

THE OCCUPIED TIMES OF LONDON

#28

AUG 2015

theoccupiedtimes.org

@OccupiedTimes



Editorial

Up to a hundred people put up fierce resistance to a south London immigration raid in June, despite intense violence from riot police, who came in numbers to support the UKBA's racist and deadly border enforcement. This state violence is merely a more explicit component of an otherwise general assault on people's lives in this city, and elsewhere.

The mass cleansing inherent to "regeneration" policies, ongoing crackdowns on squatting, unaffordable rents, the structural shift from welfare to workfare, cuts to disability funding, long-repressed wages coupled with inflating commodity prices; these are all features of a barren capitalist landscape, stretching as far into the future as we can see, in which it becomes progressively harder for growing numbers of us to reproduce our own lives. As we become surplus to the needs of capital, through automation, and to a lesser extent outsourcing, it also shows its disregard for more and more of our lives - filling its prisons with (disproportionately black) bodies it doesn't need, turfing thousands out of their communities to make way for a "better class of person", and cannibalising the remaining services of a retreating welfare system that most of us still depend on to survive.

There was a large element of spontaneity to that rebellion which took place down a back street near East Street Market, as is often the case when communities meet the violence of the state with a righteous counter-violence of their own. But it's also no coincidence that this happened where it did. There are several local housing, squatting and anti-raids groups operating in the area, as well as a prominent social centre. This is also a community undergoing rapid gentrification and displacement, though its population is still largely Black and South American. Several local teenagers, constantly stopped and searched and racially profiled, weren't slow to join in.

This part of south London is seeing the beginnings of networks of solidarity forming, of community organising developing into community resistance. Such resistance is taking the form of a determined struggle over material needs: housing, defence from the violence of the police, access to food. This is not a case of "activists" parachuting in with plans and lectures, but of people organising together in their own communities over what they want and need. The make-up of such groups

reflects the make-up of the community and those affected by what's happening there.

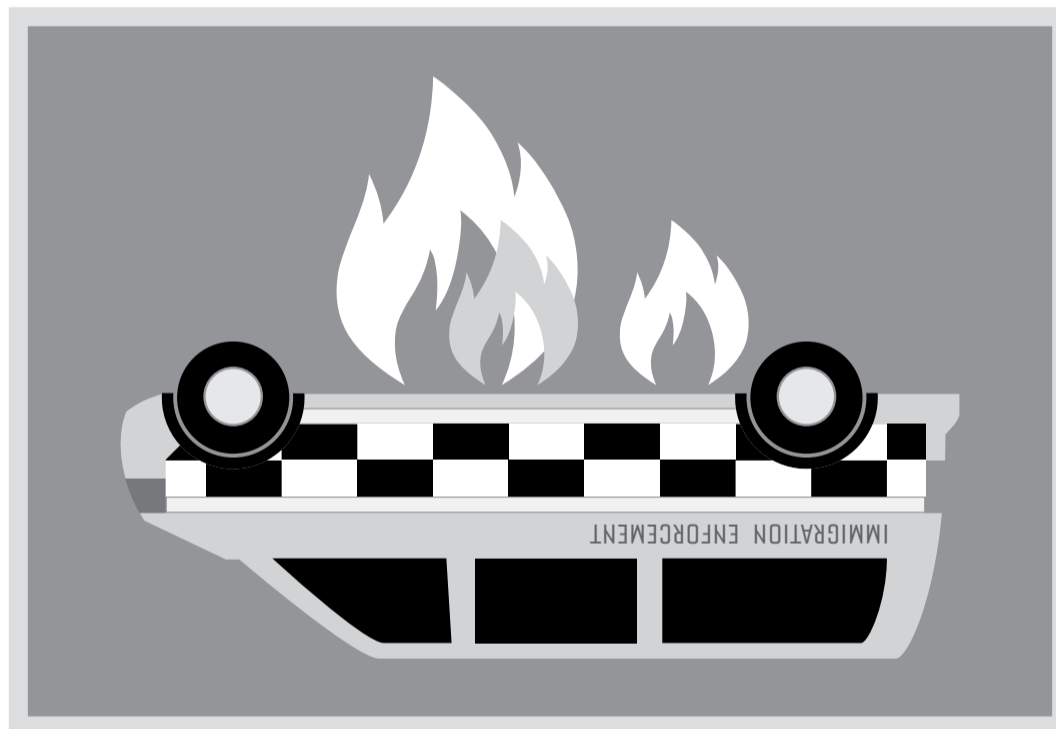
Such organising can be seen on a far larger scale in Greece and Spain, with the proliferation of free soup kitchens, solidarity health centres, and huge squatting and anti-eviction movements. This self-organisation is not revolutionary in and of itself, nor is it necessarily prefigurative of "how things should be in future", but in the context of a disappearing welfare state unlikely to return, such work is necessary. It can also help to counter a long-term and undeniable decomposition and fragmentation of the working class. This could be a recomposition not brought about through an oppressive or anachronistic demand for "unity" but by people coming together, not based on their role in the productive sphere but on a common recognition of the importance of each other's reproduction and a desire to spend time together, and to plot.

There is of course a danger that such organising plays into capital's hands - filling in for a withdrawing state like a cut-price "Big Society". But if we recognise as immanent capital's relentless production of surplus populations, then we see this not as choice but as necessity. And the aim of new (or different) organisational forms should always be, in the long-term, not just to survive, but

to counter-assault. Can future insurgent practices emerge from this organising? Can expropriation, de-commodification and other direct means of subverting capitalist social relations become more generalised? Such questions should guide us. So should the work of the Black Panther Party.

The Panthers, between 1967-1971, grew from a tiny neighbourhood group in Oakland, California, that monitored racist policing, to a national insurgent threat that terrified the US government by not only taking on state violence but providing for the communities they were a part of. Free breakfast programs, free healthcare, free food and clothes, eviction resistance, free ambulance services, free educational programs and more made up the party's "survival programs". At least 36 Free Breakfast Programs in party branches across the country fed 20,000 children a day in 1968-69. Organising around material needs roots social movements in their neighbourhoods and builds communities of struggle.

This is not, and cannot be, activist alternativism. You cannot opt out of the capitalist mode of production. Nor can you vote it out of existence. The struggle is long, the best place to start is exactly where you are, fighting for what you need. Together.



OT This publication is funded solely by donations and is sustained by the voluntary efforts and enthusiasm of the OT collective, contributors and readers. It is printed on recycled paper using vegetable inks by Aldgate Press. The paper has a print-run of 2,000 copies per issue.

Web | theoccupiedtimes.org
Twitter | [@OccupiedTimes](https://twitter.com/OccupiedTimes)
Facebook | facebook.com/theoccupiedtimes

OT#28 Cover by *Kostis K. inkanddestroy.com*

Creative Commons License

Unless otherwise stated, all content within this publication is covered by an Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 3.0 Unported Creative Commons License.



For further details see: www.creativecommons.org

CONTENTS

3 Yarl's Wood MFJ Callout

Following the powerful June 6 and August 8 demonstrations at Yarl's Wood Immigration Removal Centre, we publish a call to action & statement by Movement For Justice.

4 Irish Water Revolt

Ferdia O'Brien writes of the growing social movement in Ireland against the privatisation of water. People across the country are getting organised and taking direct action to secure the most basic of needs.

5 On Circulation Struggles

Nick Srnicek calls for strategic reflection on approaches to class struggle in light of the vast changes in the capitalist mode of production and circulation over recent decades.

6 & 7 Social Reproduction & Collective Care

The Radical Collective Care Project - a research collective - outline some of their findings about mutual aid initiatives and self-organisation and their centrality within contemporary struggle.

8 & 9 These Babies Need Communism

The OT speaks to new parents from within our organising circles (and our own collective!) about how becoming parents has affected their lives and their politics.

