chests to take out the palpating scarlet hearts.

Maputen and Millaray also felt the torment, the savage pain of martyrdom: Licanray was calling them, sharing her agony with them. The feline and the warrior ran to the furious, roaring mountain, climbed and climbed; their chests open, their hearts bleeding, their brains melting away with the princess's anguish. Finally, they arrived at the open mouth of the volcano which had fused with the princess. One mountain and one princess, screaming, yelling, expelling their life in hot, glistening rocks and Licanray's woman love in infernal fire.

Her flaming blood ran down the slope burning her beloved trees and animals, incinerating her sisters and dissolving the pride of her race under the ardent lava of her ghost trying to escape the fatal marriage to the starving god of death. The black

cloak the machis had dressed her with, turned into jet-black feathers, the silver necklace into a silver collar, the band on her forehead turned out to be a red crest and her dark arms gave shape to impressive black wings.

Free at last from the excruciating pain of fury and duty, Licanray flew to the top of the volcano to see her lovers, the warrior and the puma, hugged in death, their souls fused together in one beautiful, red tear-of-blood flower.

Since those times it is possible to find, down the slope of southern volcanos and hills, red copihues intertwined. Do not cut them, for if you do, you are killing Millaray and Maputen again. If you look at the light blue sky, you'll see the haughty, majestic condor flying over the crater of volcanos. Do not kill her; it is Licanray's soul wanting to kiss the red copihues. If you kill her, she'll die for ever.

---

## Poetry Prescribed

Miss Yankey

***How groundbreaking project Poetry Prescribed are using spoken word poetry to spark change.***

Poetry Prescribed is a project that uses spoken word poetry as a catalyst for conversation. They believe that poetry can promote good mental health and well-being. During their workshops, they invite participants to read, listen, speak, create and share poetry; with the aim of providing a safe space for people to come together and express themselves. They have provided workshops for a wide range of clients including; Southall Black Sisters, London City Hall, MIND, Rethink Mental Illness, Royal College of Psychiatrists, Southwark Council, Birmingham City University, and the Museum of The Mind.

They are currently preparing to pilot a new complementary health course for domestic abuse victims, survivors, supporters, and workers. The course will offer an insight into domestic abuse from a multitude of victim and survivor perspectives in the form of spoken word poetry; alongside digital presentations, interactive exercises and creative assignments. This course is designed to



be accessible and beneficial to all. Whether you be a victim, survivor, supporter, advocate, qualified DV worker, or any other health or social practitioner.

It doesn't matter if you have a deep and detailed understanding of domestic abuse, or haven't even scratched the surface — by the end of this course you will hopefully have taken away something valuable. The power of your untapped creativity is more easily accessible than you think; and it will aide you not only in your own personal journey- but in social and professional settings too.

Please contact [info@poetryprescribed.com](mailto:info@poetryprescribed.com) should you wish to enquire about facilitated pilot courses in the London and Greater London area.



Wendy Davies

We are delighted to take part in the FILIA 2019 Conference, running a workshop about Women's Spaces with Vivienne Hayes, Linda Bellos, Karen Ingala-Smith and Nadia Baksh.

Visit our website to find out more!  
[www.roomsofourown.org.uk](http://www.roomsofourown.org.uk)

When the sun set, the priests raised their silver knives and three chests felt the thorn drilling, the blade penetrating, tearing tissues. The three virgins could feel the warm blood gushing out through the open wound and the priests' hands poking in their chests to take out the palpitating scarlet hearts. Rooms of our Own was set up to explore new ways of creating and sustaining spaces for women that cannot be taken away from us. We have lost SO many women's buildings and organisations. Our idea is that we should own buildings ourselves through a Community Benefit Society and that we should use housing to cross-subsidise the creation of our buildings.

We were in the process of buying a site which unfortunately fell through, so we are still looking for another suitable site to build our pilot. At present we are talking with the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham – so if any of you live or work there please get in touch! [roomso4own@gmail.com](mailto:roomso4own@gmail.com)

Rooms of our Own does not want to provide any services; we only want to provide the affordable, accessible, green, sustainable space. However below shows some of the activities we imagine will be happening in the space. All ideas welcome!





MUSSARAT RAHMAN: Lunar Goddess, made from reclaimed materials and embellishments.

# Survivor Alliance UK

Nancy Esiovwa

Survivors of human trafficking are not receiving support they deserve. I am one of them and I am fighting for change.

I am a member of Survivor Alliance UK which has been running since 23rd of April 2018. We have over 180 members around the world about 40 in the UK.

Survivor Alliance was created to unite and empower survivors. We as survivors in the UK are fighting for our freedom from the Home Office, after escaping from traffickers and we feel Freedom is not merely the lack of enslavement. We believe that everyone deserves freedom to whatever freedom means to them. We want to support every members journey toward self-determination, while holding that freedom is a collective journey.

Survivors of human trafficking and modern day slavery are bound by injustices in the UK whereby we have been promised effective and adequate support by the Government to enable us to re- build our lives after being trafficked.

But in reality this is not the case, rather survivors are been encourage to through a system called the NRM (National Referral Mechanism) where you are given 45days for reflective period (But most survivors wait longer than that) then you are been left in the lion den (Home Office) to try and sort out your immigration status to get leave to remain.

During this period most survivors are destitute, homeless, without support or money to leave on. We are been left in a vulnerable situations whereby we are being exploited and faced with the danger of re-trafficking again.

But in reality this is not the case, rather survivors are been encourage to through a system called the NRM (National Referral Mechanism) where you are given 45days for reflective period (But most survivors wait longer than that) then you are been left in the lion den (Home Office) to try and sort out your immigration status to get leave to remain.

So how does the government help us to re-build our lives?

They aren't. At least not for a majority of us. Some lucky ones get the support they need.

Being part of Survivor Alliance, these are some of the things we have done and taking part in;

- Launched a UK Survivor Network, supported two new leaders to launch chapters in the UK in Bradford and Nottingham, and supporting a third in London
- Consulted (all of these are in the UK) for Minderoo Foundation, West Midlands Anti-Slavery Network, the Rights Lab, U.N Delta 8.7, Freedom Fund, Kindred Agency, University of Sheffield, University of Manchester (in progress)
- Submitted evidence to the Home Office Independent Review of the Modern Slavery Act
- Collaborated with Antislavery Early Research Association on a survivor-researcher day long workshop
- Took part in a campaign for a longer support for survivors and hand in a petition in the Home office and 10 Downing Street.

Survivor Alliance is giving me the opportunity to rebuild my life encouraging survivors to take actions for change. If you would like to contribute please visit [www.survivoralliance.org](http://www.survivoralliance.org).

You can also help us by signing up my personal petition: <https://www.freedomunited.org/advocate/help-victims-like-nancy/>

I made my case public because I want people to be aware of the struggles that survivors from human trafficking and modern slavery are going through in the UK.

# Indestructible

Sharena Lee Satti

*I am a fortress, built from the fire, driven from the depths of hell  
I am the scattered ashes that have risen and has released a wave of  
Thunder in every blood cell  
I am the raging storm that crashes hard against the rocks  
I am the taste you crave, that lingers on your lips, your forbidden detox  
I am indestructible, this soul is untouchable  
This heart is living proof of every scar, every shard, that has pierced my skin  
That has tried to penetrate this life within  
You mistake this fragile soul  
That's shatter proof and in control of my own destiny  
For I am the wild flames that cannot be tamed by todays society*

Sharena Lee Satti is a Bradford born, West Yorkshire poet who started writing at a very young age.

Sharena experienced a very difficult childhood, it's through this she found her voice. She started writing poetry as a form of escape, it became her shield and protection throughout her younger years.

Poetry cleansed the path allowing her to see where she was going. Writing became a huge part of her life.

Sharena is a very passionate and an honest writer who writes poetry about her own life experiences and seeks inspiration from all life existence, and her surroundings.

Sharena leads an active role in her communities, sharing her love of poetry and spoken word in her city and surrounding areas. She is very pro-active and encourages others too, in Schools and Libraries and at spoken word events. Working closely with Bradford networks such as Bradford Council, Bradford Refugee forum and several more.

Sharena is an uprising voice in and paves the way for the younger generation, inspiring others with her powerful poetry and also a beacon of light to many.

She believes poetry is the art of expression and it carries therapeutic healing properties too.

Sharena has recently being associated with Kala Sangam (The artist takeover) Bradford Festival, Bradford Literature Festival, and BBC radio 4, NHS, Balbir singh Dance and Tim Smith Film and photographer, the south square arts centre, Mend, Saltaire festival, Ilkley Lit festival, Bradford Libraries, Leeds Lieder, BBC Leeds, Drystone radio and Bcb Radio.





# Feminist Process

Marian Davis

In the 1970's & 80's - in what is now being labelled as 2nd wave Feminism, we organised many meetings and conferences. How we did this with no social media and few telephones will possibly stretch even the most fertile of imaginations!

The guiding principle was the importance of allowing women to participate in as full a way as they chose, bringing our experience, insights and dreams into a warm, accepting and appreciative atmosphere. We also saw inclusivity and full representation as essential and non negotiable. The notions of Experts and Stars were shot down in flames. Few feminists were able to get published. Newsletters were produced on ancient Gestetner presses which had to be cranked by hand and used toxic ink. Contributions to these was open to all women and editorial control minimal.

We argued and disagreed with each other in fairly fundamental ways, but this didn't lessen our commitment to dialogue and belief in the importance of communication. The sense that our lives depended on finding new ways of understanding the world and fighting the oppression we suffered gave an immediacy, passion and urgency to our discussions so feelings ran very high.

Papers were produced which were read avidly at the start of the conference and these formed the basis of workshops. We sat in a circle, even if numbers necessitated several concentric circles. Women speaking would be visible to most, if a woman was feeling confusion or distress, we could react; if a woman was desperate to make a point or ask a question, that could be accommodated.

Women were able to grow in confidence and awareness through consciousness-raising. I personally had the wonderful experience of being able to sit back, not be anxious about having a chance to speak and hearing other women, often previously unknown to me, voice my ideas and feelings. That recognition and commonality, realising I wasn't the only one, was so strengthening.

What I experience at feminist events now clearly runs counter to this. I think that our present day culture, being based as it is on celebrity and power through wealth has infected feminist discourse, it has lowered our expectations and belief in our own power.

Seeing women sitting in forward-facing rows passively receiving information from the experts on stage and, if there are brave enough, have a chance to ask a question or make a comment at the end fills me with despair. It feels to me as if we've gone backwards 40 years to where women's voices are not being heard.

I and other women my age must accept responsibility for the hiatus feminism experienced where a lot of the advances were lost to memory allowed to fade out of view, and young women genuinely don't know what went before.

I am in no way discounting the contributions of feminist academics and theoreticians and the value of them presenting their work, but there must also be a way for women's lived experiences and material realities to be given their rightful prominent place.

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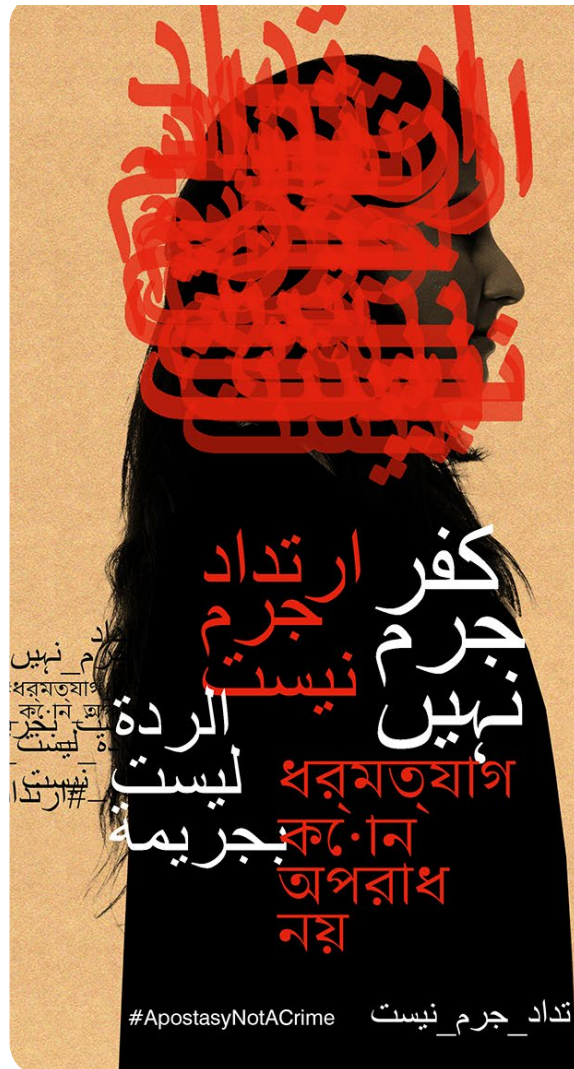
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#ApostasyNotACrime #ارتداد\_جرم\_نیست #الردة\_ليست\_بجريمة #كفر\_جرم\_نهیں #ধর্মত্যাগ\_কোন\_অপরাধ\_নয়

# Women and Islamophobia

Maryam Namazie

“Islamophobia is rooted in racism and is a type of racism that targets expressions of Muslimness or perceived Muslimness” – All-Party Parliamentary Group on British Muslims definition of Islamophobia

The All-Party Parliamentary Group on British Muslims’ ‘Islamophobia’ definition is an assault on free speech but most disturbing is the promulgation of the idea that there is something that can be called ‘expressions of Muslimness’. This is as absurd as speaking of expressions of Christianness or Jewishness or Hinduness and no different from saying there are ‘expressions of Britishness’ - something that the far-Right – and increasingly, mainstream politicians – imply in order to exclude migrants and minorities.

Certainly, we can discuss what it means to be British – or Muslim for that matter. This will inevitably mean different things to different people. But with the Brexit Party, Nigel Farage, Boris Johnson, Tommy Robinson, the Windrush scandal, May’s ‘Go Home’ vans, and her hostile environment, along with the far-Right fascist parties gaining seats across Europe, the promotion of expressions of ‘Britishness’ isn’t as innocent as it is made out to be. In this context, Britishness becomes whiteness. Likewise, promoting ‘Muslimness’ in a world in which the religious-Right is in power and destroying women’s lives and rights is far more ominous than it might initially seem. Like ‘Britishness’, the concept of ‘Muslimness’ is fundamentally about exclusion. Britishness tends to exclude brown and black people. Muslimness tends to exclude doubters, dissenters and any woman who does not know her ‘place’.

The not-so-funny thing about identity politics is that whilst it claims that each particular ‘group’ has a singular identity (as if that were even possible), the identity is so restrictive that it keeps out many more people than it allows in. In fact, that’s the whole point. If you want in, you have to make sure you look the part and follow the rules. If you terrorise a primary school in Birmingham to prevent lessons saying that being gay is OK, if you defend Sharia courts despite their promotion of violence against women, or legitimise apostates being shunned and killed, then you will automatically pass the

‘Muslimness’ authenticity test! Not so much if you are a gay Muslim, or an ex-Muslim, or a feminist who doesn’t want to wear the hijab or a secularist who is opposed to Sharia law.

Another major problem with identity politics is that those with power determine Britishness or Muslimness or Jewishness or Christianness... and the limits of permissibility within these ‘groups’. Therefore, ‘Muslimness’ becomes what Cage, Mend, the Muslim Council of Britain or the Iranian and Saudi regimes say it is. In Trump’s US, Christianness becomes regressive anti-abortion laws and moves to end Roe V Wade...

The promotion of identity politics and ‘Muslimness,’ has, therefore, everything to do with appeasing the religious-Right by pushing the false narrative of an ‘authentic’ Muslim: a homogenised caricature imposed upon a diverse people by fundamentalists-playing-victims. This feeds into stereotypes, and collaborates in the erasure of class politics, dissent and political and social struggles; it diminishes solidarity both within and without the so-called group. Also, ironically, it actually exacerbates racism by insisting that brown and black citizens are ‘different’ and in need of paternalistic protection and treated with hyper-sensitivity in case (god forbid) they start burning books...or worse.