10 Organising in our Communities

Housing Action Southwark & Lambeth (HASL) have been organising together for two years. The group here presents an outline of their origins and working practices in fighting poverty and securing homes for all.

11 Eat Together, Fight Together

A look at some of the interests and motivations behind HASL's free communal lunch clubs and picnics and the inspiration here drawn from past groups such as the Black Panther Party.

12 & 13 The Structure of State Education

R Movement present an analysis of education in UK schools, revealing the perpetuation of gendered education, racism and the underlying logic of state education.

14 Ecstasy & Warmth

A personal perspective and account of social and collective life within struggle by Automnia; the warmth to be found in one's affinities - and the reach for the ecstasy beyond us.

15 Why is my Curriculum White?

Neda Tehrani looks at some of the underlying concerns informing the UCL-born campaign to unveil the complicity in academia with white supremacy and the perpetuation of the white curriculum.

16 East Street Resistance

In June, some 100 locals, squatters and activists put up fierce resistance to an immigration raid being carried out in Southwark by UKBA and riot police. Rabble.org.uk describe what went down that afternoon in East Street.

17 How to Spot an Immigration Raid

Originally printed in OT24, we're republishing our popular infographic, created with help from the Antiraid Network & providing advice on what to do when the UKBA show up.

18 Provo

An introduction to the use of print media by the Dutch counterculture movement, Provo, who were active in the mid-1960s. Part of a larger research project by Jil Daniel.

19 Building Space, Making Time

Part observation, part reportage, learning and critique - the OT illustrate and seek to share, as best we can, some key learnings - an approach to spaces, moments, organising and political mobilisation.

MFJ CALL TO ACTION

Following Shut Down Yarl's Wood Demo

by Movement for Justice

The demonstration on Saturday June 6th was at its most powerful, and empowering, the moment the windows of Yarl's Wood Immigration Removal Centre came into view. At this point, the movement inside and outside of detention connected as one - visibly, and audibly. That was when the desire to see Yarl's Wood shut down became a real possibility in people's minds; because a united movement as determined to fight for justice as we were becomes an unstoppable force. We must continue making every effort humanly possible to build this movement - that is how we know we can win.

Movement for Justice (MFJ) received this text message from a young Yarl's Wood detainee, Marina, the day after:

"The protesting was amazing, I enjoyed every single moment. That was the time to let that anger out and put forward the craving for freedom. Yarl's Wood is such a confinement and a depressing place that detainees were hoping that protesters would break the gate so we could all escape, some even had their bags ready just in case. I am sure what we did will not be a waste. Thanks to everyone for such a great day."

The power and joy felt inside and outside the walls of Yarl's Wood was palpable. The hated fences and barbed wire were breached, and with it the power of intimidation that Serco and immigration authorities hold. These fences are seen by detainees every day, reminding them of their captivity. But on the 6th June we were reminded that what was built can also be torn down.

From outside we listened to the women shout, saw them waving handmade flags and written signs, and we joined them in chanting 'SHUT DOWN YARL'S WOOD'. Uniting together, inside and outside, we made history and together we have the task of fulfilling the promise of that demonstration: that those walls will fall.

How was the 6th June built?

MFJ leaders in Yarl's Wood had been planning and building up to that demonstration for several weeks. Resistance comes in many forms: it's letting new detainees know about what is planned; working out how to get the message across from inside to the outside; spreading the word about the demo; making signs, banners and placards; discussing how to deal with the bullying threats and sugar-coated enticements from management, designed to intimidate and

distract, to re-establish the segregation of those detained in Yarl's Wood from the outside world.

On the 6th June the Serco management organised a surprise bingo contest with cash prizes followed by a disco to distract the women from the demonstration outside, and to drown out the chants. This attempt to divert attention from the demo only confirmed to the women how important this demo was going to be. The women's joy was enormous, as they watched hundreds and hundreds of people start to appear in the field between the torn down fence and the much larger one still dividing them. The women banged on the windows, shouted until guards told them to stop, then did so again and again.

Before setting off to see the detainees, we had heard some speeches speaking of those detained as victims - poor, brave women who need us to speak for them and act in their place. Too often detainees are portrayed as weak and their actions treated as secondary to the more important efforts of MPs, lawyers and celebrities, but this is not the truth. Defining detainees by vulnerability alone means undermining the enormous strength and capacity of detainees who are daily waging a fight for dignity and justice - some of our most important and dynamic leaders. Detention does intensify the vulnerability of those detained, especially due to the isolation and being deemed a liar. Yet it also puts together strong people in an intense situation that calls for dynamism and unity, with a shared cause. Winning means learning how to

fight - not helping with how to cry. There are no knights in shining armour coming to ride in from outside and save the day, it's on us, on how we fight for ourselves and each other. Many of our best leaders are in detention right now, shedding illusions and leading through action. Relying on winning sympathy from a section of the rich and powerful is deluded; basing how we fight on that premise is a losing method which we cannot afford.

To win requires a mass, independent movement unafraid of the anger of the oppressed, based on the optimism we feel when we really fight to win, speaking the plain truth about racism, and mobilising collective power. MFJ is committed to organising with the detainees inside Yarl's Wood and all the detention centres.

* We have to continue the work of organising inside the detention centres and we need people who can learn how to do that work, take part in collective visits, phone calls and develop the leadership of detainees.

* We need to expand our organising into our communities in street rallies and demonstrations, and we need to organise in schools and colleges because our movement must be mobilising the most dynamic sections of our society and developing youth leadership of our movement.

So for everyone inspired and moved by the historic demonstration at Yarl's Wood on 6/6/15, now's the time to join MFJ, join us in building a mass, independent, integrated, youth-led, civil & immigrants rights movement that can win. @followmfj



Building the independent, integrated, youth led, civil & immigrant rights movement



Photos by Wasi Daniju



THE IRISH WATER REVOLT

The movement against the imposition of new charges by Irish Water has become a platform for opposition to austerity, bank bailouts, privatisation, the government, party politics, the EU, and more. Thousands have experienced a political (re-)awakening. But while it is possible that we will win this battle, and abolish Irish Water, this struggle represents a precious opportunity to launch a grassroots offensive after so many years of being beaten down. It certainly wasn't always obvious that the fight against water charges would be so enormous. The massive turnout for the 11 October "Right2Water" demonstration came as a surprise to most, including much of the activist left.

People didn't throng Dublin's city centre out of nowhere. After the collapse of the Campaign Against Home and Water Taxes (CAHWT) around January 2014, crucially, a small number of people decided to stay active and stop the installation of water meters in Ballyphehane and Togher in Cork and then a few areas of north east Dublin. On this, Gregor Kerr, who was the secretary of the Federation of Dublin Anti-Water Charge Campaigns (FDAWCC) in the 1990s, opined: "I don't think it's any exaggeration to say that the huge protest on 11 October wouldn't have been anything like the size it was without the slow burn for the previous months of blockades and protests against meter installations spreading from community to community. And it was no coincidence either that many of the people involved in water meter blockades had also participated earlier in the summer in blockades of scab-operated bin trucks in their communities in support of the locked out Greyhound workers." The initiative and hard work of these early campaigners was the germ of the huge movement which has burgeoned since.

This is a large part of the reason the fight against the water charges has been far more successful than the fight against the household and property tax was. Kerr added: "the fact that [the latter] was so fresh in people's memories was undoubtedly important. But maybe for many people it was important from the point of view of people saying 'We're not going to allow the same mistakes to be made again'. There is a huge contrast between the way the two campaigns developed. The CAHWT was initiated by political organisations and was effectively strangled by some of those same parties/organisations as they jockeyed for control and positioned themselves to be the anti-property tax candidates in the local elections. In contrast the anti-water charges campaign has emerged from communities and the political parties and organisations have been running after it trying to 'lead' it. Indeed there isn't an anti-water charge campaign but a plethora of groups organising in an ad hoc manner, some co-ordinated, some not."