For me, it is clear as daylight: the adoption of any definition of ‘Islamophobia’ is a triumph for fundamentalists. It has nothing to do with combatting racism. Of course, bigotry exists. Racism is a matter of life and death at worst and humiliation and discrimination at best for many people from Muslim, minority and refugee backgrounds. But fighting racism by imposing blasphemy laws gives the impression that something is being done when racism is only being exacerbated by promoting difference and superiority, rather than secularism, citizenship, equality and our common humanity irrespective of background and belief.

# Surrogacy: The Invisible Woman

Heather Brunskell-Evans

I attended a public meeting in Birmingham on September 3rd, one of a number held across the UK as part of the Law Commission's Consultation on the introduction of a new surrogacy law. My purpose in attending was fact finding: Would this meeting, unlike the bamboozling consultation questionnaire, consider the ethical issues central to surrogacy, for example the human rights of the birth mothers and the children they bear?

I slipped into the meeting room a little late. I was just in time to catch the initial framing of the substantive purpose of the consultation. We were told that the overarching premise and guiding principle of Building Families Through Surrogacy: A New Law is how to legitimately help individuals and couples create a family through surrogacy in the UK, not whether this should be legally permissible.

I took notes but did so in a desultory manner since real ethical considerations had been ruled out de facto. I wrote down a number of key aims: At the moment, altruistic surrogacy is legal in the UK but not commercial surrogacy, thus leading to British citizens seeking birth mothers abroad. The government wants to encourage surrogacy agreements in the UK, and to determine its own regulations. We were told that a major aspect of the consultation is the attempt to discern public opinion about one of the most controversial aspects, namely shifting from altruistic to commercial surrogacy. The 'new pathway to legal parenthood' will include a written surrogacy agreement between the 'intended parents' and the birth mother which gives them legal parental status from the child's birth. The birth mother has five weeks to lodge an objection, at which point the case goes before the court and a judge will decide what is in the best interests of the child.

I sneaked a look at the time on my phone: When could I decently escape? This meeting, like the government document with its 502 pages and its exhausting 118 questions (some of which are multi-faceted and most about detail rather than broad ethical issues) was giving me a dull headache. At question time I roused myself from my somnolent condition. I looked around the lecture theatre

wondering about the other attendees and their motivations. Were they academics, social workers, gay men or perhaps infertile women thwarted by the current system of altruistic surrogacy in the UK or the closing of commercial markets abroad e.g. in India or Cambodia? The questions, sometimes interrupted by the noise of a baby who cried intermittently, revealed the audience was made up of a range of people across these groups.

The absent person in the room was the surrogate mother – or should I say the birth mother, since surely the individual to whom the child is then given is the surrogate? I asked: 'What are the motivations of the woman who gestates a baby for another person'? I was assured by the smiling faces and a chorus of voices that women become surrogates for altruistic reasons: The surrogate is an angel; she gets real pleasure and even joy at helping those people otherwise unable to build families of their own.

At some point later the dark shadow of the birth mother emerged through the voice of the man with the baby who described his experiences of commercial surrogacy abroad. He asked: 'Should the new UK law give her a 5 week cooling off period? After all, she may decide to claim the baby which is not contractually hers'? Just like the dichotomy that has hounded women through the centuries – one is either a virgin or a whore – I sensed the resurrection of another old dichotomy – the birth mother is either a ministering selfless angel or a cruel, selfish witch. The birth mothers, of course, are neither of these but flesh and blood human beings caught up in structural, social, economic, psychological and personal circumstances.

I felt despondent. When did 'procreative liberty', 'sometimes termed the right to reproduce' (a central tenet of the consultation) become established as a right beyond ethical question? The biological connection of the birth mother to the child is considered unimportant (despite the fact that being pregnant and giving birth are intense biological, emotional and physical experiences) whereas the father's biological connection to the baby is considered of such importance that a gay man now has the right to reproduce by utilising a woman's body as a vessel. We were told that under

special medical circumstances the law will not require a genetic link between the intended parent and the child. Double donations of female and male gametes will be allowed, including for cases of infertility resulting from transgender medicine. The important thing about surrogacy, we learned, is not necessarily about any biological link, but adults' intention to parent.

When the meeting ended and we all got up to leave, the man with the baby left first. He was applauded as he negotiated the pram through the door. After all, here was a successful example of someone building a family through commercial surrogacy, as the lungs of the crying baby testified.

For those people who want to explore the ethics of surrogacy, there are numerous resources. In her book *Being and Being Bought: Prostitution, Surrogacy and the Split Self* Kajsa Ekis Ekman describes how contrasting heteronormative and queer perspectives, seemingly at opposite poles of the analytical and political spectrum, coalesce around prostitution and surrogacy. Scholars and activists from across the globe will speak at the forthcoming FiLiA Conference: Sheela Saravanan, Jennifer Lahl, Julie Bindel and Renate Klein. Nordic Model Now! has also carried out an excellent analysis of the consultation's flaws and provides a useful link: [How To Respond To The UK Surrogacy Consultation in 10 Easy Minutes](#). Time is of the essence since the consultation closes on October 11, 2019.

## NORDIC MODEL NOW!

Nordic Model Now! is a small UK grassroots women's group campaigning for the abolition of prostitution and related practices (such as lap-dancing, pornography and surrogacy) and for the introduction and effective implementation of the Nordic Model approach to prostitution law and policy.

By abolition we mean a new social consensus that recognises the harm and violence intrinsic to prostitution and the adoption of concrete measures to bring about its eradication while helping those caught up in it to make a new life outside.

Our activism is informed by women who have lived prostitution – both those who are members of the group and those in the wider community. We soon realised that there are many reasons that make it

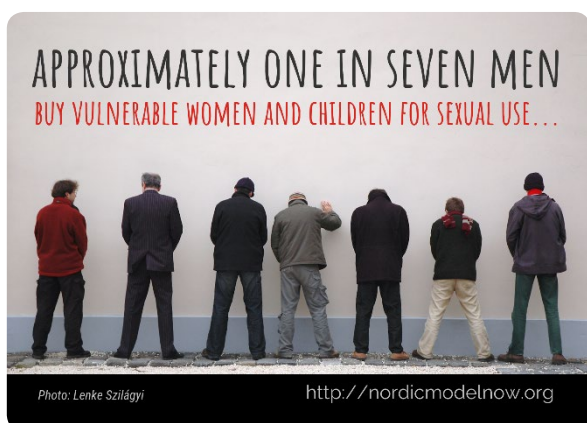


difficult and even dangerous for women to speak out publicly about their experiences. So we have a page on our website where women can enter their stories anonymously.

The stories we have received are overwhelming and heart-breaking. Each one is unique but the themes are similar. This is what one woman wrote: "Thank you so much for providing the material on your website. It helps me to realise what just happened to me.

"I was brainwashed into thinking 'sex work' is a legitimate job that could help me escape the poverty of my childhood and help me reclaim some of the power taken from me during sexual assaults. I was brainwashed by the local prostitution organisation, when I reached out for help, into believing prostitution was 'empowering' me.

"I wish the Nordic Model could be introduced to change the culture and stop women like myself from being brainwashed."



# Feminist songs, fireside chants, songs of peace and protest: Where it all began

Paula Bolton

My “Feminist songs, fireside chants, songs of peace and protest” workshop has been growing year by year, sparked by a chance conversation with Gail Chester round the fire at Women in Tune in 2010.

“Someone should collect and teach our songs so we have something to sing!”

So I started the collection and began delivering workshops and have done so ever since.

There were over 70 women at the 2011 workshop. We started by sharing what they had ever fought for or protested about. What an inspiration! In that room were women and girls who had protested about an astonishing range of issues.

From peace to pensions here is that first list: anti racist, anti fascist, environmental, animal rights, health care, miners strike, steel strike, dockers strike, worker’s rights, international solidarity, palestine liberation, anti cuts, lesbian activists, anti homophobia, housing rights, travellers rights, anti nuclear power, CND, abortion rights, alternative energy, anti military, Million Women Rise, Close down Campsfield, asylum rights, support the NHS, Reclaim the Night, Anti pornography, against sex trafficking, road protestors, Right to life, student activism, tuition fees, anti war.

Women at the forefront of changing the world. There were others fighting to get rehoused, finding a refuge, standing up to employers for a better wage, refusing sexual harassment! On the world stage, locally or personally - we fight for our rights and those of others.

I have repeated this exercise at every subsequent workshop and the list keeps on growing. As does my song collection!

I have always collected songs wherever I travel. But I have a particular interest in making our women’s world audible and visible by collating and passing on songs from the world of women and the world of protest.

Songs encode our vision, tell of our struggles, celebrate our successes.

With modern technology we can pass them on, learn them and sing together when we gather.

In Germany this August at a Radical Feminist retreat, women from 5 countries sang together. In Leeds on 7th September 150 Lesbians sang the same song. In Sweden at the Kvinnorum gathering in 2018 a 6 year old girl stopped my workshop and told me she knew the song already having seen it on You Tube showing another Feminist get together earlier that year!

These songs connect us. Singing together is a great bonding experience. We literally harmonise with one another.

Keep singing! Keep creating! That’s how we keep our culture alive and pass on Herstory. Let’s take back the air waves and fill the world with our songs.

*“They can forbid nearly everything,  
But they can’t forbid me to think,  
And they can’t forbid my tears to flow  
And they can’t shut my mouth when I sing!”*

# Netzwerk Ella

Huschke Mau



Hi, my name is Huschke Mau, I am a survivor of prostitution in Germany and an activist for the Nordic Model since 2014.

In January 2018 I founded Netzwerk Ella, the only survivors-only activist group in Germany. We are women who once were in prostitution and women who still are in prostitution.

We stand in solidarity with all other women in the same situation, but we distance ourselves from the interests of those who profit from the prostitution of others.

We understand prostitution as sexual violence and we are committed to having this recognized. Prostitution is not a service and not a profession, but cause and effect of an unjust relation between the sexes.

Because of this we follow the abolitionist course of engaging against prostitution, but for prostitutes. Prostitution is sexual violence. Because of this it is just to demand responsibility from those who enact the violence. A punishment of buyers is the logical conclusion.

We see, however, that this is not enough. Having women affected by prostitution criminalized is an injustice that we are committed to abolishing. We need neither regulation nor criminalization – we need alternatives, other options, exit support and also trauma therapy.

We see all of this realized in the Nordic, respectively the Abolitionist Model.

This is the model we are committed to.

We also concur with the demands from the Survivors of Prostitution and Trafficking Manifesto which was read out in the European Parliament in 2005:

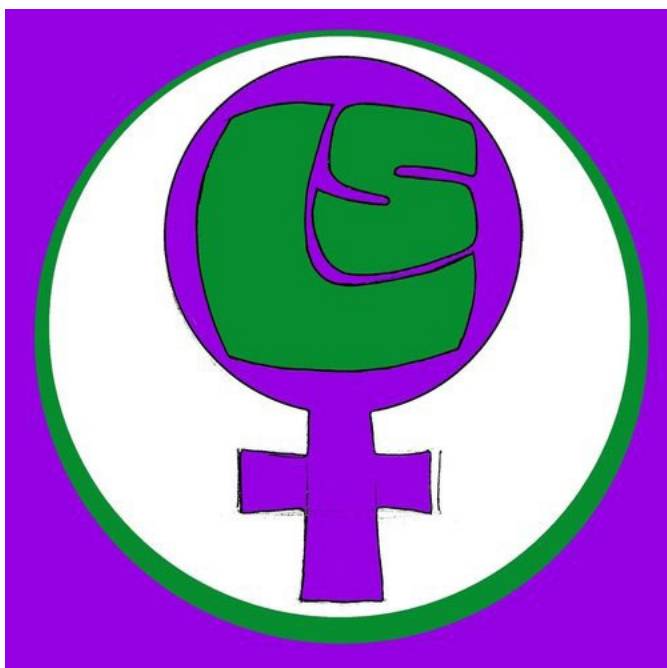
1. Prostitution must be eliminated. Thus, it should not be legalized or promoted.
2. Trafficked and prostituted women need services to help them create a future outside of prostitution, including legal and fiscal amnesty, financial assistance, job training, employment, housing, health services, legal advocacy, residency permits, and cultural mediators and language training for victims of international trafficking.
3. Women in prostitution need governments to punish traffickers, pimps and men who buy women for prostitution and to provide safety and security from those who would harm them.
4. Stop arresting women and arrest the perpetrators of trafficking and prostitution.
5. Stop police harassment of women in prostitution and deportation of trafficked women.
6. Prostitution is not “sex work,” and sex trafficking is not “migration for sex work.” Governments should stop legalizing and decriminalizing the sex industry and giving pimps and buyers legal permission to abuse women in prostitution.

Our website is: <https://netzwerk-ella.de/>

My personal blog about prostitution is <https://huschkemau.de/>

There are English sections on both websites.

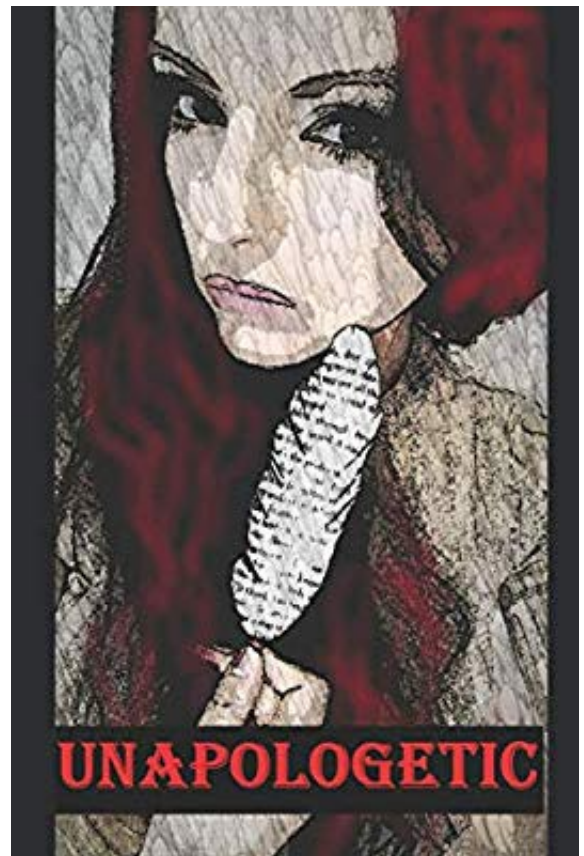
# Stalls at FiLiA 2019

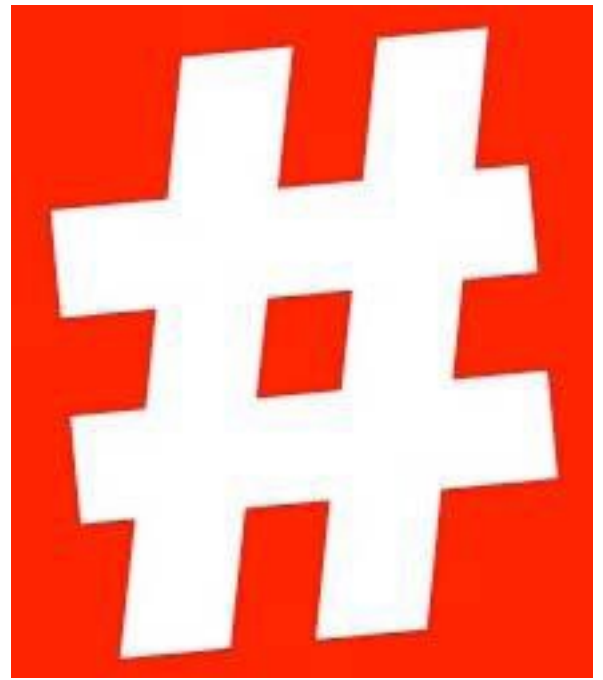
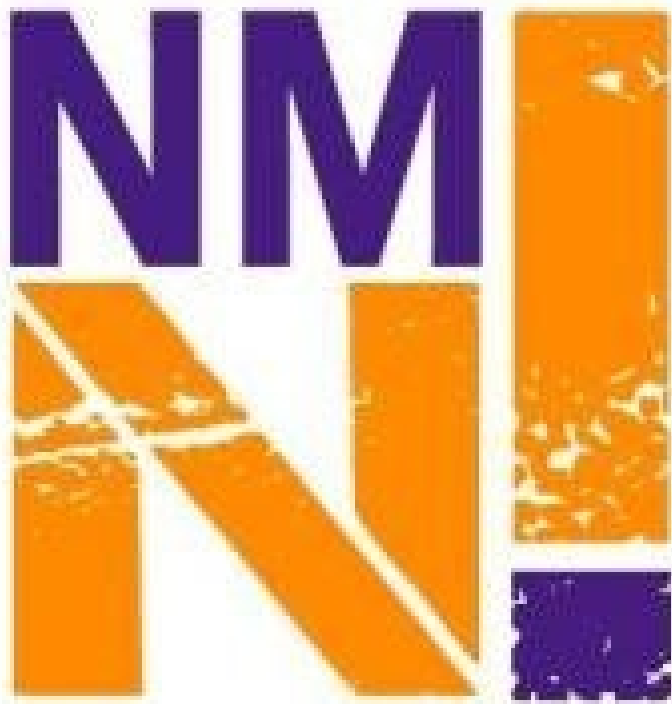