The attempt to impose domestic water charges in Ireland is not new. In 1977, domestic rates were scrapped (raising VAT and income tax), but in 1983 'service charges' were introduced in most counties. From 1994-1997 a grassroots campaign in Dublin (FDAWCC), somewhat similar to the present one, repelled the water charge (a flat charge, no meters were used). This involved a strong boycott of the bills, mass demonstrations and court protests, a solidarity fund for legal costs, and reversing and preventing water cut-offs. The water charge was then scrapped for the 26 counties. The implementation of domestic water charges was in the previous Fianna Fáil-Green government's Programme for Government in 2009. Then in 2010 it was a condition of the Troika bailout.



The purpose of Irish Water is certainly not 'safeguarding your water for your future'. Only the most naïve would believe that the same politicians who decided to critically underfund our water infrastructure for decades – so that 40-50% of supply is leaked and whole areas are on boil notices – are suddenly driven to make long-term 'tough decisions' for the good of humanity. These are the same politicians who are committed to ignoring the very present catastrophe of climate change.

Irish Water was established to transform our water into a commodity. Even former Fine Gael junior minister Fergus O'Dowd spoke of being 'deeply concerned at other agendas, they may be European' and '[not knowing] where they are coming from' when he was involved in the foundation of Irish Water. But this is not peculiar to Ireland. The global pattern is that 'familiar mega-banks and investing powerhouses such as Goldman Sachs, JP Morgan Chase, Citigroup, UBS, Deutsche Bank, Credit Suisse ... are consolidating their control over water.' The UN has predicted that there will be a 40% shortfall in global water supply by 2030. In 2008, Goldman Sachs called water 'the petroleum for the next century'. Such corporations have been slurping up water utilities and reserves. For instance, Goldman Sachs bought Veolia Water, the largest water services corporation on the planet, in 2012.

Resistance to the Irish Water plan has been relentless. The movement has not withered away as many predicted, even in the face of Garda (police) repression and mainstream media denunciations. A sense now pervades that there is always some action going on somewhere, and that protest or dissent in general has become a sort of national pastime.

There is no lesson quite like being arrested, and thanks to social media this lesson has spread the length and breadth of the country. A ludicrously excessive Garda presence is a familiar sight to anyone following the anti-water charges movement, with packs of Gardai crowding around a few meter holes as if protecting someone from murder. One protest in South Dublin saw not only a dozen Garda cars and vans deployed, but even a helicopter. The Jobstown dawn raids, the pepper spraying of protesters in Coolock, and the jailing of the 4 injunctioned protesters only made it harder to swallow the idea that the Gardai and judiciary exist to serve the people rather than the interests of an elite.

Attendance at protests is persistently under-reported and the movement has been hounded by a 'has the protest gone too far?' narrative (sometimes using outright fabrication). Some of this has been subverted through the establishment of important counter-media platforms. A sprawling network of Facebook pages, Twitter accounts, and a host of blogs and websites provide a means to communicate quickly amongst ourselves, keeping up-to-date on activity around the country, reacting to establishment spin and discussing tactics. This grassroots media network has given staying power to the movement, allowing protesters, who would otherwise be isolated and forgotten, to link with and inspire others.

At the heart of this movement is direct action, both in the prevention of meter installations and the boycotting of bills. People's dedication has been impressive, with people regularly waking at 5, 6, and 7am to protest for hours on end, often in stressful circumstances. These protests can have almost military precision, scouting for meter contractors each day, communicating their movements via text trees. This is typified by Dublin's 'Flying Column' who respond rapidly to alerts and drive to different parts of the city, and the Cobh, Co. Cork group who even have a makeshift 'command and control' centre. If anything, this movement is a testament to the ability of so-called 'ordinary' people to figure things out for themselves and organise effectively.

Despite the spontaneity, ingenuity, and grassroots nature of this movement, most of the left remain hell-bent on the tired strategy of electoralism. There is much talk of left alliances, broad platforms, and progressive coalitions – in other words, another attempt at social democracy. Along with an economic crisis, we have a crisis of imagination. Instead of advancing in the natural direction of this movement by renouncing parliamentary democracy as the un-democratic charade that it is, and spurring people on to wrest back power over their lives, "Right2Water" is encouraging us to entrust our fates in 'progressive politicians' and is drafting its own electoral programme. Considering "Right2Water" won't back the boycott, its mobilisations are effectively election rallies, and the closer the elections draw the more it will focus on them to the exclusion of all else, it is worth asking if "Right2Water" – now a sort of meta-political party – has outlived its purpose.

Elections are where movements go to die, demobilising people and fostering divisions. Why bother taking action yourself when some politicians are going to solve the problem for us? And who will do the campaigning for these anti-water charges candidates? Well, water protesters of course. Leafleting, canvassing, organising meetings – time, effort, money, and hope, poured into what is ultimately an act of ritual mass delusion. We desperately require a fundamental transformation of society, and that cannot come from the buildings of parliament, it can only come from the great mass of people taking control of their destinies.

There has been much talk of SYRIZA as a model for change, but far less focus on Greece's network of grassroots organisations comprising free medical clinics, alternative currencies and exchange economies, self-managed education, alternative media, and eco-villages. Surely this is more inspiring than a left party being elected to government? Clearly we are far from achieving this in Ireland, but this is the sort of politics we should aspire to. This is actually a 'new politics'. The 'Says No' groups are promising in that they go beyond single issue campaigning, linking up struggles like homelessness, evictions, and austerity. They could be the embryos of powerful community unions through which people can participate in a real form of democracy and organise around local issues. It is essential to remember that this is our movement and our world, not the world of the politician, and if we want to change things we will have to take responsibility ourselves rather than rely on somebody else.



On Circulation Struggles

Today's left is beset by a lack of strategic reflection. After decades of being weakened, the various forces that comprise the left have been set on the back foot, reacting against the active forces of capital and the state. They have been fractured into a plurality of small-scale and independent actions that rarely merge into anything larger. In particular, there has been the decline of strategic thinking – the self-reflection on the relationship between means and ends, tactics and goals. This article is intended as a small contribution to the reinvigoration of strategic reflection, examining the recent popularity of the blockade as a potent political tactic. As with every tactic, however, there are limits to its effective use, and the mindless application of this tactic in every situation risks reducing its power and overlooks the opportunity costs involved in channelling scarce political energy into ineffective avenues. That is to say, a lack of strategic reflection not only hinders political success; it actively militates against it.

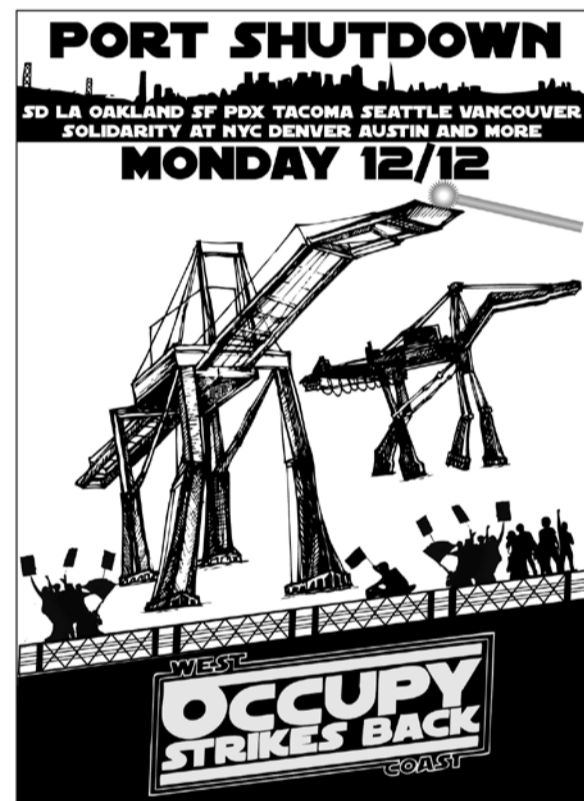
In recent years, it has become a dogma to claim that struggles around the point of production are largely over. In the West, there has certainly been a significant decline in the share of manufacturing employment – and as a result, a significant decline in industrial action in this sector. Union density has dropped across the Western world, though with marginal holdouts in the public sector. But while it picks out some truths of our situation, the claim that production struggles are over is only a partial perspective. The decline in production struggles in the West has been matched by the rise in other countries. China is perhaps the most notable case, where the labour movement has managed to gain significant increases in real wages through their struggles. A similar story holds for much of Latin America and South Asia as well, and looks likely to take hold in Africa as China and American capital flows into the region searching after new cheap labour sources. So the claim that production struggles are over is a peculiarly Eurocentric conceit. However, to say production struggles still have importance is not the same as saying they will be the revolutionary vanguard of the proletariat. The latter claim, for a variety of reasons, does not hold.

Moreover, even within the core capitalist countries, production struggles still have some notable efficacy, particularly in sectors dependent on lean production. The reduction in inventory and reliance on just-in-time supply chains means that these sectors are highly susceptible to worker agitation. Yet all this must be set in the undeniable context that manufacturing is in decline in the Western world. And indeed, in relative terms, even developing countries are reaching a turning point where manufacturing employment is in decline. The phenomenon of premature deindustrialisation is likely to be one of the key events these economies will have to face up to in the coming years, and this will have significant effects on the continued efficacy of production struggles.

Because of these changes, many have turned to a focus on circulation as an alternative. Everyone from the romantic insurrectionists of *The Invisible Committee* to more traditional labour organisers in the pages of *Jacobin* have announced a new era of blockades and circulation struggles. While agreeing with much of this analysis, I want to outline three possible limits of circulation struggles (undoubtedly many more could, and should, be analysed as well). The first of these is the often scattershot nature of the political pressure. Who are the targets of a blockade? Who could respond in any meaningful way? And how, precisely, are they being pressured? Point of production struggles had ready-made answers to these sorts of questions: the target was the employer (or with more generalised struggles, the national government), and pressure was exerted by stopping the production of a good, which went on to have direct economic costs for the employer (or the

national economy). In most cases of blockading, the targets, pressure, and effects are much less clear. Often the ones pressured most are the suppliers and retailers who are affected by a disruption of the supply chain – but given that they don't own the circulation nodes, they are simultaneously not in any position to respond directly to the struggles. And usually this pressure on suppliers and retailers is itself scattershot, subject to the contingent composition of goods passing through a circulation node. Which industries are affected? Are imports or exports affected more? What industries can re-route around the blockade? What industries have time-sensitive goods that can't be re-routed? Such questions are important for understanding the targets, political pressure, and potential efficacy of a circulation struggle, but they too often get ignored. Some unions, such as the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU), have a key position in the global economy which allows them to exert pressure without having to worry too much about pinpointing effects, but for most circulation nodes, this will not be the case. Computer modelling can help to understand the chains of power here, as industry reports outline the effects of blockades. But in any case, it is an important question to ask, lest blockades join summit-hopping and marches as routine but ineffective tactics.

A second related problem arises from the potential for these actions to simply enable one segment of the labour force to gain traction, while leaving others behind. This is a general problem, of course, and one not limited to dockworkers, warehouse workers, and truck drivers. It is, in fact, endemic to union organising: how to create solidarity beyond just the particular workplace or industry? There are precedents for various industries building



broad-based solidarity. And the ILWU has been supportive of, for example, the #BlackLivesMatter movement. But such questions of solidarity and deploying structural power for ends beyond that of the workplace must remain at the forefront of any strategic theorising about these tactics. How can blockades help the surplus populations being tossed aside by capitalism? Assist unwaged domestic workers? Freelance online workers?

A third potential limit is a more long-term concern: namely, the decreasing size of the workforce involved in circulation. In a recent report, the ILO notes that in the wake of the 2008 crisis, supply-chain-related jobs have dropped and have yet to return to pre-crisis levels. A sluggish turn in global trade, combined with increasing (though still distant) parity in wages between places like China and the core capitalist countries, along with increased automation are likely behind the drop in supply-chain employment. The rise of fully automated ports, self-driving vehicles, and automated warehouses portends even further diminishment of jobs in this sector. Certain stages – such as the picking stage in warehouses – remain labour-intensive, but even this is the focus of immense research to overcome. If one of the classic arguments against the strength of production struggles has been the decline in manufacturing employment, a similar conclusion must follow for circulation struggles as global employment in this area declines. This, in other words, poses a long-term constraint on the power of these struggles.

Despite these qualifications, circulation struggles are likely to become more and more important as surplus populations grow, and as movements around inequality, police brutality, racism, and sexism continue to seek potent points of leverage. Point of production struggles have been significantly constrained in many cases, and point of circulation struggles offer a new avenue for political struggles. But the use of this tactic, as with any tactic, must be situated within a broader strategic reflection on how to build the power of these movements. Only this will enable a better future to be built.

Social Reproduction and Collective Care

A HORIZON FOR STRUGGLES AND PRACTICES

Manuela Zechner & Bue Rübner Hansen

The Radical Collective Care Project is a small research group investigating the politics of collective practices of care. Our aim is to explore different methodologies from small self-organised experiments (such as mutual legal aid and housing cooperatives), to substantial movements (such as the PAH and Occupy Sandy) and models for policy (such as the historical one-kitchen house and proposals from feminist economics). On our website we're putting together a modest showcase of examples from across this spectrum, to ask and learn about the specific challenges they face. We hope to map out a set of common knowledges and frequently occurring problems within this horizon. In the future we hope to find resources to expand the project and open it up to wider participation.

STRUGGLING AROUND SOCIAL REPRODUCTION

The crisis we are in is a profound one. It's not just the economic system facing a crunch but also the mode of social organisation and reproduction, as well as ecological systems, reaching a tipping point. It's a deep crisis, one that isn't about to be resolved but rather will keep erupting, leading to new breakdowns at economic, societal and environmental levels. Our survival and flourishing on this planet can no longer be managed via abstract chains of exploitation because those chains increasingly break down. We in the Global North – at least those of us with northern papers and skin colour – have been able to get by thinking that we don't depend on anyone, that we are our own masters. This is in line with the liberal subject that structures our societies and relations, which fetishises independence and thinks of itself as universal. Well, in fact, we do all depend on one another in global capitalism – we cannot think of societies as islands (whether at a national, ethnic or other level) because we depend on Chinese factory workers and Congolese miners as much as on Polish plumbers or Indian IT workers (to reiterate some major national industry professions).

It is time to transform these interdependencies into more sustainable and friendly ones, and the site of this struggle is social reproduction.

WHAT IS 'SOCIAL REPRODUCTION' AND WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR STRUGGLE?

Taking the term from Marxism and feminism, it refers to the ways in which a society regenerates and sustains itself – the forms of life and their ways of taking care of the bodies that compose a given group. The social reproduction modality of capitalism ends up creating vast "surplus populations" as well as austerity and unemployment in times of crisis. So the question of how to struggle at the level of social reproduction is not just about how to manage the welfare state of one country. Indeed, the welfare state in its 20th century form is no longer much of an option for organising a generalised way of looking after bodies within a population because the economic growth it fed on is no longer possible in Europe (and the male wage worker it was built around has come to be demystified).