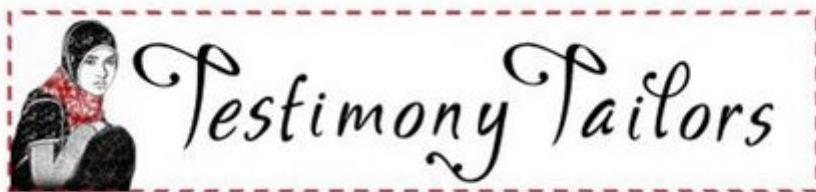




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# Agenda

S A T U R D A Y	OPEN FROM 08:30			
	09:30 - 10:30	FiLiA		
	ROOM	BARKAT BIBI	LILIAN ARMITAGE	RATNER LACH
	11:00 - 12:30	FEMINIST PERSPECTIVES ON THE SEX TRADE	FAILING FAMILIES: WHEN COURTS ABUSE	WOMEN'S HEAL
	12:30 - 13:30			
	13:30 - 15:00	FEMICIDE	VIOLENCE AGAINST LESBIANS	GENERATION FEM
	15:00 - 15:30			
	15:30 - 17:00	FROM 'BORN IN YOUR OWN BODY' TO 'INVENTION OF THE TRANSGENDER CHILD'	CLASS OPPRESSION AND THE EFFECT ON WORKING CLASS WOMEN	APOSTASY AND BLAS
	17:00 - 17:30			
	TWILIGHT SESSIONS 17:30 - 19:00	KEEP CLEAR FOR ROOM CHANGE		MEMORIAL WAL (MEET IN RECEPT
	19:30 - 00:00	FiLiA EVENING PARTY		

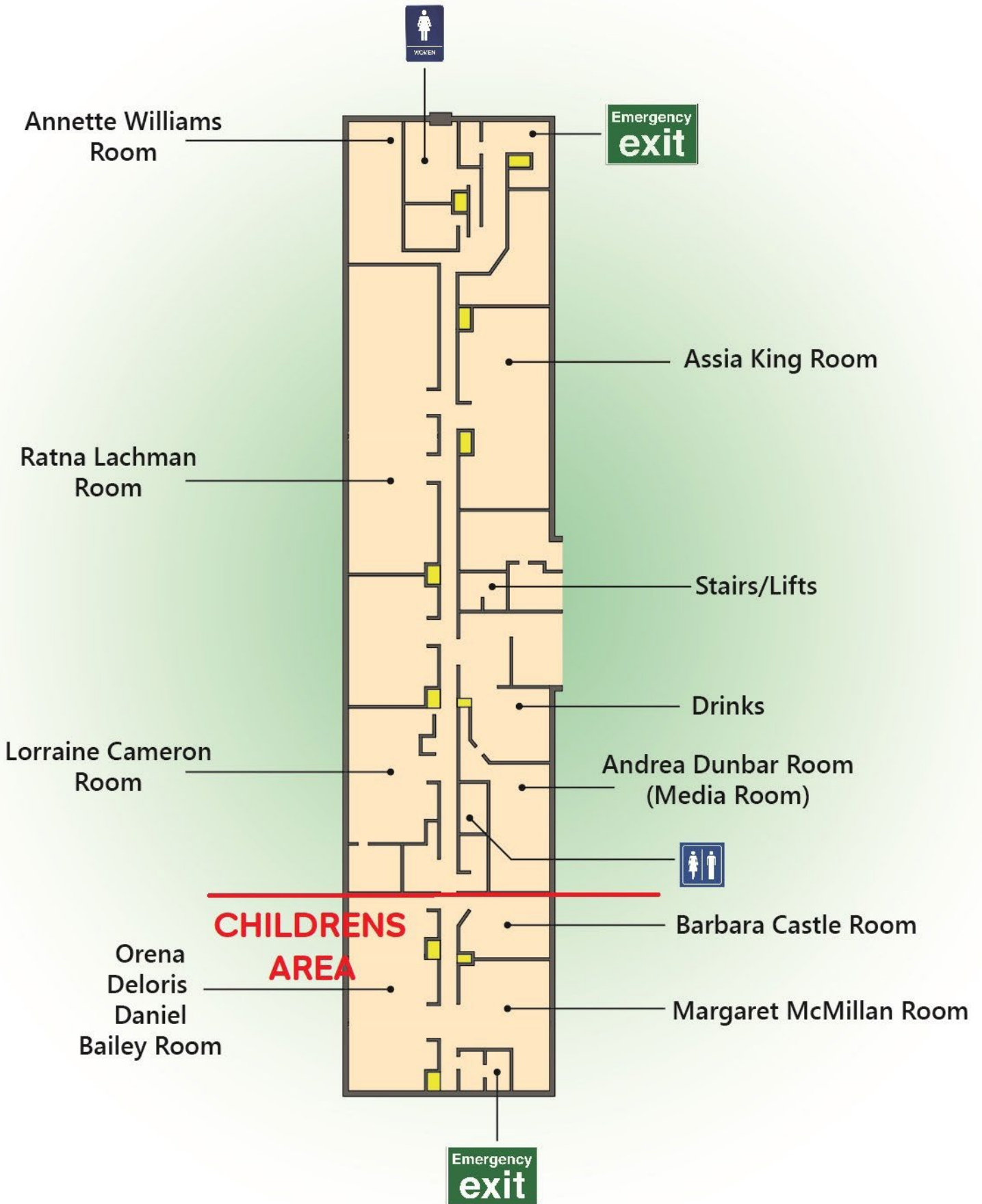
S U N D A Y	OPEN FROM 08:30			
	09:30	BARKAT BIBI	LILIAN ARMITAGE	RATNER LACH
	11:00 - 12:30	FEMINIST PERSPECTIVES ON THE SEX TRADE	WOMEN FACING THE CLIMATE CRISIS	FEMINIST CONTROL OVER T PRODUCTION THE PUBLISHING CI
	12:30 - 13:30			
	13:30 - 15:00	SURROGACY A HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATION	GLOBAL SISTERS: LATIN AMERICA	30 YEARS OF QUES THE CHILD AND WO ABUSE STUDIES U
	15:00 - 15:30			
	15:30 - 16:30			

REGISTRATION			
OPENING IN THE MAIN HALL			
IMAN	LORRAINE CAMERON	ASIA KING	ANNETTE WILLIAMS
TH	HOLDING THE STATE TO ACCOUNT ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS	VOICES OF AFRICAN WOMEN	THE PERIOD CAFÉ
LUNCH			
NIST	'HONOUR' BASED VIOLENCE	WINDRUSH AND HOSTILE ENVIRONMENT	VULVA'S THE WORD
PHEMY	MOVING BEYOND HELPING; EMPOWERING SURVIVORS OF MODERN SLAVERY	WOMEN'S SPACES	BLACK WOMEN'S CONSCIOUSESS RAISING GROUP
K (ON)	FEMINIST SONGS, FIRESIDE CHANTS, SONGS OF PEACE AND PROTEST	INVISIBLE WOMEN	LADY IN RED DOMESTIC ABUSE AWARENESS THEATRE

REGISTRATION			
OPENING IN THE MAIN HALL			
IMAN	LORRAINE CAMERON	ASIA KING	ANNETTE WILLIAMS
HE MEANS OF & RCUIT	FEMINIST CHALLENGES TO WAR	SELF DEFENSE	CONSCIOUSNESS RAISING
LUNCH			
TIONS OMAN UNIT	KURDISH WOMEN'S EXPERIENCES AND POLITICAL ALTERNATIVES	WHAT WOULD A 'NO DEAL' BREXIT MEAN FOR WOMEN?	THE MENOPAUSE CAFÉ
FiLiA CLOSING SESSION			

# Floor Plan for the Bradford Hotel

## Sixth Floor

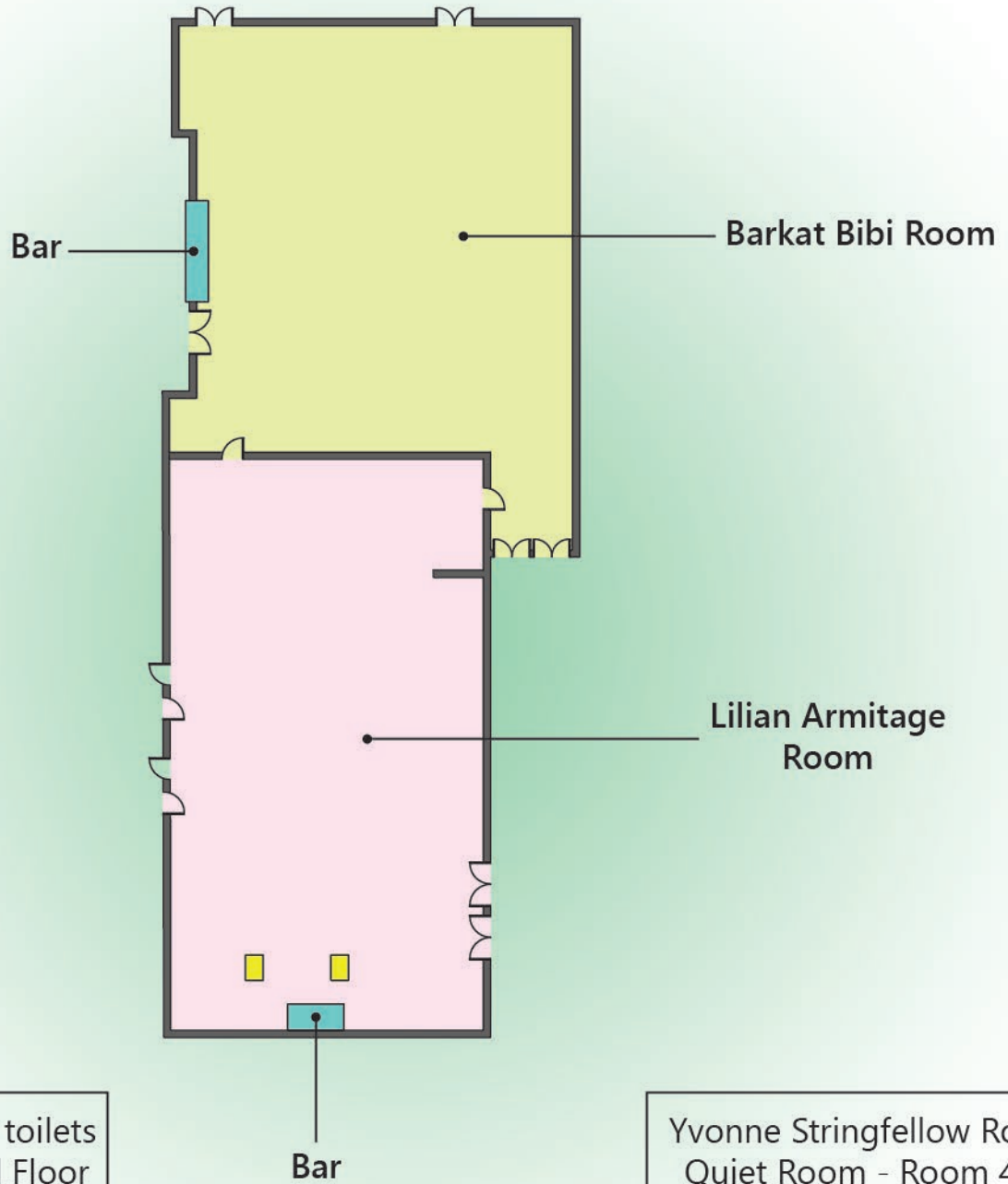


*Designed by Maham Sultan*

*An optimistic architect from Pakistan trying to make it big*

# Floor Plan for the Bradford Hotel

## Ground Floor



 Accessible toilets on Ground Floor

Yvonne Stringfellow Room  
Quiet Room - Room 413

Supported by  
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A classical choir with community spirit - since 1856



Bradford  
Friendship  
Choir

# Everyone Welcome!

Especially refugees, asylum seekers and their friends

**Tuesdays 6 – 7.30pm**

Kala Sangam, St Peters House  
1 Forster Square. BD1 4TY

 @BDfriendschoir  @BDfriendschoir  Bradford Friendship Choir  
 bradfordfriendshipchoir@gmail.com [www.bradfordfriendshipchoir.com](http://www.bradfordfriendshipchoir.com)





# Bradford Friendship Choir

## Who's it for?

Anyone who wants to enjoy singing with other people  
- you don't need any experience and don't have to read music.  
We'll help you find your voice!

## What do we sing?

A wide range from songs – easy to learn, from different parts of  
the world, traditional and modern, harmonious and uplifting.

## Do I have to pay?

We offer travel costs to refugees and people seeking asylum.  
Otherwise, we welcome a contribution of £4 per session - but  
you can pay less. If you have no spare money, it's free.

## How do I get there?

Kala Sangam Arts Centre is at St Peter's House, 1 Forster Square,  
BD1 4TY, near the Broadway Shopping Centre. It is 5 minutes from  
Forster Square station, and 15 minutes from the Interchange.  
It's on bus routes 622, 623, 626 and 680.

# A surrogate mother's cautionary tale

Julie Bindel

Surrogacy — the act of using a surrogate to conceive and bear a child — is on the rise around the world. Defenders of this practice say that everyone benefits from it. But a U.S. woman named Annie (a pseudonym) found out what happens when the relationship between a surrogate and the couple who hope to raise the child goes wrong.

Surrogacy made so much sense to Annie at first. Following a series of bereavements, she and her husband, Pat, felt the need to “bring life into the world again,” she says.

“Pat’s brother passed unexpectedly, and then my cousin, who was like a mom to me, followed by Pat’s cousin, who was found dead in a hotel room; my great uncle; then my aunt,” Annie says. “All of this happened in the span of a year.”

She had four children from a previous marriage, but an ectopic pregnancy left her unable to conceive naturally again. Annie, in her late 30s at the time, was advised to try in vitro fertilization (IVF). She and Pat couldn’t afford that, however.

The couple wasn’t poor, “but time was a factor for us, and we didn’t think that we would be able to come up with that amount of money in a short amount of time,” Annie says.

She was aware of women being hired as surrogates, from the media and through word of mouth. “I began to wonder if that was a good way to pay for the IVF.”