Social reproduction operates on many levels: how we cover our everyday needs; how we relate to resources and ecological systems in our fulfilment of needs and desires; how we organise and manage this fulfilling of needs/desires at different scales, from the household to the neighbourhood to the city and region, to the larger country or continental and indeed global levels (and here, as a myriad of movements

propose, the question is about rethinking what we actually need to organise via which scale, and where scale is a mere expression of our alienation and being managed by big corporations and financial mechanisms).

So reimagining and struggling around social reproduction can mean fighting for the right to housing or water, for social rights and a basic income to sustain oneself. It can mean struggling against privatisation and building other systems of supply, management and distribution (from free self-education platforms to soup kitchens); it can mean struggling for commons, in the sense of resources that belong to all members of a community and are managed collectively; it can mean struggling within a perspective of 'transition' or reorganising the way domestic and care work are done, beyond hierarchies of gender and race. These struggles mark a huge field that may seem to englobe almost anything, and that's okay for our purposes since what we are interested in is a shift in the lens through which we read what is happening today and where the problem of our struggles lies. That problem is not just one of good management or stable wages but one that calls for profound reorganisation of some of the channels through which we get what we need and desire, through which we sustain our lives. It presents itself in times of high unemployment and intensifying precarity.

STRATEGIES OF REPRODUCTION

On a very basic level, social reproduction refers to a problem – namely, that we don't have guaranteed access to what we need; our reproduction is contingent, for instance, upon employment or access to welfare, or having friends or family who can sustain us. We all develop strategies of reproduction in relation to this problem and these can be immensely individualising, competitive and normative (e.g. careerism and nuclear families). But they can also be collective, and they will have to be to some extent, for struggles that are based on everyday relations of mutual separation and competition tend to be dependent on strong top-down leadership and ideological investments. Strategies of collective care transform individualisation into solidarity in a much more embedded and embodied way than ideas and slogans can. And rather than departing from big ideas, these struggles start from the everyday – things like child care or making a living – meaning they are accessible and immediate to a lot of people. Political change, in this way, is not beyond people's individual everyday struggles, but about the transformation of individual everyday struggles into collective struggles. This is not just a question of shared demands, but also collective capacities.



The Spanish housing movement PAH is an interesting example of this. They have managed to overcome the individualisation and shame of being caught up in unpayable mortgages. Many people would join the PAH simply to get help with their individual cases, but the sharing of stories soon made them realise that their problems were common. And common tactics such as eviction resistance, bank occupations and collective negotiations with banks, made it clear that the solutions would be collective too. Many who went to their first PAH meeting to defend their individual dreams of home ownership, were soon fighting a collective struggle for the right to housing, because the best way to deal with the individual problem turned out to be collective solidarity.

RELATION TO LABOUR

It seems unlikely that there can be a return to the near-full employment that existed after the world wars in certain core capitalist countries. That moment of economic growth, from within which the welfare state became possible, is over. We might see similar economic growth in 'developing' nations like China or India but we also increasingly see that this comes at an environmental and social cost that is unsustainable even in a relatively short term. Economic policies, illnesses, suicides, strikes, protests, riots, food supplies and migration all play into one another as bodies and communities struggle hard to find what they need to live.

In the West, where labour-intensive industrial production tailed off in the last century, labour and wages can no longer be the sole horizon of our demands, since they concern a dwindling proportion of the population. Struggles around wages are now rife in Chinese industries, while what we increasingly suffer is unemployment, precarity and diminished welfare services. This doesn't mean that labour struggles become obsolete, of course a large part of our populations are still working, but it's impossible to stick with a system that crassly privileges the employed over the underemployed or unemployed when the latter come to make up almost half of the population.

This is why we see struggles around reproduction emerge most strongly in the European South, where there has been a rapid economic downturn accompanied by unemployment and de-classing. The question people ask there, and this question obviously echoes in other places too, is: 'how can we organise our livelihoods beyond being dependent on these abstract forces that can leave us completely screwed from one moment to the next?' How do you build new forms of resilience and mutual support, new forms of self-managed supply chains and cooperative self-employment where we at least control the basic mechanisms of our everyday survival?

So, the social reproduction angle is necessary to understand the character of struggles today. But more than that, it also opens new possibilities. In classical labour organising, wage struggles are compartmentalised into different sectoral unions fighting for their own particular interest. Meanwhile, migrant and racialised labour, as well as domestic workers, are largely excluded from collective bargaining. When we start with social reproduction, we immediately start with an issue that is transversal to different forms of labour and non-labour. This problem of the contingency of reproduction is common to the salaried employee, the housewife whose marriage to a wage earner is her central access to money, as well as for the people engaged in self-employment and illicit and informal economies.



ORGANISING AROUND PROBLEMS RATHER THAN IDENTITIES

Struggles for reproduction address broad social problems, which are often lived in very different ways by different communities. The main question is whether these struggles build communities that compete with other communities and individuals, or whether they find ways to compose across lines of identity in order to make a broader claim on society.

The Black Panther Party started from a disillusionment with traditional civil rights protest. They asked how it was possible to go beyond symbolic protests and short-lived forms of civil disobedience, by creating a social power in the everyday. They did this by making themselves directly useful to their communities, starting from the specificity of their oppression. With their 'self-defence programs' they built a solid base around the issues that were lived much more urgently by black people than other poor communities, such as police brutality and racism. This helped create solidarity between different groups of black people, between those working, studying, and on welfare. But they did not simply oppose white supremacist identity politics with a black nationalist identity politics.

Apart from forming alliances with different struggles – such as those of the students, Native Americans and homosexuals – they created an everyday politics of reproduction with their *Survival Pending Revolution* programs. These included free breakfast programmes for children, free food programmes for the poor and elderly, free medical clinics, legal aid assistance and much more. These programmes created a social base that made the Panthers much more powerful than the regular armed revolutionary groups. For them “revolutionary struggle” did not simply mean an ideology-based struggle for a world to come, but for the defence and extension of new social relations, which were already under construction. The survival programmes addressed problems that were shared both by poor workers and the unemployed, by women, men and children, as well as black, Chicano and poor whites – namely, that wages and welfare were not enough to reproduce them. The Panthers show us that struggles grounded in questions of social reproduction can create direct relations of care across lines of colour and profession.

RELATION TO THE STATE

The question of the state obviously plays a key role here, because this crisis is about the end of a paradigm where states guarantee (at least some of) their populations' survival. It's important to remember that the welfare state originally emerged from struggles of workers for basic security and rights – it was born out of a need to pacify industrial workforces through responding to the demands and struggles for a common good. The social and indeed also political rights we won in the course of this are considerable, and we think it's important to keep that in mind when thinking about struggles and institutions today.

Many of us might have become increasingly cynical about the role of institutions in caring for the bodies under their

jurisdiction, since we've seen just how corrupt and determined by economic powers state policies have been under neoliberalism. We need to recognise this alienation from the state and oppose the elites that have inhabited it, but in many places it is becoming feasible to start new institutional experiments and forms of governance that speak to our needs. We certainly need to reclaim the functions of self-management and revive our democracies as bottom-up and permanent spaces of decision-making, to push for transparency and give strength to our own experiments in creating supply chains.

From this, new institutions can be born, or indeed old ones can be taken over, as we see in the struggles of new electoral platforms and parties in the Mediterranean. Syriza, the Spanish municipal platforms as well as the Turkish HDP party all understand the importance of infrastructures of social reproduction at the grassroots and neighbourhood levels. The ways in which they relate to collective care movements such as solidarity clinics, popular soup kitchens, workers cooperatives or grassroots agri-ecological networks will be key in determining whether their politics can lead to a sustainable future. We hope they will not merely snap back into proto-social-democratic politics of labour and economic growth, but recognise the need for a paradigm change; we know they recognise this situation and have many movements pushing them to propose a politics that's in line with the social imaginaries and practices in place.

In the crisis, we've seen self-organised practices of care take over responsibilities from the state, saving and minding lives where the state divested itself. Movements, volunteers, friends and families build new networks of mutual support. Some neoliberal strategies have this in mind, as the UK Conservatives' Big Society programme, for instance, or struggles for parent-controlled kindergartens in the German 1980s, which often ended up implying unintended privatisation. Those strategies are often called “neo-communitarian” and try to instrumentalise the social to facilitate privatisation, legitimising cuts on social safety nets like welfare or pensions by saying people do this better when working with the market. It's a strategy that tries to absorb ongoing collective



organisation and weaken existing collective structures. It links the freedom of people with the freedom of the market and insists the state can't provide freedom.

Occupy Sandy was a great example of how community organising could do things the state couldn't – effectively rescue people in the face of natural disaster – and this created a chance for Occupy Wall Street to cooperate with working class people that had hitherto seen them as a bunch of media-savvy middle class activists whose ideas and practices were irrelevant to their lives. It was acts of help rather than manifestos that broadened the struggle.

At the same time, in countries such as Greece, fascists and the church provide soup kitchens and distribute food to gain loyalty through it. Their work resembles charity with all its blackmailing and dependency-creating functions, and yet food provision can also be done in a more militant way, as solidarity and not charity. Many initiatives collectively run soup kitchens open for all, crucial in times of exploding poverty.

To create networks of care and reproduction can also be a way to avoid the blackmail, discipline and individualisation that comes with conditional support from agencies or the state, like workfare and racial profiling. This also happens in Spain where patients and health workers got together in the Yo Si Sanidad Universal campaign to fight exclusion from access to healthcare, making sure people get treated despite having no formal access to public healthcare (since the law was changed in 2012 to exclude many people).

SOUTH/NORTH, CENTRE/PERIPHERY

Of course the periphery is what reproduces the centre, in material terms. In the case of Europe, there's a long-standing Eastern semi-periphery; and a renewed Southern one, having those so-called PIGS who have been relegated to a subaltern position since the crisis. And there is the global periphery of course, all those more distant sites of raw material extraction, outsourcing, labour importing, waste dumping, war waging – a complex thing to analyse and currently subject to strong geopolitical shifts.

In the peripheries, social reproduction is more obvious as a shared problem. Right now, with the drastic changes they have lived through, the European Mediterranean countries have seen an explosion of politics of social reproduction, changing their social and political landscapes and producing not just new practices and movements but also subjectivities and collective resilience. In the Eastern peripheries, experiences of super-exploitation and struggles for survival have been a reality for decades, and European 'integration' has meant little more than restructuring that exploitation under new neoliberal logics – alongside a strong erosion of the communal knowledges and practices of self-reproduction that stem from the Yugoslav or indeed Soviet context. Those communal knowledges are also key to learn from, and our next round of case studies will address how these can be articulated through contemporary situations.

So what we do is set out to see how this horizon for struggle – what we call collective care, or social reproduction – is being articulated in different places.

By Manuela Zechner and Bue Rübner Hansen, of the *Radical Collective Care project*. radicalcollectivecare.blogspot.co.uk





These Babies Need Communism

One of the more pleasant aspects of the growing anti-gentrification movements has been the increasing presence of children at organising meetings and direct actions. Not only has this posed new challenges in providing mutual acts of childcare, the presence of children has also required a reconfiguration of space to accommodate them. There have also been a spate of births amongst people who've been in organising circles familiar to those of us who make the OT itself (including new parents amongst the collective!) The OT spoke to some of these new parents, to attempt to draw out how this had affected their political activity and the impact on their political outlook more generally.

OT *Has there been a significant shift in your experience of political space due to becoming parents? How have your priorities shifted? Have they shifted?*

Rob My kid is only 8 weeks old. I had very naïvely assumed I'd be able to just rock up to political actions (and, even more optimistically, football matches) within a week, though it turns out quick trips along Streatham High Rd were initially well beyond us. The impact on your sleep is exhausting. No matter how much I was warned, the sleep thing knocks you for six. I've barely read a chapter of the sci-fi novel I was reading.

We hope to [attend our first protest together in a few days], which will be interesting. I do feel quite disconnected from active politics. My wife's long-impending labour onwards seemed to coincide with an incredible upsurge in housing activism, and to be very honest I'm a little bit pissed off about the timing!

Alasdair We're five months in now and there's been a massive shift in both of our political involvement. Most obviously we're both knackered a lot of the time which makes anything else hard. Between work and housework and looking after the baby I just don't have time to go to lots of meetings these days. Things at the weekend are possible, but evenings are just right out so far. [the baby] is pretty active and she's not one to just lie down and sleep in a crib or pram very often so we can bring her to events, and we do try to get her out the house a lot, but you've always got at least half an eye on her not anything else.

Whenever accessibility for parents is thought about by radical groups the go-to seems to be whether there's childcare or not, but for us (at the moment anyway, it may be different when she's older) that's not really the point. She doesn't like being left with others that much so just offering a crèche isn't much help, and in fact for most of the meetings

I'd be at they're so small that wouldn't make any sense or be at all feasible. So thinking about how to make activism more accessible is pretty tricky, in fact.

Alex We're about 10 months in now. It's all a bit of a blur and also the most beautiful thing. We had some problems around the birth, Thea was induced 5 weeks early and was then in special care for a couple of weeks because of her weight (under 4 pounds). This was really traumatic and has meant everything else has taken a step back. We feel very fragile, I think. Politically, this obviously affects any kind of participation in protests or actions, which in turn presents some questions over the limits and potentials of anti-capitalist practices for different kinds of daily situations.

At the other end of the wage-relation, there is the daily toll of care work that takes precedence over all else, including marked and purposeful resistance against the system

that exerts and reproduces this pressure. We have naturally become highly sensitive to the politics of social reproduction through this process. This is all very clear now - the way capitalism ties you in knots through its othering of social reproduction to the sphere of unpaid work. This has been very difficult. We feel very consumed in our own struggle, which has naturally distanced us from collective projects and resistance. Maintaining involvement in the production of the OT has been really important in counteracting these patterns of isolation.

Regarding political shifts in thinking. The experience of more or less living in the hospital together with Thea has perhaps sharpened our view of the NHS. After we found out about the problems with the pregnancy, we were desperate. There were all these people gathering together on our behalf. We realised, however naïvely, that this is just not something that happens very often.

Natalia On one hand, since having a baby I find everything in our world concerns the immediate; is she safe? the day by day; counting sleep, week by week, what's her weight gain? Adjusting to sleep deprivation whilst developing a subconscious 24/7 awareness, it's exhausting, exhilarating, all-consuming. The priority is simply being together to experience this, to cope. This doesn't leave much practical time to be involved in political activities and in a materialistic sense the experience can push you in an opposite direction. I found myself buying things that you hear will make things easier; marketing companies feed off inexperience and the guilt that you might not be looking after your baby properly.

On the other hand, I don't feel like I've ever had so much time to reflect on how we live, what's important and what we need to keep our girl safe and happy. Without going to work every day and being forced to think about something which is ever more insignificant and useless, it's quite clear that capitalism takes us away from our family and forces us to commit a ridiculous proportion of our time elsewhere - to projects that have no beneficial effects whatsoever on our well being.

At the baby clinic I meet mums on their 'final days' before having to go back to work. I have never met so many people spanning class, profession, race, who all openly confess that they simply don't give a shit about their job anymore. We laugh over the days when we stayed late to finish projects. Now it's just about what minimal commitment you can get away with. Our ambitions, desires, priorities have changed.

As we are coming up to having a year with Thea, I will go back to work and hand her over to a nursery so I can spend my hours selling one sort of valueless product or another. The cost is just shy of my daily salary. Not only do I feel I am being forced to leave Thea, I am going to have to stop breastfeeding, and leave her just as separation anxiety is kicking in, making it a truly distressing situation for us both. We're paying to miss out on her growing up, putting her into a system where consensus not criticality is the norm.