Surrogacy involves inseminating or implanting an embryo into a woman’s uterus. Immediately after giving birth, the surrogate mother is required to give the child to the commissioning parents. Since the 1970s, more than 25,000 babies have been born in the U.S. through surrogacy.

There are two types of surrogacy: altruistic, in which the birth mother bears a baby for another couple simply as a gesture of kindness, and commercial, in which the surrogate is paid.



In the U.K., Canada and Australia, altruistic surrogacy is permitted, but commercial surrogacy is against the law. By contrast, all surrogacy is illegal in France, Germany and Italy. Commercial surrogacy is legal in a number of U.S. states, including California, Illinois, Arkansas, Maryland, Oregon and New Hampshire, as well as Washington D.C., and in New Jersey and Washington, commercial surrogacy laws go into effect this year. But even in states that outlaw commercial surrogacy, payment can be made by way of covering expenses and loss of earnings, which can amount to a full-time salary. In Iowa, for example, surrogates receive between \$30,000 to \$35,000, plus expenses.

Annie says her decision to become a surrogate was “spur of the moment.” She began checking out advertisements on the website Craigslist, where a number of couples were looking to hire a birth mother. One lived nearby and had already identified an egg donor and chosen a fertility clinic in Chicago where the implant process would take place. The couple planned to use the commissioning father’s sperm. “They were just waiting for someone like me to answer their advertisement,” Annie says. “At that stage, I had no doubts. I thought, ‘What a great gift it would be to have a child for someone who can’t have kids, and in return they pay for my IVF so I can have a baby.’ ”

The couple arranged to meet with Annie and her husband. “At first, we got on fine,” Annie recalls. “We all appeared to want the same thing. It was obvious we could help each other, and everyone seemed pleased to have met.”

They agreed that in return for Annie carrying a baby to term and immediately relinquishing responsibility for it, the commissioning parents would pay \$13,000 for one cycle of IVF for Annie. “That was all we wanted,” Annie says. “We did not want to profit in any way, but just pay for the IVF so hopefully we could have our own child.”

The Chicago clinic offered a discount for providing both the embryo transfer for the couple and Annie’s IVF treatment.

Surrogacy is a profitable business in the U.S. But it has come under challenge as feminists and human rights campaigners question the ethics of what is sometimes known as “womb trafficking.”

These critics point to class and racial divisions between surrogates, egg donors and commissioning parents, which often are stark.

Surrogates tend to be working-class women with their own children; many are military wives. Surrogates must have had at least one pregnancy to demonstrate that they can carry a baby to term without complications. They are less inclined to want to keep the baby if they have their own children, the logic goes.

By contrast, an egg donor is more likely to be a college graduate from a more affluent background—features considered attractive to commissioning parents. Advertisements for egg donors are abundant on university and college campuses.

Advocates of commercial surrogacy insist it is a win-win situation: The surrogates are making an informed choice, and the money they earn can be life-changing. But as women like Annie sometimes discover, the process can be fraught with difficulty. “I didn’t think anything would go wrong,” she says. “Everybody stood to get what they wanted.”

But things soon started to go very wrong. In the state where she lives, surrogacy contracts are enforceable by law.

“When Pat and I suggested getting an attorney to look through our contract, the intended mother got very upset,” Annie says. “She started accusing us of wasting time. So we went ahead and signed the contract.”

In states where commercial surrogacy is legal, surrogates are typically given legally binding contracts to sign, which spell out the agreement between the commissioning parents and the woman who will give birth. Commonly, these contracts include instructions regarding what the surrogate is allowed to eat and drink and which medications she can take during pregnancy; they can forbid smoking, riding a bicycle, having sex, drinking alcohol or going without prior permission to doctor’s appointments (which are paid for and monitored by the commissioning parents).

These contracts can also give the commissioning parents the right to demand the abortion of one or more fetuses in the event of a multiple birth, or to demand that the baby be handed over to the commissioning parents immediately, without even being seen by the surrogate mother.

To prepare her body for the procedure, Annie had to have a series of painful injections.

“Getting my body ready for the embryo was hard. I gained so much weight because of the shots,” she says. “I was left to inject myself with progesterone in my buttocks area and Lupron [an artificial hormone] in my stomach. I didn’t know anything about surrogacy and I didn’t really do any research. I was just looking at the end result of a family having a child they wanted, and for Pat and I to have the child we wanted.”

Annie became pregnant in 2016, after the first embryo transfer. She discovered that she was expecting twins when she began to bleed six weeks later.



"I called the doctor's office in Chicago," Annie says. "The doctor told me to take bed rest and that it was normal, so that's what I did, until my husband came home from work. I didn't feel comfortable, so I went to the hospital to check [that] all was OK. The commissioning parents got very upset with me, saying I needed to ask permission before I went to the hospital again." Annie was not, in fact, violating the contract at this stage. Nowhere in her contract did it say she had to ask for permission from the commissioning parents to attend a doctor's appointment or hospital.

Trust and communication between the two couples quickly broke down. Annie and her husband decided they did not want to receive IVF treatment from the same clinic that had done the embryo transfer, because Annie wanted to be free of any involvement with the commissioning parents.

When they discovered that an IVF cycle for Annie and Pat would cost more than the discounted rate at the original clinic, the commissioning parents "acted as though we were trying to extort more money from them," Annie says. "The next thing we knew, the other couple was accusing us of planning on selling the babies on the black market."

Annie says the commissioning parents began to renege on paying certain expenses they'd agreed to, such as the travel expenses for Pat to join Annie at the clinic in Chicago. They also complained about the increased cost, due to complications, of Annie's medication to sustain the pregnancy.

"They asked why I couldn't claim these expenses on my own medical insurance, which was outrageous, because that would mean I would be penalized by my insurance company," Annie says. "After months of harassment, I got the police involved. I had been called the N-word [Annie is African-American] and my husband a 'dirty Mexican.' I couldn't trust the commissioning parents any more, and did not feel the babies should be raised by people like them."

Annie did not want to take money for IVF treatment from the commissioning parents, which meant she and Pat had to put their plans to have a baby together on hold.

A few days later, just six months pregnant, Annie went into premature labor and gave birth to twin girls. Eight days later, one of the twins died.

"When I went into labor days later, the last thing on my mind was the contract," Annie says. "The main thing was to make sure the babies were OK. I was able to hold the babies [which is usually not allowed]. The hospital didn't know about the surrogacy arrangement. They were so young and so tiny. [The baby who died] was a fighter, and she was gaining weight and we were actually able to hold her and breastfeed her. When we lost [her], it was so hard, but I still had to get up to be there for [the surviving baby]. It was heartbreaking."

Annie stayed at the hospital for more than two months, sleeping in a room next to the maternity ward, until she was told she had to leave by the attorney of the commissioning parents.

"They had got the courts involved, accusing us of going against the contract and saying that we should not be having a relationship with [the surviving baby]," Annie says. The commissioning parents took the baby away and Annie never saw her again.

A number of surrogate mothers I met in India and the U.S. have spoken about the agony of delivering babies who are immediately taken from them and handed to the commissioning parents, usually in the delivery room.

One of the hardest things about the experience is not knowing how the babies are doing after they are taken away, and yet, at the same time, feeling a huge responsibility and deep connection with them.

"If, years later, I saw something had happened to [the surviving] baby, I would never be able to forgive myself," Annie says. "Would people blame me for not protecting her?"

The pain of bearing twins, giving birth, and losing one and then the other soon afterwards was unbearable, Annie says. "But not knowing how [the surviving baby] is, or being able to tell her I am here for her, is a terrible thing."

Two years later, Annie has given up the idea of keeping the baby, and recognizes that she should stay with the parents she has known since she was a few weeks old.

"I'm not a heartless person," she says. "I know [the baby] has been with them all this time and she doesn't remember us, so I don't want to scare her."

I don't want to take her from the only people that she has known. The only thing I want is for this not to happen to anyone else."

Currently, British surrogates are only allowed only out-of-pocket expenses. Meanwhile, the practice of commercial surrogacy is increasingly being outsourced from the U.S. to countries like India, Ukraine, Thailand and Mexico. In India alone, the annual surrogacy industry is valued at more than \$450 million.

In a number of countries, including the U.K., there are moves to legalize commercial surrogacy, which would allow the surrogates to receive a fee, as well as expenses, and give legal rights to the commissioning parents. Lawyers and campaigners lobbying for such changes often use California as a "best practice" model. Barrie and Tony Drewitt-Barlow, for example, a U.K. gay couple who have

five children through surrogacy, now run the British Surrogacy Centre of California, which allows British commissioning parents to sidestep current U.K. surrogacy laws.

I asked Annie what she would like to see happen to educate potential surrogates about the realities of the experience.

"I want surrogacy to be illegal," she says. "If I had known what I know now, I never would have done it."

After going through such an ordeal in their quest to pay for IVF, Annie and her husband recently discovered they are going to have a baby—without assisted reproductive technology playing a part. Annie beams as she tells me, "Our beautiful daughter ... is due in the spring of 2019, and we could not be happier."

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## Lesbian networking and activism

Paula Boulton

Last year at Filia I collected contact details from other Lesbians after saying in a Workshop that since we are at war it would be a wasted opportunity if we left without connecting up.

The clipboard was circulated and 72 addresses later the action 72 network was born! I later came up with Sapphic Warriors Action Group and have produced quarterly newsletter with call outs for action and a round up of what we sapphic warriors have been up to.

And I can tell you that has been a lot.

So many groups and individuals - Get the L Out, Lesbian Rights Alliance, All L breaks Loose, Lesbian Strength, Lesbians on chairs, Object, Lesbian Asylum Support group.....to name but a few.

Here are some snippets from the year's events

Lesbian Herstory was of course invisible during February - so we struck where we could with a particularly effective action in Taunton where Claire dressed as a WW1 Nurse and told the story of two

Lesbians from Taunton who had run a field hospital.

"We all know Storme started it" has been a theme throughout this anniversary year of the Stonewall riots. Various Lesbians travelled to New York for the celebrations and as became the pattern - were not made welcome. But the Storme Tee-shirts have been seen everywhere and endorsed and worn by Martina Navratilova herself!

Stonewall has been protested wherever and whenever possible on and offline in reaction to the redefinition of Lesbian. Some of us are involved in a strategic alliance with Gay men challenging Stonewalls very existence. Same sex attracted set to become a thing of the past? I don't think so.

Pride events throughout the UK have been hostile to Lesbians attending with banners declaring same sex attraction and reminding people of the biological and anatomical facts of Lesbianism.

Those attending have shown tremendous courage as the intimidation has ramped up each time with Police action centred on removing Lesbians from a supposedly inclusive Pride event rather than stopping the intimidation. They managed to find

several to remove one Lesbian from a meeting where she hadn't said or done anything.

Removals too from the National Theatre bar for potentially making someone feel unsafe!

The distortion of Hate Crime legislation has been appalling. No-one I have heard of has been able to get as far as countering allegations of transphobia with allegations of lesbophobia. It seems pointless when many of the police have clearly had the "training".

Undeterred Lesbian activists led Manchester Pride, went to- among others -Vienna Pride, Lancaster, Swansea, Edinburgh, Sheffield and even the lesbian conference in Ukraine.

In academia, Angela Wild's research on the Cotton Ceiling got some mainstream coverage with Sonia Poulton bulldozing it into prime time TV.

The GEO has been challenged over its unrepresentative advisory panel and many of us have complained at Ruth Hunt being accepted onto that panel and recently being made a peer.

Lesbians are active locally challenging schools about the need to provide support for young Lesbians and

ensuring that someone is speaking out about the unprecedented rise in referrals of teenage girls to the Tavistock clinic.

In real life there have been several gatherings and networks are growing stronger all the time.

The Lesbian Strength March in Leeds on September 7th was a joyful occasion and it brought together 150 Lesbians from 20-80 in a true show of solidarity.

As MC for the march I made the point that this was an example of Lesbian revival. Reclaiming our Roots, Rebuilding our Community and Resisting Erasure.

And we chanted together, "Lesbians united will never be defeated. Bring it on!"

To finish on a lighter note - what do lesbians do to relax? Well - we have had the pleasure of some Lesbian entertainment this year with the screening of Gentleman Jack which has led to a huge rise in the numbers of Lesbians visiting Shibden Hall in Halifax as well as meaning that we actually heard the word Lesbian repeatedly on TV whilst the nation discussed Ann Lister's love life!

Wonders will never cease.



# Rehabilitation centers may save the lives of prostitution survivors, but they are better off without clients

Luba Fein

Alice is 50. Her PTSD is like a tattoo, scorched into her soul by the life in prostitution. These days she's making her first steps into the normative world.

Nights are still hard: the monsters of the world chase her, and she fails to sleep. Every evening Alice arrives at the 'Turning the Table' rehabilitation center in south Tel-Aviv and works there by herself: imaging, cutting and sewing dresses of her own design.

One night, I arrive there to purchase a dress from her to wear to the Filia convention, and she tells me how much the foundation helped her: with maximising her rights, with vocational training and with business mentorship.

Iris has left the prostitution world two years ago, but fails to maintain a full time work. She survives on disability allowance, assistance with rent and a little income from odd jobs.

Every time she desires something out of reach- new furniture, holiday food basket or clothes- she turns to the 'Not Standing By' foundation that assists women in prostitution. The majority of the assistance provided by the foundation focuses on providing daily necessities. Many women receive food baskets on a monthly rate.

"For me, 'Not Standing By', is like parents. I received every piece of furniture in this apartment from them. They even brought a birthday cake", Says Iris.

In Israel, thousands of women in prostitution and survivors receive aid from foundations and rehabilitation centers: whether through professional training, maximising their social rights, psycho-social treatment, social support etc.

The foundations are begging for more funds. Calls for assistance have increased since the passing of the new Sex Buyer Act, where vast support to prostitution survivors was promised. Meanwhile, any fiduciary addition entails battling the authorities. Aid workers report feelings of despair for them and for the women who approach them.

Our opposers often try to take advantage of these circumstances to dismiss the law. According to them, as long as there aren't enough funds the rehabilitate the survivors - the Nordic Model shouldn't be reinstated in Israel. If that claim was true, it would be enough to delay the law for all eternity.

There are never enough funds to rehabilitate every woman, when wounds are this deep. But we reject that claim, because rehabilitation doesn't pose an equal alternative to life in prostitution.

"We lack the funds to rehabilitate them, so they are better off in prostitution" is a horrible concept. Primarily, because it's unfair to those who are trapped in prostitution and seek rehabilitation. We have failed them as a society. Now, we must fight for them, funds or not.

We start by defining them as victims rather than "workers" who can manage until we raise funds. Second, it's dangerous for the women outside of prostitution. If we don't prohibit the purchase of prostitution thus limiting demand, more women will be sucked in, finding themselves in a predicament where they require expansive rehabilitation where funds are lacking.

The rehabilitation centers and foundations are doing sacred work. They should have access to whatever funds we can raise. However, the goal we should strive for no one to require their help.

# She needs protecting

Amria Khatun

*She needs protecting  
From her doubts  
And her friends blind leadership  
And societies opaque glare  
From lenses so long  
They see nothing  
But every fake  
Expected version of her  
She needs protecting from her inner demons  
And other people's outer angels  
From her mothers imagination  
And her fathers honour  
And her brothers hypocrisy  
But mostly she needs  
Protecting from you  
Man  
And your fantasies  
And your cock fighting,  
Bull fighting  
Cage fighting  
Preening, posing, posturing  
And your S\*\*\* scented promises  
That evaporate in a whisper  
On your way to war  
Your greedy hungry wars  
Where we can't protect them  
Where I can't  
Protect them  
At all*

Amria was born and raised in Bradford. She has worked in public service all her life including running a women and children's centre. She describes herself as an amateur poet and her poetry often focuses on women's rights and sisterhood.

Last year Amria had the honour of comparing and performing her poetry at the Women's March on Shipley Glen.

# Invisible women

Luchia Fitzgerald and Angela Cooper

We are delighted to be attending FiLiA 2019! We came for the first time last year, and were bowled over by the energy and enthusiasm of the 600+ women there.

Walking in, we were moved, to be reminded of the WLM conferences of the 1970s- hundreds of feminists of all generations, coming together, to celebrate and support each other, in fighting the patriarchy.

This year, we are sharing our film 'Invisible Women', charting our activism in Manchester, in the early 70s- including organising GLF, 5 years living in the Manchester Women's Centre, starting up Amazon Women's Printing Press, the Northern Women's Liberation Rock Band, the second Women's Aid Refuge in the country, and fighting Clause 28. At its heart, the film is the story of a 50 year lesbian friendship, forged in escape from a repressive Irish past.

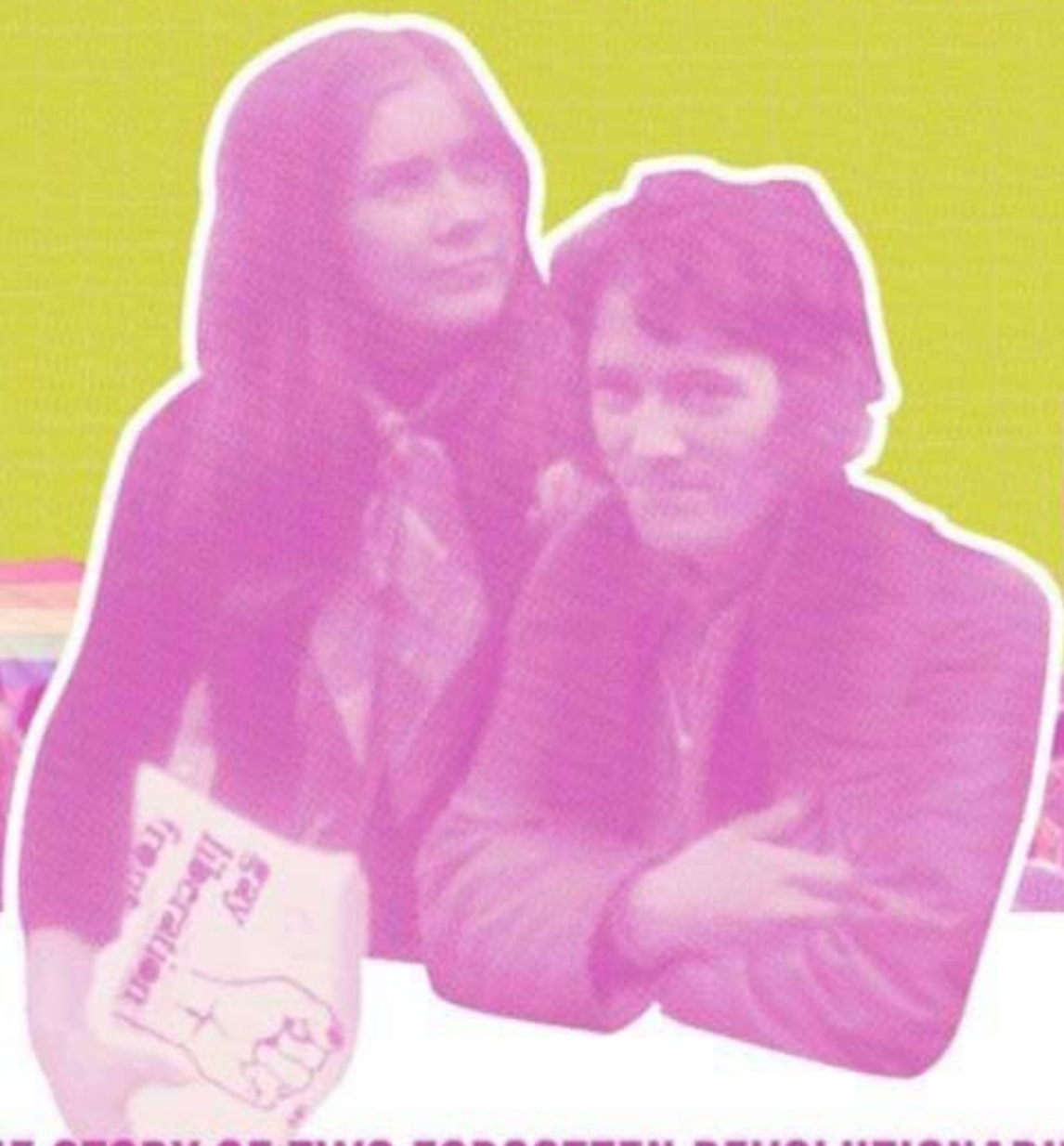
We made it for our community, to capture our 'herstory', and that of many of our sisters, particularly lesbian feminists. Our story is seldom told; our central role in the WLM is in danger of being forgotten.

The lessons of the past can hopefully help us to keep the gains we've made, and defend against the renewed attacks by the patriarchy, to silence and cower us.

We look forward to sharing our story, and meeting you, to hear yours.



# INVISIBLE WOMEN



**THE STORY OF TWO FORGOTTEN REVOLUTIONARIES**  
**DIRECTED BY ALICE SMITH • PRODUCED BY JOE INGHAM**

# JUSTICE FOR WOMEN

Justice for Women was established in 1990 as a feminist campaigning organisation that supports, and advocates on behalf of, women who have fought back against or killed violent men.

Most recently we successfully campaigned for Sally Challen to have her murder conviction overturned which resulted in her being released earlier this year, bringing significant public attention to the little understood form of domestic abuse known as coercive control. Sally was just one of many women serving life sentences for the murder of an abusive partner. We are working on a number of cases of women who seek to appeal their convictions.

Two of these have court dates imminent and we would welcome your support.

## **Emma-Jayne Magson**

23-year old Emma, had recently left a relationship with an abusive man who had hospitalised her, when she met and fell in love with James. Over the months they were together, James became increasingly controlling, jealous and physically aggressive. On 26th March 2016, less than two weeks after suffering a traumatic miscarriage, the couple were out drinking with friends in Leicester when they began to argue. Later at home, when James' behaviour towards her became unbearable, she suddenly stabbed him. A single action which proved fatal. She was convicted of murder and sentenced to life in prison, to serve a minimum of 17 years.

Emma has never denied causing James' death. She lives with the consequences of her action each and every day; she loved him.

Emma did not give evidence at trial and the jury were not alerted to the history of domestic abuse she absorbed as a child and endured as an adolescent and young mother. There was no full examination of her mental health issues.

Emma will appeal her conviction at the Royal Courts of Justice on 19th November this year on the grounds that she was suffering from a recognised medical condition at the time of the incident, namely Emotionally Unstable Borderline Personality Disorder and PDD. This also contributed to her not participating in her trial and having very little understanding of what was happening in the proceedings.

We urge people to come to the court on the day of Emma's hearing. As we have seen with the interest in Sally Challen's case, public support can really help raise awareness of how the criminal justice system is failing survivors of male violence.



*“It’s given Emma so much hope knowing not everyone sees her as a monster but as a young vulnerable woman who truly though she was going to die that night. We are truly grateful for the kind words of strangers who have now seen through the headlines.” - Jo Smith, Emma’s mother*

### **Farieissia Martin**

On June 9th 2015 Farieissia Martin, at the age of 22, was convicted of the murder of Kyle Farrell, her violent partner and given a tariff of 13 years. At the time of the incident, Farieissia and Kyle had 2 children under the age of 3.

Kyle and Farieissia had known each other since primary school and had been together from the ages of 16. Kyle had been sent to anger management sessions at Primary school. A year into the relationship Kyle started to be violent to Farieissia. The relationship was off and on with a pattern of violence, splitting up and reconciling. Kyle’s violence often left Farieissia in fear of her life. Farieissia did not call the police for fear that social services would become involved and remove the children

On the night of the incident, Farieissia had been out and Kyle was babysitting. On her return he attacked her including trying to strangle her. In order to defend herself and in fear of her life, Farieissia reached for anything to help stop him. Kyle died as a result of a single stab wound to the heart.

During the trial the history of violence was not explored and a mental health assessment was not carried out. These two issues form part of the grounds for appealing the sentence and conviction. We expect the grounds to be submitted to a panel of three judges later this year.

Please spread the word about these campaigns on social media and come to court to support these women.

[www.justiceforwomen.org.uk](http://www.justiceforwomen.org.uk)



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## **WAST**

WAST (Women Asylum Seekers Together) is a self-help support group for women seeking asylum in Manchester. Women are often in Vulnerable situations - isolated, traumatized, ill health, facing destitution, homelessness, and deportation.

WAST Women share experiences and support one another in a safe, secure environment. The women also exchange information and ideas, organize support and campaigns for members in emergencies, offer one another friendship and empowerment in the face of the asylum system.

WAST has a choir and roadshow drama group who perform in a various event to raise awareness about issues that force women to seek international protection and the injustices they undergo while in the asylum system.



# Ladies and Gendermen (Gender and Race?)

Linda Bellos

I have been a feminist for 40 years and a lesbian for only a few weeks more. It was when I recognised that I loved other women that I started to question why I had not known about or recognised my emotions and at this point I started to question to ideology of 'gender'.

As a Black woman living in a White society, I had recognised the ideology of races and racism, indeed I had begun to question racism since my teens in the 1960's, but I assumed that 'gender' was a natural phenomena just as 'races' were.

It was in 2006 that I stopped recognizing 'race' as natural and started seeing it as a manmade notion, and by manmade, I mean made by men, White men to be precise, not all of them of course, just the ruling class ones. I had given a great deal of thought to the ideology of race and of gender over the last decade or more, I see them both as ideologies of power that seeks to locate the power relationships as natural occurrences.

Once I could recognise that the power dynamics were created by White men for White men I could develop (with other women) means of empowering myself instead of accepting my inferior status in society.

These days with a new discourse, I do not hate Trans women, but I am very aware of how threatening some of them have been to me and to many other feminist women. Since late 2018, I have been the subject of an allegations to the police that my words are a threat to Trans women, because apparently, I said that if I was attacked as Maria MacLachlan was attacked at Speakers Corner in September 2018, I would defend myself.

For those that do not know me, I am 68 years old Black woman, soon to be 69 and have several age-related medical conditions, but I will still defend myself if necessary. It is now some time since the incident that exemplified the New Trans approach, one of threats or actual violence against women. But what distresses me more than anything

has been the growing ideology of gender and particularly of transgenderism.

I draw upon my understanding of the ideology of races which I know see as a man-made politics. In Britain it has justified the abduction and murder of several million West African people and many millions more who were transported to North and South America as Enslaved humans, and who continue to be described as 'slaves', as though they had no humanity.

During the decades that I have considered the concept and reality of this enslavement by European men, I have also considered to oppression of women in Europe.

But I am not sure that I considered the notion of gender as an ideology which justified the oppression of women. I knew than many women had been oppressed by men for as long as man have recorded history, but I do not think until recently I had recognised that gender like race was the ideology of oppression based upon the physical difference between girls and boy and women and men. And yet that is the ideology I grew up with, just as I had grown up with the ideology of races.

It was not until 2006 that I recognised that the word and the concept of 'races' was very much a reflection of a set of ideas that I challenged. And from that point, I stopped using the word and the concept of 'race' because it reinforced the very notion I had fought against of my previous conscious years. And a mere 12 years later I recognised that gender too was a man-made notion as race is.

I could see that humans had different levels of melanin dependent upon their historic exposure to the sun but that this did not/does not reflect their intelligence or ability to play Chopin or Bach. I could see that as a girl I was not allowed to do things that were designated 'male' such as become an architect or play football, (I am speaking of the 1950's and 60's when I grew up in England) and in those and

previous times gender -that is men's power to designate and rule, determined that women could not do a wide range of activities including work for pay equal to that of men, or vote or be members of Parliament. This was gender in action just like racism, an ideology which justified differential treatment based upon physical characteristics.

What is interesting in the recent ideological onslaught on women is how close it was to the creation of the 'Me Too' campaign which saw a whole cohort of women publicly protest at the sexual abuse of women and girls. Of course, it may be sheer coincidence but whatever the motivation of the timing it has had the effect of changing the conversation on sex to gender.

There have always been men who have, at least in private, displayed themselves as women, most often as caricatures of women, and there have been a number of women, who have at least in the UK, have presented themselves as men, mostly it would appear so that they can live with their women

partners. But the recent Trans Movement seems committed to the idea of gender and their ability to change from one gender to another with or without surgery.

What strikes me about this new movement is that it reinforces the ideology and practice of 'gender' whilst ignoring the reality of 'sex'. Gender is the ideology which reinforces the oppression of women and girls. Just as 'races' reinforce the power differences based upon skin colour/hair/language or customs.

I am a proud Black woman, I am also a Jewish woman, I know that over recent centuries some White men have sought to oppress and then justify their oppression of these two (and other) groups of human beings. I shall not remain silent when I see men in 'ladies dresses' seek to define what being a woman means, as some of their fathers have done in reinforcing racism. These are learned behaviours and are capable of being unlearned.



women's  
resource  
centre

### Social change and sisterhood

Women's human rights are under constant violation. The current climate is one characterised by a hostile environment, austerity and cuts to public services and support organisations. This leads to increased levels of racism, poverty and violence, which disproportionately affects women and girls, and in particular, those from marginalised and minority communities. The women's sector is key to protecting and promoting women's rights in the UK. Research consistently demonstrates that the best guarantee to secure and protect women's rights is

the independent action of women's movement and organisations.

Women's Resource Centre is the national umbrella organisation for the women's sector in the UK. We stand up for all women's human rights and we support a diverse and thriving women's sector. Through collective action, in the spirit of sisterhood and solidarity, and with a shared vision of a world where women and girls' enjoy substantive equality, we believe we can achieve social change.

This is why we at WRC work tirelessly behind the scenes to build solidarity in the women's sector. We do this in a variety of ways, from campaigning and advocacy work to training and capacity building. Earlier this year, we launched the Tampon Tax campaign, which calls on the government to honour their promise to ring-fence the money collected from VAT on period products to women's health and support charities. We also ask the government to repay the debt of £500 million of the £700 million collected through the Tampon Tax to women's charities.

WRC is a strong advocate of CEDAW – the UN Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women. CEDAW puts a duty on states to take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination and to protect and promote women's human rights. WRC coordinated the production of the CEDAW Shadow Report, through consultations with hundreds of women's organisations and other women's human rights defenders across the UK.

In February 2019, WRC together with other representatives from the women's sector, attended the CEDAW examination of the UK government and provided an oral statement about the true state of women's rights. Through our facilitation of collective and focused collaboration, we were able to present an agreed position on prostitution to the Committee, which has been described as a 'milestone in the history of feminism'.

The UN incorporated a lot of the concerns raised in their recommendations to the UK government. Subsequently, WRC and a number of women's

organisations sent a letter to the Minister for Women regarding the UN's recent review of the of women in the UK and the progress made in achieving their rights.

We are currently working together with various women's human rights advocates to ensure that we keep pressuring the government to commit to the articles and recommendations of CEDAW.

In 2018, we piloted our women's leadership training, which was to become one of our most successful and popular training courses to date. We have now completed a hugely successful pilot and hosted multiple one-off sessions with various agencies.

This training is about doing things differently and challenging traditional and stereotypical masculine notions of leadership. It's about creating, living and acting upon a leadership style that is transformative, inclusive, adaptable, transparent and powerful – i.e. feminist. Increased self-confidence and self-worth was one of the most apparent themes of the feedback.

The opportunity for self-reflection made a lot of women realise that they already have a lot of leadership skills and that they are leaders in their own right, not despite of what they have been through, but with their experiences as an asset. Women's Resource Centre is a strong advocate of the need for women-only services.

The power of the sisterhood is profound and we aim to facilitate a safe space of support and solidarity in everything we do.



# Radical Happiness: an Honest Conversation on Mental Health

Radical Girlsss

Mental health and depression are issues that we still treat as a taboo in various spaces, including the feminist one.