OT *It'd be interesting to hear anything about an approach to parenting that perhaps doesn't reproduce heteronormativity, gender binary, nuclear family values. I don't know if any of you have taken a tack that would be more unfamiliar to some people. That'd be very interesting, as would an approach that looks at notions of discipline and hierarchy in a family.*

Rob We were given a few pink felt blankets which we tend to use in the pram. This convinces 99% of people the baby is a girl, some of whom are clearly affronted to find out it's a boy and think we're being extreme, as if we were, I dunno, forcing a 10 year old boy to go to school in a neon pink tutu. Whilst this isn't a problem for us, merely providing mildly amusing anecdote material, it does strike me how embedded heteronormativity etc. is, and what an uphill struggle it remains.

In some ways I have developed a bit of an idiosyncratic 'conservative Marxist' view of the/my family. A few weeks ago we had to dash over to Belfast for my granny-in-law's funeral.

I was struck by what a big deal it was. A family matriarch mourned by a huge family, life-long neighbours, Sinn Fein politicians, old-skool IRA men. My own extended family's English funerals have been like trips to Argos in comparison.

Alisdair When Zoe got pregnant we were living in a flat with several friends, and we considered staying there, at least for a while, which would have been a fairly non-traditional setup. In the end though, we moved into a

place just us, so although we're not married, we've got a pretty heteronormative nuclear household :(. We'll be adopting a more anti-hierarchical and anti-disciplinarian approach to raising our child than most people, but for a five month old that doesn't really mean a lot yet, so I don't know if we can say much.

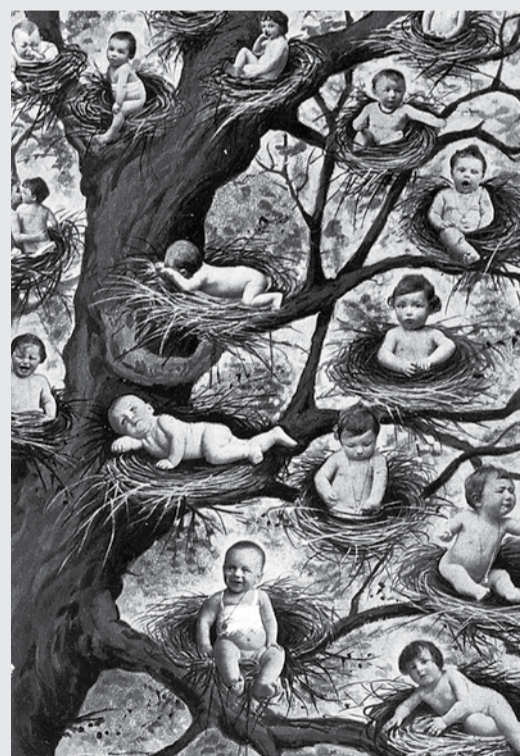
Alex We live together in a flat with Thea and no one else. Because of all the instability in Nat's pregnancy, we decided it would reduce stress if we stuck about where we have lived for nearly ten years, got our own flat, and paid all our money on rent until we were broke. Then work out what to do when the time comes to go!

Discipline and hierarchy? Alex goes to work and Nat cares for Thea. It's there whether we like it or not! This creates all sorts of conflicts, obviously, but thanks to feminism we're at least aware that the working man has assumed the role of an arse-hole patriarch and should be reminded of that on a daily basis.

Nat Limited as this is, if Alex's job would have allowed it, we could have substituted some of my maternity leave for Alex to take more paternity leave. A few people I know have taken 9 months and given 3 months to the dad. This is an idea in the absence of any other choices. Sadly pink and blue clothing dominate baby supplies, but we are happy for people to think she is a boy. I have got rid of piles of pink presents.

OT *I know some of you have struggled with your own well being since you've had children. I'd be very encouraging of anything said about this, if people feel safe and able to express these things, and think them relevant to a political publication.*

Rob My wife has bipolar disorder and spent the pregnancy and post-natal period under the watchful, slightly interfering gaze of mental health professionals. The biggest issue was their insistence she spend 5 days in hospital after the birth to make sure she rests (lack of sleep triggers episodes), where she was so constantly disturbed she (and I) got virtually no sleep.



Nat The anxiety associated with the level of care is exhausting. As Thea was a premature baby in special care for some time, we need to be really attentive to her. I never knew caring about someone so much would be so exhausting! Despite this, I have never felt so proud of myself and Alex of what we have made and the fact she smiles at us makes all my worries dissipate.

Alex General despair and bewilderment as usual, except now Thea smiling provides



a dialectical complement to the way things are heading. *weeps*

OT *Notions of urgency, perhaps best encapsulated in the demand "No Future, Utopia Now" have been pervasive amongst organising circles for some time. The reproduction of a new generation would seem to come into conflict with this, seeming to very strongly state that there will be a future ("won't somebody think of the children?!"). I think we all acknowledge that the nature of climate science these days makes looking 60-70 years into the future a very scary proposition. Is that relevant to now?*

Rob The poor babe is completely fucked. In the short-medium term we've got rent increases and constant house moves in the private rental sector. I fear for how unsettled and how poor this will make his upbringing. In the longer term, his life in the employment market will likely be even worse than mine, which was already worse than my parents! And then beyond that he could well be caught up in an existential battle for life against mutated nature... Less so now he's here in my arms giving me heart-flutteringly beautiful gummy smiles, but during the pregnancy I did have some very serious "what are we doing??!!" rages. These babies need communism.

Alisdair This is a really interesting point I think. The Out of the Woods collective are looking specifically at the use of what Lee Edelman calls "reproductive futurism", the "won't someone think of the children?", and how that

operates to uphold white heteronormative family values, both on the right, obviously, but also in the discourse of much mainstream liberal/leftist environmentalism. We prefer to view things in terms of regeneration rather than reproduction. Generally, there's a conflict between an imagined future and the present, and political action on behalf of future children can often be at the expense of current real ones. In terms of climate change, we need to realise that it isn't 60-70 years away, it's right now, and seriously right now for increasing numbers of people. We need communism for the sake of our children, but also for our own sake. One could view "no future" as a call that, unlike past generations (or the last couple anyway), I can't just wait for productivity growth to give my child a better future than my own. If we want a better future we have to create it now, not idealistically, but through material collective action today.

Alex #nofuture is a fairly accurate summary of the present, so we try and temper it by playing peekaboo with Thea and dancing and laughing and throwing Thea around. Not sure if this is to do with having Thea or not, but I feel a more heightened despair at how capital turns nature into things. I look at Thea - a product of nature - and she has a very honest view on the world. This makes me feel all the weird changes in my being, the strange fixtures of my psychosomatic shape, which I didn't take much notice of before. As mentioned previously, babies need communism so this kind of damage can be limited to a minimum.



ORGANISING IN OUR COMMUNITIES HASL

Housing Action Southwark and Lambeth (HASL) have been organising together for two years on housing, benefits and other issues we face relating to poverty. Over time we have explored ways to make our organising more accessible and better addressed to our diverse needs. There are people in our group for whom English is not their first language, some are the sole carers for their children, some have mental or physical disabilities, or struggle with various other difficulties that living in poverty can entail.

HASL is part of the London Coalition Against Poverty. When starting up we found their booklet 'Building Mutual Support and Organising in our Communities' to be a vital guide. We recommend that others read this and hope that some of our insights from our early years are also helpful. London Coalition Against Poverty was formed in 2007 in response to the mass mobilisations around the GB. The idea was to set out a way to do politics that is relevant to our daily lived experiences and allows us to take control over our lives.