We often refer to survivors with a focus on their past of violence and oppression, but rarely we question how the various events have affected their present and how they are dealing with trauma. It seems we do not have time anymore to ask women how they are and how they feel.

We are not building that safe space which allows us to open up and show our vulnerability and scars. We are so busy and used to hide our vulnerability due to fear of being exposed and giving ground to people to hurt us.

Our activism already affects our mental health. Getting used to hear everyday stories of violence, murder and oppression, increase our perception of this cruel world, in where it seems there is no space for our freedom and happiness.

In addition, it seems there is no space for us to scream how angry, mad and sad we are. Because yes, we are angry, we are mad, we are sad and we are so tired. We are nowadays so used to bottle our anger, our madness to please the society in which our feelings are still not accepted.

But what about our mental health? How much can we keep bottled our feelings, and keep pushing in this survival mode? Why is our anger not something acceptable for society? Why should our anger scare people, and be interpreted as arrogance?

If telling the world that we are mad and we have had enough means being arrogant, then go ahead.

As Radical Girlsss, we strive for a feminist world in where we do not have to ask permission to expose our vulnerability and our anger.

We strive for a radical happiness, a space where we can heal from our trauma, exclusion and violence we have endured in so many different ways and forms. We strive for the entire world and not just for a small portion where it seems we have to fit to please the way people deal with others' emotions. We strive for a generation that is not afraid to ask women how they are, and to show their scars proudly, including the way they are dealing with past traumas. We strive for a feminist world in where women live under the values of solidarity and sisterhood, in where women's tears are our tears, women's resilience is our resilience. And women's happiness is our happiness.

Radical happiness, this is what we are looking for.



# EMMA HUMPHREYS MEMORIAL PRIZE 2019



**FRIDAY 8TH NOVEMBER 18:15 – 23:00**

Oxford House, Derbyshire Street,  
London, E2 6HG

For program and tickets, visit:

[www.centreforwomensjustice.org.uk](http://www.centreforwomensjustice.org.uk)





*Calling all local agencies, services and partnerships working across the VAWG sector:*

*Join us in our National Campaign to celebrate the strength of women!*

## **STANDING TOGETHER AND THE BLOOMING STRONG CAMPAIGN**

**November 25th** every year marks the **United Nations day for the Elimination of Violence against Women**.

At Standing Together Against Domestic Violence, we use this time of year to celebrate the strength of women who have survived violence against women and girls (VAWG), or supported someone who has.

We have run this campaign since 2014, and it grows every year. The idea is to encourage women that they too have the strength to survive, leave, move forward and recover from VAWG. We have found this positive campaign very successful and would love for you to take part by obtaining a campaign pack.

Very often at this time of year women are portrayed as victims of crime. We want to turn that around to promote the strength that women show either by surviving in an abusive relationship, continuing to get through each day despite the abuse, or leaving a relationship and starting out again, often with no more than they can carry.

**Flowers** – We celebrate the emotional strength & resilience of women by presenting a variety of women with a single flower - to those who are accessing services and working within services, to local women in leadership roles and to local women in the community. We believe this positive approach celebrates and recognises the strength of local women and will also demonstrate to women who are experiencing violence, how Blooming Strong they are!

**Awards** – Local services can nominate women for a Blooming Strong award (a flower) in recognition for overcoming the odds, or going the extra mile.

**Coffee Morning Fundraiser** – We have recently introduced the Blooming Strong Coffee morning (or Afternoon Tea!), where strong women get together to celebrate and raise funds for their chosen local VAWG service.

This national campaign enables people to celebrate the best of their locality and raise funds for their own services, whilst spreading a message that honours how Blooming Strong women are! Please join us by developing your own local Blooming Strong campaign, which can include all or part of the elements above as well as selling Blooming Strong merchandise to raise further funds.

**To receive a Blooming Strong Campaign Pack and/or Blooming Strong Coffee Morning Fundraiser Pack (small donation applies), contact:**  
[admin@standingtogether.org.uk](mailto:admin@standingtogether.org.uk)

*We look forward to working together with you!*

# Women and Climate Change: Differently Affected and Under- Represented

Sarah Dawson

## **A major justice issue:**

Extreme weather events and sudden or gradual climate changes have a greater impact on the poor and most vulnerable – 70% of the world's poor are women.

In the ten years up to 2017 87% of disasters were climate related.

Women and other groups such as people of colour, the global poor and indigenous peoples - are more severely affected by climate change in ways that are linked to social inequality.

The limit of 2 °C warming as an aim, is not, a safe goal for all people on the planet. It could be a way of ensuring the stability of patriarchal capitalism and continuity of power for those who are powerful today.

## **Climate change already means:**

- Food supplies failing,
- In 2009, women produced between 60 and 80 percent of all food in the global south, yet they only owned ten percent of all agricultural land and approximately two percent of land rights.
- Fuel shortages,
  - Less drinking water,
  - Coastal, river bank and low lying homes being destroyed,
  - Forced mass migration
  - Worsening resource conflict
  - More frequent and ferocious natural disasters.

## **Women in the developing world are often responsible for:**

- Gathering and producing food,
- Collecting water
- Sourcing fuel for heating and cooking.
- Caring for the young, sick and old

With climate change, these tasks have become or are becoming more difficult.

## **During and After Disasters Women and Girls are often:**

- The last to eat - less food means disproportionately less for women and girls
- The last to be rescued; facing greater health and safety risks as water and sanitation systems become compromised;
- Taking on increased time-consuming domestic and care work after a disaster - further limiting education opportunities - increases in out-migration of men because of livestock deaths and lack of work leads to feminisation of responsibilities as women take on more roles
- More isolated so less supported and also less skilled in survival - e.g. swimming and climbing skills, particularly older women
- At higher risk of sexual abuse and violence - routines disrupted, feelings of powerlessness leading to aggression by those groups with power
- At higher risk of sexually transmitted disease - condoms less available and a breakdown in social order
- Less likely to survive: A study by the London School of Economics found that, in natural disasters in 141 countries, when women have fewer rights and less power in society, more of us die due to climate change,

After the cyclone and flooding of 1991, Bangladeshi women aged 20–44 had a much higher death rate than men of the same age: 71 per 1000, compared to 15 per 1000 for men.

After the drought in Mozambique, which has affected and continues to affect at least two million people, there is:

- Increased maternal mortality rates
- Increased child marriage rates

An additional 250,000 climate-related deaths per year are expected between 2030 and 2050 from e.g. malnutrition, malaria, diarrhoea and heat stress.

The impact on women and girls will be disproportionate.

**Women, particularly in the global south, are:**

- On the front line in the battle against climate change, and are vital sources of information about how climate change manifests
- Consistently resourceful in protecting themselves and their communities, in spite of their vulnerability and lack of social or political power,
- More concerned and aware about caring for the environment
- Innovatively and expertly transforming lives and livelihoods, and increasing climate resilience and overall well-being
- Early adopters of many new agricultural techniques,
- First responders in crises,
- Entrepreneurs of green energy
- Decision-makers at home,
- Offering valuable insights and solutions into better managing the climate and its risks.

Yet, women’s contribution is often overlooked in humanitarian and climate action; and our practical needs forgotten.

According to the 2018 International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report:

- 27% of contributors concerned with impacts, adaptation and vulnerability and
- 18.5% of contributors concerned with the physical science basis, are female.
- A study conducted by the University of Oxford in cooperation with the Nielsen Company found that 18 of the 22 ‘most influential spokespeople on climate change’ are male

Some feminist scholars argue that male dominance or patriarchy is limiting us to technical solutions and is why we are not adapting and reducing the effects of climate change effectively yet.

Building a sustainable future entails harnessing the knowledge, skills and leadership of women in climate action.

We need gender-sensitive policies on climate change, and women everywhere need to be supported and empowered to achieve their full potential as human beings and agents of positive change in the struggle for climate justice.

We also need to recognise that the oppressive policies of this system have affected how we perceive each other. We can no longer be divided from other groups of women. Those of us who are privileged, and have been able to avoid acting against these policies, get to now move together and act to demand change.

**To Change Everything, We Need Everyone**

There are many examples of effective and powerful women addressing and responding to climate change:

**Wangari Muta Maatha 1940 - 2011**

The first African woman, and the first environmentalist, to win the Nobel Peace Prize. She was a warrior and a trailblazer who defied all odds to become a very successful campaigner actualising a clear vision for the social, economic and environmental agenda.

She developed a campaign to provide an income for women and to help them break the bonds of poverty and promote environmental awareness. This grassroots movement became the Green Belt Movement, this international movement has planted over 47 million trees and helped nearly 900,000 women. She was fondly called “Mama Trees.”





We believe that art can be a powerful force for change. FiliArts acts as a hub in a network of like-minded groups, bringing together the worlds of art, academy, and activism in innovative ways.

Since 2013, we have been working hard to promote women artists at our annual exhibitions and beyond. We support the development of emerging and established female artists from all backgrounds.



Last year, our theme celebrated 100 years since (some) women got the right to vote in the UK - a big leap forward in history. This year, we have an un-elected prime minister in office, and the UK is facing its most divisive political landscape in decades. In times like these it's important not to forget that for every big leap there are many many small steps that one day add up to change. We invited women to submit artworks that reflect on the small actions we take (in all aspects of our lives, from home to work to community, that add up to transforming the world.) The work in the showcase this year meditates on feelings of frustration and resolve, empowerment and disempowerment, unity and division.

Art by: Jill Boyd,  
Kirsten Todd, Louise  
Pankhurst Johnson,  
Kristina Mygul, Kaye  
Teale, Mandy Webb

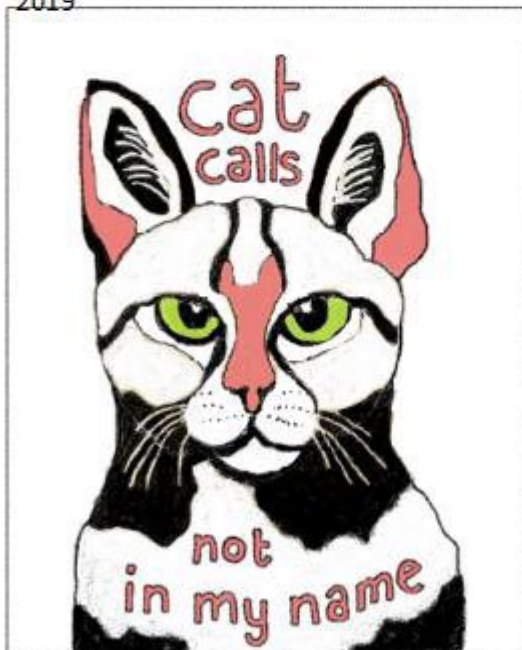
Next page:  
Romicon Revola, Cally  
Trench, Lauren  
McLaughlin



Huge thanks to Jill, Lidia and Alisa

Every year we support one artist as our Artist in Residence to develop a project alongside FiLiA.

See 9 Stitches, the incredible work of Jane Hellings this year's AiR, at FiLiA 2019



9Stitches

FiLiA 2019



Atelie397 Sao Paulo

The FiLiArt100 banners from last year have been spotted as far as Brazil (with thanks to the British Council and Blasfemeas), Leeds and even outside the Houses of Parliament!



Leeds Spinners



FiLiA Arts is non exclusive, any woman who practices art of any kind can become a FiLiA Artist. Sign up by sending an email to [art@filia.org.uk](mailto:art@filia.org.uk) with the subject "I'm an artist sign me up"

# Lady in Red



## Domestic abuse awareness Theatre Tour

It is Christmas Eve and 'Rose,' a woman in a red dress, awakes to find that she has no memory of who or where she is. As she gradually weaves the threads of memory together, a dark and violent picture begins to emerge. Compelled to leave for fear of her life Rose begins to pack... but it's dark outside and the house is full of strange noises. Will she escape, before her attacker returns? Or is he still in the House?

Extensively and accurately researched this highly acclaimed production - LADY IN RED - combines superb dialogue, a compelling plot, inspired performance and evocative colours to create an unforgettable experience - a journey through one woman's attempts to leave an abusive relationship. Power and control, physical, emotional and psychological abuse, coercive control, fear of the unknown and "Why doesn't she just leave?" are just some of the issues raised in this contemporary look at domestic violence.

This tour of six **FREE performances** is for women and girls and is followed by an after-show discussion with the writers and actors. Information on domestic abuse will be available and an opportunity to make a donation, if you wish, to support the project and a local Women's Aid service in the each area.

Parental Guidance 14+ contains strong language and themes.

**For venues and dates see: -**

<https://www.cctheatre.co.uk/domestic-violence-drama/lady-in-red/>



# Madres Victims de la Trata

Marta Núñez

The Argentinian organisation Madres Victimias de la Trata supports mothers who have lost their daughters to trafficking. A completely grassroots movement, they survive thanks to donations, but lack any formal funding.

Some of these women left everything behind trying to find their daughters, but still live the agony of not knowing what is being done to them. Sometimes a message arrives, someone saw a similar face in a disco, in a bar... but by the time they notify police it is too late. As trafficking is a global business, traffickers move the women to other countries, or silence them by killing them and disposing their abused and tortured bodies as rubbish.

Trafficking and the prostituting system complement one other and reinforce their violence against women, girls, boys, transvestites, and transsexual people. Both emerge from the existing inequality among genders and social classes that are exploited by multiple institutions, including the state, powerful criminal networks, business, ex-prostitutes who move into proxenetism, and ultimately men who pay for sex.

During a workshop of Vivas Nos Queremos (We Want Ourselves Alive), I met Señora Margarita, the mother of Susi Betker, who was a victim of trafficking and was killed by their exploiters. She made an impression on me. Strong, smiling face, and fierce fighter against trafficking and in favour of abolitionism.



Recently I found her again by chance in the very famous flea Market San Telmo in Buenos Aires, in a rickety stand, speaking with whoever would listen about her mission to end this terrible femicide. Around her, the faces of the girls are all displayed with their names beneath them.

I met Blanca Rizzo, the spokeswoman for the movement. Blanca is a dancer and teacher who created the dance troupe “Mariposas” (“Butterflies”), who have performed choreographic street interventions as part of several campaigns for human rights and women’s liberation. Now Blanca has dedicated herself totally to Madres.

- In Argentina, legally an abolitionist country, there are around 40,000 brothels in big cities, small towns and along motorways
- Brothels are clandestine centres of rape, torture, sexual exploitation and deprivation of freedom.
- One girl disappears every 62 hours.
- A trafficked girl gives an income of 13000 American dollars per year to their captors.



Madres have been cruelly confronted by liberal feminist reglamentarists who deny the relationship between legal prostitution and trafficking. AMMAR, a very strong group of ex-prostitutes who are now proxenets themselves, have not only abused them publically but also suggested that mothers are in denial that their trafficked daughters chose to become prostitutes.



## Meeting CRIOLA in Rio de Janeiro

Marta Núñez

On behalf of Filia UK, I met CRIOLA in their headquarters in Rio de Janeiro. As I learnt, the tradition in Rio is offering for any social occasion their delicious *cafézinho* (coffee) and their irresistible cakes and sweets. The office has displays of beautiful pieces of Brazilian artcraft, and as always, in all my encounters with feminist groups, a feeling of welcoming and sisterhood.

As the afternoon advanced Lia Manso introduced me to the incredible work done by CRIOLA during their 26 years of existence, within a tough context of institutionalised racism, linked with poverty and marginalization. They have a network through different areas of Brazil. Below you will find what they do through their own words.

And then, other activists started to arrive one by one to tell me more about their specific area of actions. Thanks Lia for bringing together these fantastic women!

Cleide, the president of the union of domestic workers explained to me their fight to ensure fair salaries, fair treatment by their employers and so other considerations to do with their access to

health, to education to wellbeing. We are talking about 9 million of women across Brazil doing these jobs.

Then came Ionata, representative of NEGREX, the association of black GPs, surgeons, specialists and students the medical profession in Brazil. She told unbelievable personal anecdotes, that keep happening, that when she is called to perform surgery at a hospital and Ionata asks for the theatre, as she is black, they will ask her "and what are you going to do there, what is your job, why do you want to go to the theatre"... as if black doctors should not exist.

She runs courses for black doctors explaining this reality, and how to deal with it in the most appropriate manner. On the other hand, she talks to white doctors to explain what it is the every-day confrontation of black doctors to attitudes to race. The main objective of Coletivo NEGREX is transform the perception that the Brazilian society has with regard to Black health professional, as well as focusing on the health of the black population that are the less likely to receive medical care, are in low salaries or are unemployed, and in addition they often live in deprived areas.



Finally the president of ARCO IRIS, Marcelle, a psychologist specialised in the LGBT population, explained the lack of knowledge and specialism that she found in her own profession. No psychologist that has finalised their career know about LGTB issues.

It is not in the programmes, so she is alarmed about of the misguidance that unintentionally can be given to parents, children and adults on this field. Naturally the current government that it is beyond denial of sexual and gender diversity, will not favour any advance in this field.

While I am writing this article, I have just learnt that Bolsonaro the current extreme right president, is planning to abolish the careers of philosophy and sociology because 'they do not bring any money'.

I really hope that we could hear their voices soon, in the UK!

### Criola: A brief presentation

Criola is a civil society organisation (an NGO) founded in 1992 and led by black women. Our actions are directed towards the development and improvement of the living conditions of the black population and of black women in particular. We aim to aid black women as agents of transformation, contributing to the construction of a society based on values of justice, equity and solidarity, in which the presence and contribution of black women are welcomed as a good of humanity.

**Mission:** To empower black women to confront racism, sexism, lesbophobia (discrimination against lesbians) and transphobia.

**Field:** The defence and promotion of the rights of women and young girls in an integrated and transversal perspective.

**Lines of action:** The strengthening of black women; mobilisation of black women and their communities; advocacy at local, national and international levels; qualification of black women activism; strategic litigation in defence of black girls and women; leadership formation.

### Goals

- To create and apply new technologies for the political struggle of black women's groups
- To produce knowledge and data on the current context of rights look by the lens of black women
- To form black leaders capable of elaborating their demand agenda for public policies and conducting processes of dialogue with public managers
- To increase political pressure on governments and other public bodies for the realisation of rights, particularly to the right to health, reproductive and sexual rights, access to justice and gender equity, race and sexual orientation



# International Women's Day in Argentina: The Revolution of the Daughters

Peker, Luciana. "La Revolucion de las Hijas", Pagina 12, 6th June 2018

Filia UK was present at the massive International Women's Day event on 8th March in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Since 1915, with the strong surge of the feminist anti-femicide movement NI UNA MENOS (NUM), which can be translated as "not one [woman] less", 8th March has gained more and more popularity in the streets of all cities of the country.

The demonstration in Buenos Aires is particularly important because it attracts a multitude of women of all ages, races and social levels. It was inspired by the Polish women's strike, with women refusing to perform either paid or domestic work.

Women also used the event to give voice to their demands. The loudest call was for the decriminalisation of abortion – a woman's right to choose freely, legally and safely.

The event in 2019 was impressive. Media estimates suggest between 500,000 and 700,000 people took to the streets.

This year, event organisers faced obstacles due to polarisation between pro- and anti-sex work factions which is becoming more acute every year. As in the UK, a small group of trans-women took a rather aggressive attitude towards radical feminist groups.

Nevertheless, the day was a massive celebration of being women and a strong grassroots statement of women's commitment to liberation. It was a statement of women's determination to end gender-based violence, and a moving commemoration of the victims of femicide. By March, around 60 women had been killed since the beginning of 2019, an alarming increase compared with previous years. We were also marching for the women that are victims of sex trafficking – those who have been killed, and those who have simply disappeared.

One of the most noticeable aspects of the "Marea Verde" (the Green Wave), named for their use of the green handkerchief to symbolise their demand for a legal, free and safe abortion law, is their age. Many were secondary school girls (and boys) dressed colourfully, singing, their bodies covered in feminist slogans. They seemed fearless, many of them going topless, painted in green and purple.

So one could see the Filia spirit, the daughter spirit, at its best. Grandmothers, daughters, granddaughters marching for the same motives, even young mothers with their toddlers wearing the green handkerchief with pride.

The handkerchief has a strong symbolism in Argentina. After the 1976 coup d'Etat and the following dictatorship decade, 30000 people disappeared. The repressive state clamped down on human rights. The mothers of the disappeared [Madres de Plaza de Mayo] who started a quiet protest every Thursday, by wearing a white handkerchief and showing pictures of their children, while walking slowly in a circle in front of the Government house. They were followed by Grandmothers who, knowing that their daughters were pregnant then, wanted to know where their grandchildren were.

The new wave of feminist activism is sometimes called "the revolution of the daughters" The Argentinian writer Luciana Peker describes the current protestors as "the fruit of a construction of more than thirty years of feminism, of a tradition of three decades of women's debates and of a horizontal, federal and autonomous way of doing politics".

# Femicide in Latin America

Esther Pineda

According to the Modelo de Protocolo Latinoamericano de Investigación de las Muertes Violentas de Mujeres por Razones de Género, (The Latin American Protocol Model for Investigating Womens' Violent Deaths Due to Their Gender), published by the UN in 2014, femicide is defined as a woman's violent death because of her gender. This applies whether that happens within a domestic family unit, within another kind of personal relationship, within a community or by any person; or perpetrated or tolerated by the state and its agents, violence; or as a result of being subordinated, marginalised or put at risk in society.

In other words, femicide is an extreme form of violence towards women, characterised and differentiated from homicide by its sexist motivation and misogyny.

Femicide needs viewing in the context of gender inequality, power relations, domination and dependency.

In Latin America, these types of crimes are reaching ever high levels, and are systematic, repeated, and characterised by both sexualisation and a very particular kind of cruelty.

This is demonstrated by the official statistics from 16 Latin American countries: Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, México, Nicaragua, Panamá, Paraguay, Perú, República Dominicana, Uruguay y Venezuela. In these countries alone, there were 12,001 femicides between 2010 y 2018 – the equivalent of 1333 women a year, 111 a month, at least four a day or one every six hours.

These stats are understated – some countries didn't start keeping these records until after 2014, meaning many were treated as homicide, their sexist, mysogénist motives rendered invisible; in some countries there was no regular process for recording these crimes in an ordered, reliable and transparent manner; and in others figures were simply not produced in order to avoid highlighting inaction when faced with such a serious situation.

Although women of any age are at risk, including children and senior citizens, these crimes are predominantly meted out on women of reproductive age. Most perpetrators are men who were in some kind of sexual relationship with the victim (partners or ex-partners). In general, the crimes were committed in the home the woman shared with the perpetrator or in her own home. Some had reported the victimisation, but the

state had failed to protect them.

When it comes to femicide, excessive violence becomes the norm. For the perpetrators there's no preferred weapon or modus operandi. They use firearms, they use knives, they asphyxiate, strangle, and batter. Also recurring was the setting light, burning, of victims. Aligned to this, women are also victimised in the context of sexual violence and trafficking, specifically during the phases of kidnap, transfer and exploitation.

The data also demonstrates that femicide is increasing year on year in the majority of countries. Mexico occupies the top spot, followed by Guatemala, El Salvador, Argentina and Perú.

However, despite the high levels of crime, and demands from feminist movements, investigators, activists, families and people close to the victims, the problem has been largely invisible and ignored.

Latin American states largely fail to act. There's no political will to push for prevention. Governments have simply approved higher sentences as an example, but in most cases this means nothing, perpetrators are treated with impunity.

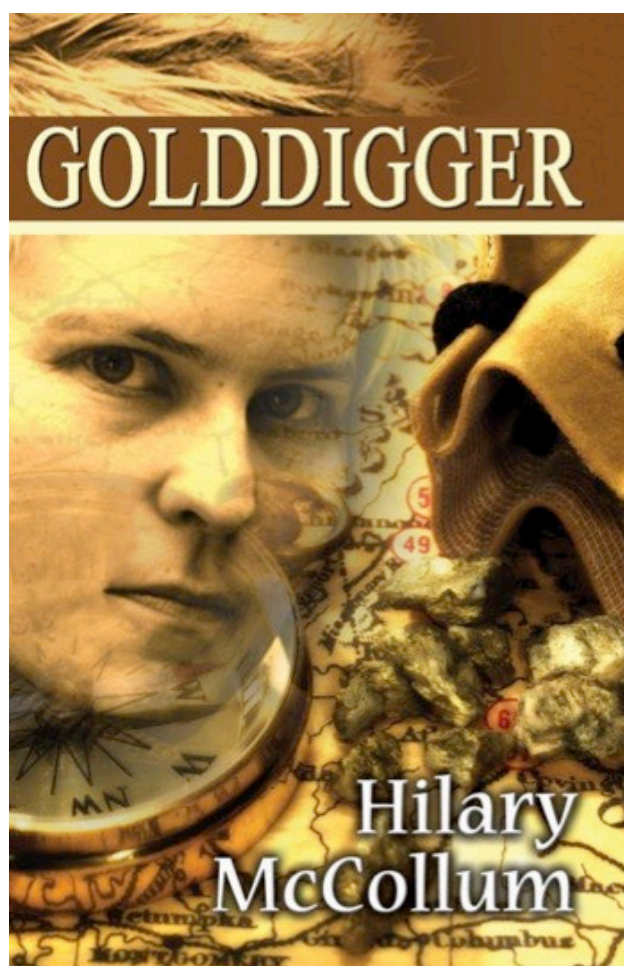
The lack of protection for women is more profound still, when crimes against them are justified and normalised by the general population, the media and the penal system.

*Esther Pineda (born in Venezuela) has a PhD on Social Sciences, Works as a consultant and researcher specialised in gender. She is a journalist and author of several books: "Gender rolls and sexism"(2011). "Racism, Endoracism and Resistance" (2014), "Pretty to die: the female beauty canon as misogynism" (2014) and lately "Femicide Culture. The risk of being a woman in Latin America" (2019)*

*Esther is one of the strongest voices in Latin American feminism.*

## Official femicide figures, Latin America, 2010-2018

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	TOTAL
Argentina					225	235	254	251	251	1216
Bolivia				25	69	110	104	109	85	502
Chile	49	40	34	40	40	45	34	44	42	368
Colombia	125	130	139	88	145	81	128			836
Costa Rica	31	42	26	18	24	27	26	26	24	244
Ecuador					27	55	69	108		259
El Salvador				98	178	358	350	332	173	1489
Guatemala	205	245	246	300	209	209	210	220		1844
Mexico						407	584	735	834	2571
Nicaragua				42	38	19	10			109
Panama					26	29	19	18	19	111
Paraguay		14	24	5	26	23	39	50	54	235
Peru	139	123	122	111	100	103	105	116	149	1068
Republica Dominicana	97	128	103	71	93	77	88	107		765
Uruguay			20	22	13	26	16	23	22	142
Venezuela						121	122			243
<b>TOTAL</b>										<b>12,001</b>



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# We Want Ourselves Alive

Angeles Anchou and Pilar Goldmann

## Engraving is a cry within the reach of all of us

During the Filia Conference in October 2018, we had two representatives of the collective of Women Engraving We Want Ourselves Alive.

At that time, their book was in Spanish, and we had only produced a very summative translation into English to accompany the book to those who bought it, because of the collection of images included.

Now they have managed to translate the whole book into English. We hope to bring it to the UK in time for our Conference 2019 in Bradford.

Vivas Nos Queremos produced more copies for this year's International Women's Day, organising printing sessions with volunteers and even their children. Then, before the police could close off access to the areas where the rally was going to take place the following day, volunteers improvised a campsite to be able to work overnight.

The following extracts of their book explain how they found a way to make people aware of the horror of femicide through street art. This was partly to counteract the effect of the media, which was nullifying the humanity of the victims, focusing on the gory details of the crimes and dismembered bodies.

## How it all started

This story began in Mexico, driven by the Women Engraving Resistance Collective, who decided to use woodcutting as a way to create images with clear messages, a vehicle to denounce, inform on and render visible the different ways in which violence is inflicted on women.

We know it's impossible to reproduce all the gatherings that took place and continue taking place along the way. We also know that a piece of paper doesn't depict what it means to work with the xylography technique, which implies making, printing and going out on the street to intervene in public spaces, expressing ourselves on the walls, walking together as women, bringing this collective cry before the eyes of all.

In spite of all of this, we got together and took this sense of sorority, explicit throughout the campaign and the daily lives of women who take part in it, to use images (and a few words as food for thought) to express what our bodies go through every day and what we are seeking when we scream: We Want Ourselves Alive!



In the book, you'll find some of the images we made in Argentina, starting in 2015 when we first began working together, and some of the first images from the Mexican campaign. There will be images of well-known women, others of anonymous women; there'll be witches, crazy and free girls and women doing all sorts of things. We also highlight the different activities that were carried out in demonstrations and neighbourhoods by art collectives, or in the streets to show women in motion.

As this campaign has to do with the present but all the more with the future, we also designed educational activities to work with children on self-appreciation and loving one's own body so as to counteract everyday machista violence. Apart from this, we added step-by-step instructions so that everybody could create their own xylography, their own protest art, in a simple way.

This book is an invitation to continue to work together with mates, friends and sisters wherever we are, creating together with engravings and woodcutting, a loud visible rallying cry accessible to everyone.

## A sisterly cry echoing beyond all borders.

In Mexico, the saturation of violent images is part of the day-to-day necropolitics. Mass media bombards

us with images of moored, devastated bodies, our bodies in bags, thrown away as if we were objects.

In the face of this inundation of negative images, we decided to use printmaking to create images with clear, pro-active, positive messages, placing a wager on life in the midst of so much death and creating a vehicle to visibilise, inform and denounce the different ways we experience violence in our bodies, our spaces, our lives experience violence. This becomes, at the same time, a way to claim our right to self-defence and true happiness.

The prints were made on lino blocks, digitalized and printed on offset for their distribution and the campaign in the streets carried out via wheatpasting. Filling the streets with images, pasting them up, taking back the streets to acknowledge ourselves in defence and constant struggle.

The posters were distributed in different states around Mexico and eventually reached other countries around the world. They were free because the idea is that the streets carry our messages and our visions and that our declarations spread, hopefully finding echoes all around.

During July of 2014, we began to share the Mujeres Grabando Resistencias' graphic campaign, #VivasNosQueremos in the streets and on social media, launching a second open call to any other women who wanted to join. This was the moment in which we understood that all actions create reactions: the campaign began to receive more and more images, along with feedback, criticism and support. During the third phase and open call, we opened up the conversation inviting images reflecting self-care as a radical act, responding to the question around how I take care of myself in order to be able to care for others."

The posters became our loudspeakers, carrying messages near and far, and the images were replicated throughout Mexico, in Oaxaca, Ciudad Juarez, Chiapas, Coahuila, Morelos, Puebla and beyond, in Costa Rica, Spain, Germany, Colombia and infinite places. Small collectives or women's groups have found with us a weapon in graphics and art. And in Argentina, where Vivas Nos Queremos Argentina was born, we found our largest echo, reminding us again that we are not alone.

### **Graphic, collective and feminist resistance**

Shouting Vivas Nos Queremos / We Want Ourselves (women) Alive, we create our own images, showing ourselves as active protagonists of our lives.

We fight to decolonize ourselves from the patriarchal representation of our bodies and our attitudes. We call upon all women to express and condemn, through imagery, the femicides, rapes, disappearances and the day-to-day harassment we face simply because we are women.

To the perpetrators of femicide and transvesticide, we will respond with the images of our comrades to reclaim justice: Laura Iglesias, Berta Cáceres, Diana Sacayán. The #VivasNosQueremos images are for free circulation and reproduction. They defy the logic of the traditional, patriarchal artistic circles.

Anonymous, from the streets, open to anyone that wants to share it, the campaign is everyone's. It's in public space where our images make sense and make an appeal to other women and young girls that walk the streets.

The prints travel from hand to hand; we wheat-paste them or paint them on the walls and they turn into an act of performance when we march all together, using our bodies to mount the prints. The initiative in Argentina took shape in Buenos Aires when we met echoing the slogan #VivasNosQueremos during March 8, 2015 demonstration.

Some of us were wheat-pasting the prints we brought back from Mexico while others were already making new images. We started to run into each other at demonstrations and then crafted the first open call together, on November 25th — International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women— that same year.

The process is equal to, or perhaps more important than the result. It is the possibility to finding one another, of gathering and coming together, of finding our own rhythm like that of knitting or embroidering. It is generating a weave among all of us, a weave that goes beyond the walls of the studio and takes over the streets. Carving a block, printing and then going out to wheat-paste is empowering, a way to transform the image into a collective strength.

Alive we want ourselves, building sorority networks for Latin America!

# Tradução

Carolina Teco

In Brazil, on average, every three hours an investigation is open to establish possible cases of femicide (Conselho Nacional do Ministério Público 2015-2017). There are more than 2,800 investigations opened each year. This terrifying number created a certain social acceptance /tolerance to this type of crime, becoming something common in Brazilian's everyday lives. If Brazilians can tolerate the deaths of so many women, what makes the death of Marielle different from all the others?

The murder of Marielle was not just a case of femicide, it was a clear attack to Brazilians' democracy. The murder of an elected MP in full exercise of her duties, it was an obvious attempt to block the changes she so passionately defended. Her death exposed what the Brazilian society thinks about minority ethnics that occupy roles of power.

Marielle Francisco da Silva, better known as Marielle Franco, brutally murdered on March 14th 2018, born and bred in the Favela of Maré, overcame the difficulties stemming from being a black, low income and a single mother to graduate in Social Sciences, specializing in economics and to achieve a master in public administration. Her political career began in 2006 when she was appointed parliamentary advisor to then state representative Marcelo Freixo with whom she worked for ten years.

In 2016 she was the fifth most voted female councillor in the city of Rio de Janeiro and the second woman with the most votes for the position of councillor in all of Brazil. It was from there that her voice began to gain strength.

She was a courageous human rights activist, who drew attention to the police abuse of power and the killings of young black people in the peripheries. She opposed federal military intervention in the city of Rio de Janeiro and in thirteen months of her mandate presented thirteen draft bills, all aimed at defending women's rights, combating social inequality, LGBT rights and combating racism.



Brazilian politics has always been represented by white and wealthy males, and the image of a black woman, from a favela (shantytown), admittedly bisexual, feminist, who made herself heard, is an image that Brazilian society does not want to face, it is almost an affront to the "good citizen." This voice that made herself heard began to echo even stronger and took more and more space. It was no longer possible to ignore this woman's strength.

To those who did not bear to hear such greatness had no alternative but to silence it with four bullets, three of them on the head and one on the neck. The message was clear: "you do not belong here."

But not everything went as planned.

Indeed, Marielle Franco unfortunately died instantly, but to everyone's surprise, including those closest to her, her voice still live, more alive than ever! Her voice was once restricted to the city of Rio de Janeiro but now her voice can be heard in every corner of the planet. The name only few knew before, now arouses the curiosity of many. Her killers made of her a symbol of struggle and resistance against fascism and the growth of the right wing in Brazil. The billboards with her name became an icon of protest and homage to a woman who still had much to contribute.



Demonstrations against the election of then-presidential candidate Jair Bolsonaro #ELENAO organized through social media drove millions of women to the streets in more than 150 cities in Brazil and abroad. This was the largest demonstration of women in the country's history. The cries of MARIELLE VIVE and MARIELLE PRESENTE were repeated to exhaustion and her face could be seen everywhere.

All this visibility brought concrete results; one of the most expressive was the election of three of her direct advisors Renata Souza, Mônica Francisco and Dani Monteiro to the position of state representatives. All of these women have a life trajectory very similar to that of Marielle. These women are responsible for making the Legislative Assembly of Rio de Janeiro have the largest number of black women in its history.

Another good example is the election of two collective mandates of the Ocupa Política movement, one in São Paulo and another in Pernambuco. This movement, of which Marielle was part of, was created to increase representation in the legislative power, giving voice not only to a person but to a whole group.

The collective Juntas of Pernambuco is represented by Jô Cavalcante, who shares this position with four other women including a trans lawyer. The collective Bancada Ativista of São Paulo is represented by Monica Seixas, who shares this with six other women and two men. The movement also elected four more federal representatives and seven state representatives with individual terms of office.

After her death, five of her projects were approved by Rio de Janeiro's Council, amongst them the implementation of evening childcare facilities to assist families that have their professional or academic activities in the evening.

Marielle has inspired many women, especially young black women, to fight for their rights, for their space and for their communities whether through politics or other small initiatives.

Marielle Franco initiated a process of mental transformation and from this path there is no turning back.

*"They wanted to bury you, without knowing you were a seed."* (unknown author)



# FiLiA UK and Escalera Caracol in a joint feminist adventure, Buenos Aires

Marta Núñez

8th March has become an iconic day in most of Latin America, and Argentina is one of those regions where the country stops and waits for women to express themselves. Don't you dare send us flowers or chocolates as it used to be!

Representing Filia UK, I found the ideal partner in crime, a fantastic artist, teacher, curator and owner of an art gallery. For three consecutive years, Alicia Dawidson has been running a special exhibition dedicated to Woman's Week calling for artists that would like to express what was to be a woman, or any issue associated with it.

This year we joined forces to hold a more international and more feminist Woman's Exhibition in her art gallery.

We managed to create a space with the fusion of two existing collections. Twenty pieces from the art collection curated by FiLiA Art (exhibited at the 2018 FiLiA Conference to celebrate 100 years of women's suffrage in the UK) were exhibited alongside the collection of Vivas Nos Queremos (We Want Ourselves Alive), which had also been exhibited at the FiLiA Conference the previous year. The collection reflects the grassroots art done by women engravers from Mexico to Argentine, producing prints that are anonymous, without copyright and that defies the individualism of ownership.

Alicia's gallery is an art school and a communal centre as well, so she is part of a local community that attend exhibitions, join art lessons, watch films, and participate in debates.

This made an excellent opportunity to create awareness among a public that was doubtless keen on art in general, but not necessarily aware of the feminist issues that many women are facing.

We felt that bringing along representatives from Mothers Victims of Sex Trafficking with the pictures of their disappeared or killed daughters was an opportunity to raise awareness of one of the most obscure crimes against women.

Along these three main bodies of work, representing the fight of the suffragettes, the current fight against femicide and the testimonies of trafficking, we also exhibited beautiful and more intimate work of arts produced by independent artists.

The day of the vernissage we had about 300 attendees: women, men and children. We had to run to the nearest supermarket to get more wine!

Over the next few days we continued to have visitors. Perhaps our proudest achievement was having local schools bring teenagers –boys and girls – to learn about the issues still facing women today.

Our only artwork from Brazil, a portrait of Marielle Franco, who was recently murdered, gave the the public the opportunity to learn about the risks of being an assertive, black, lesbian woman in politics, fighting for the poorest and dispossessed from Rio de Janeiro.

# Brazil Fundo Elas

Marta Núñez

Filia UK got in touch with this fantastic organization thanks to their invitation to join their II Dialogue of Women in Movement: Collective Alliances and Actions that took place in Rio de Janeiro 26-28 September 2018.

I attended the encounter representing Filia UK within a group a UK representatives (Women for Refugee Women UK, Bokantaj (England), ACOSVO (Scotland, Racial Justice Network (England) and University College London).

It was a complete eye-opener for me... this encounter brought together in an environment of tolerance, mutual respect, formal institutions such as The UN Women and British Council, to representatives of rural black communities, indigenous women, transsexual associations, the Afro-Latin American women of the diaspora, plus art, music, spontaneous dancing...and we cried together for the victims of so much violence and pain, and we laughed in happiness to have this fantastic opportunity to exchange experiences.

Representatives from Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Argentina, Nicaragua, Mexico, Costa Rica, Uruguay were present, as well as the different regions of the so vast Brazil.

Since then, we have not stopped of being in touch with the wonderful K.K Verdade, the organiser of the event, and Tamyres Ravache who had the impossible task of having us all together at the right time, and in the right place! In addition, the staff of the British Council helped immensely to make such an event to be possible.

I went to visit Fundo Elas at the end of February 2019 to reinforce our partnership, and to put our efforts together so representatives of Brazil can attend Filia UK Feminist Conference, Bradford, 19-20th October, following Filia commitment to bring global perspectives to UK and create new synergies among women.

## What is FUNDO ELAS?

Elas is a fund for social investment.

We are the only Brazilian fund of investment oriented exclusively to the promotion of the protagonism of women. We understand that investing in women is the quickest way to achieve the development of a country. When one invests on women, the life of their children and the people around them is transformed, generating results for their communities, cities, regions... and all Brazil.

As UN and important organisations declare women are the main agents of social transformation. All investments towards their protagonism have an impact that produce changes in social trends within their communities.

New challenges, new partnerships and new achievements!

Since 2017 we created a potent and unprecedented partnership, the British Council, UN Women, the Open Society Foundations, the OAK Foundation, The Global Fund for Women and ELAS Fund have united to strengthen the women's movement, contributing to the advancement of democracy and rights, and the exchange of between women's movements in Brazil and in other countries in the Latin American region.

Within each programme ELAS Fund promotes strategic Dialogues between themrepresentatives of the supported projects. These are moments that include training in institutional development, mobilization of resources, communication and marketing, and networking between groups.

Our methodology is recognized and proven as a good practice to increase project results and impact. This methodology brings the groups together and allow THEM to create joint strategies.

So, what is next?

In partnership with FUNDO ELAS, British Council Brazil and FILIA UK we are aiming to bring representatives of Brazilian Feminist groups to tell us more about them. To give an example in the area of the struggle for equality of the Afro-descendant population (54 % in Brazil) there are many points of coincidence with Black feminism aims in the UK and around the globe.

We also would like to know more about how such a vast population with a mixture of origin, culture, religion, class, diversity in general interact in our feminist mission.



**Increasing  
equality of  
access to  
life's  
opportunities**



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when everyone feels safe,  
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and it is accessible to all.*

*J. Winstanley, Founder & CEO  
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# Bradford District Women's Health Network

Michelle Taylor, Self proclaimed 'mad, bad, sad old hippy'

Why I do what I do.

I've been that woman without a voice.

I've been that woman desperately reaching out and finding an empty space.

I've been that woman screaming into the darkness hoping someone would hear.

I became that hand in space, that listening ear that meant some women would not be alone and voiceless.

Not enough, never enough but some women held my hand until they could take their first steps. I spoke until they felt able to speak. And boy can women speak when just one person asks them to, when they feel safe to, when they are given permission to.

And that work brought me to here and now, to chairing the Bradford District Women's Health Network. The network is the voice of and for the women of Bradford because we are made up of representatives of all communities, speaking up for all women.

We listen to the women we all work with, we raise the issues that women tell us about and we find ways to address them.

We cover topics from hate crime to cancer screening, from poverty to domestic abuse. If it affects women, matters to women we listen and we talk and are listened to.

And we are very thankful to Bradford City, District and Airedale, Wharfedale and Craven CCGs for their continued investment in our network and to CNet who support and facilitate our meetings and events.

## Survivor

Do you understand the damage you did  
I didn't think I could live with such pain  
It's taken so long to reach this point  
Of beginning to enjoy living again  
I didn't cry on that night that you hurt me  
It was an age before the tears came  
The only feelings in those early days  
Were fear and guilt and anger and shame  
The fear that you would come back for me  
The guilt that somehow I was to blame  
The anger at you for what you'd done to me  
The shame whenever I thought of it's name  
I still can't say that word when remembering  
For that would make me a victim of your crime  
And I'm no victim, I'm a survivor  
My pain has eased with the passage of time  
The fear of you coming no longer haunts me  
The guilt has faded, I wasn't to blame  
The anger has gone now, replaced by pity  
For you now forever must live with the shame

© Michelle Taylor

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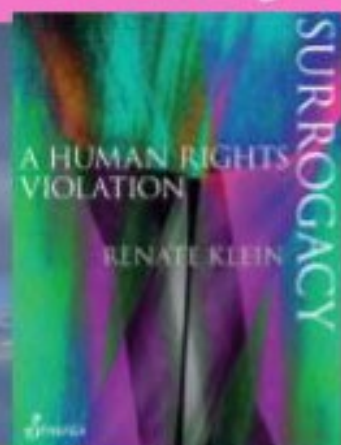
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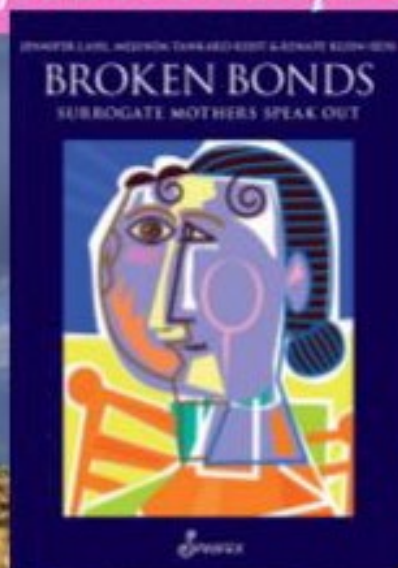
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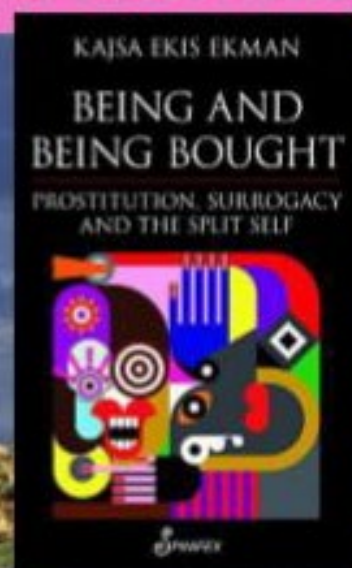
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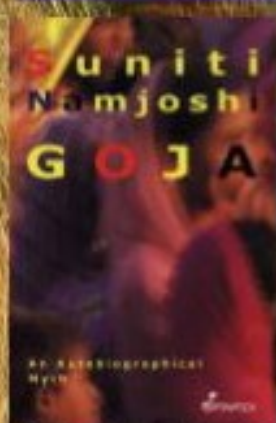


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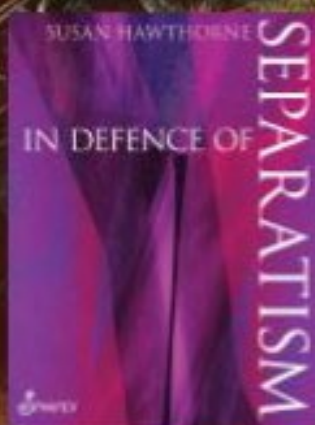


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*Suniti Namjoshi*

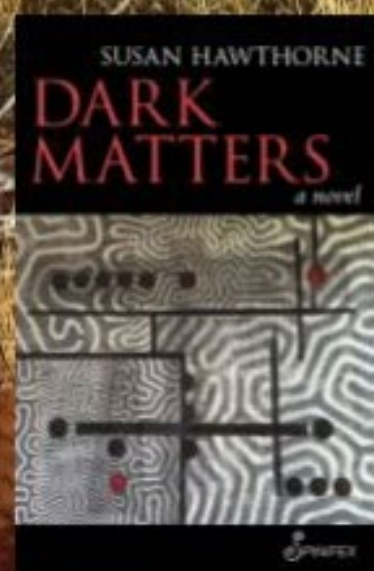


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We are incredibly honoured and humbled to be able to share the voices of incredible women, particularly those less-often heard.

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