We're certainly not the only ones engaging in mutual support and collective action to meet our basic needs. The last two years of the Coalition Government saw several new groups form who shared a community organising approach. These groups include London Campaign Against Police and State Violence, Anti-Raids Network, United Voices of the World, as well as growing numbers of localised housing action groups, including Focus E15 mums and Sweets Way Resists. Links are being built between our groups and we are inspired by the work they're doing.

Recently, there's been a renewed focus on ways people can provide practical support, action and solidarity for survival. We hope some of the experiences we share here can contribute to this.

DIRECT ACTION

Like many of the other successful housing campaigns and action groups that have emerged – Focus E15 mums, Our West Hendon, Guinness Trust Tenants – we know collective

direct action is often the only way to get the housing and benefits that we need and deserve. LCAP too, when it started out in 2007 in Hackney, described their approach of direct action casework: 'acting together, disruptively if necessary, is the only effective way to win improvements'. Hearing tales in south London of Hackney housing office pulling down the shutters when they saw Hackney Housing Group (made up mostly of women of colour) descending upon them yet again was one of the inspirations for setting up HASL.

When approaching the housing office, council, landlords, or any other institution with our reasonable demands doesn't work, we discuss a variety of direct action tactics that we can use to put pressure on them to get our basic needs met. Our direct action tactics have included buddying at the housing office, town hall occupations, eviction resistances, and communications blockades.

We make sure that our actions are as accessible as possible to our members' different needs. Our actions are usually local (so not involving travel costs or tiring long distances), finish before school ends or are in half term holidays to include children, and child-friendly with activities for children and people sharing childcare. They don't require any specific skill, simply being there as part of the group is enough to make a difference.

And they get results! From occupying the town hall to demand someone is housed that day, to stopping an eviction, we can see the direct impact of our collective action.

One of our members described our group to her sister: "I call the group the danbang group - in my language, Hindi street language, that means 'solid', you are 'the solid group'. It also means a daring person, who can do everything. If they are evicting people, they resist it, they make a group and stand outside and talk to them (the bailiffs and council) so they are not evicted onto the streets."

Another member describes the direct action we took together: "The group saved my family from another embarrassment of eviction from the bed and breakfast provided by social services. They stood by us, very

early in the morning they were in the hotel, pressing all buttons they know that will be useful. Even to the extent of escalating it to Southwark town hall to see the big boss."

COLLECTIVE SUPPORT AND ORGANISING

We meet twice a month to provide support, information, advice and to plan actions. In these meetings we also organise how the group is run, any campaigns we're working on locally, and our participation in London or national events and actions. As well as attempting to solve (or at least deal with) our problems together, we know that wider change is needed to achieve justice. Otherwise we will continue to face these problems again and again. Organising our mutual support and action together is absolutely key to how we work. The importance of this has been affirmed by our experiences over the last two years when we have sometimes drifted away from this collective approach. This leads to problems like, for example, one member becoming like a caseworker which can put huge stress and pressure on that individual which will result in inferior advice compared to the far more effective and powerful collective support provided through our meetings.

How does it work? Someone will come to a meeting with a problem and together we will work out some possible options for actions we could take, explain the processes of these, refer to previous similar cases and how these went, and share our anger, frustration, outrage, and empathy with the person in question. Doing this as a group allows us to check the courses of action we've discussed. We can draw from and build the collective knowledge and experience of the group and the problem itself becomes one that we can deal with as a group, rather than unsustainable, stressful, and alienating one-to-one (unpaid) casework. As well as taking collective ownership of our issues, discussing them in the group allows people to see directly that they are not alone, that others are going through similar problems and that the issue is systemic.

SOCIALS

We wanted to set out time we could spend together where, unlike in our meetings, housing didn't have to be the main topic of conversation. We have celebrated HASL's birthdays, Christmas, and in the last couple of months we've managed to organise (almost) monthly community meals or supper/lunch clubs. Through collecting donations from local businesses, we have cooked up large meals to eat together. We want to make and eat delicious, nutritious food together. As well as struggling for good housing, we know that low incomes mean that we can struggle to afford and find time to make good quality food. We want to politicise and challenge (food) poverty, but we also just want to hang out together. We also want to create a welcoming space for people interested in the group to meet us.

TRAINING SESSIONS

We have regular training sessions so that we can learn and develop as a group. As well as empowering ourselves through learning housing law, we also conduct skill-sharing on things like how to be a buddy at the housing office. The more that people learn, the more the group's capacity grows as more of us can volunteer for particular tasks. Our recent 'how to be a buddy' skill-share was organised to encourage more people to feel confident enough to volunteer for this vital role (having a buddy with you at the housing office can be the difference between being turned away with nowhere to go that evening and getting access to the housing you need). LCAP has supportive lawyers who have run training sessions on housing law, and LCAP members ourselves have designed and run training sessions looking at homelessness law and role-playing how to get what we need at housing offices. These workshops have been vital for people to learn the few rights that we do have, to better understand our personal situations and to build confidence. Our recent eviction process legal workshop was a great example of radical education. With many people currently going through this process, getting an understanding of the legal aspects of it becomes even more important. The complexities of housing law need to be de-mystified.

GOING OUT AND TALKING WITH PEOPLE

Whilst we're not as organised as Focus E15 and Sweets Way Resists who have regular stalls every Saturday afternoon to talk with people about housing and share information about their campaigns, we do hold information stalls regularly (though without a set day or time) outside housing offices and job centres. This way we can talk to people about their situations, hand out 'know your rights' leaflets and invite them to come to a meeting.

We've also organised workshops to talk about HASL, what we do, and basic housing rights with local community groups including the wonderful Skills Network and English for Action. These workshops help to strengthen our links and gets us talking about how we can support each other.

DON'T GIVE UP!

At the very beginning and even later on, you might have a meeting with yourself and two other people who wanted to set up the group. Or maybe you haven't had a concrete win in a while. It can still be demoralising at times and we can still take it too personally when we're ignored when handing out leaflets. It's dispiriting for sure, but if you keep on leafleting and speaking with people about their housing issues, leaving posters and leaflets about, people will come along to meetings and want to be involved. There is a huge housing crisis, things are getting worse. Doing what you're doing makes sense, even if it's tiny, you're still building important knowledge and infrastructure for when more people get involved.

OTHER PROBLEMS

Setting out some of the lessons we've learnt probably makes it all look and sound easier than it is. Of course, all these lessons and suggestions have been learnt after failures, frustrations, and difficulties which still continue. Organising a local group, even with a decent amount of people involved, still leads to common problems including high stress when urgent situations arise, feeling personal responsibility for people's situations and the urge to try and solve it, people using the group as a service and not returning to the group once their situation is resolved, and our group being socially cleansed (whilst we have helped secure housing for people, sometimes this has been far away from the group, meaning it is difficult for people, already with very little time and other pressures, to continue to be involved). Sometimes there isn't an immediate answer or concrete action that we can take to deal with our situation (homelessness law means that councils only have a duty to provide temporary accommodation for people who meet a narrow set of criteria). And sometimes our direct action does not get the results we wanted, sometimes our occupations are ignored.

Discussing what to do as a group about these issues can help resolve them or lessen their impact. LCAP groups from across London meet every three months or so to share our experiences between us, and often hearing how other groups have dealt with similar issues is helpful and comforting.

Housing action groups are being set up and growing across London and beyond, linked together through the Radical Housing Network and the London Coalition Against Poverty. Other grassroots groups are providing mutual support and fighting against the vicious and serious attacks we face. We're starting to build tighter links between our groups – with our issues overlapping and interweaving as many members of HASL have experienced and as the recent Reclaim Brixton day and targets (town hall, Foxtons, Job Centre, Barnardo's - for their links in child detention - and the police station) show. Join your local group!





EAT TOGETHER, FIGHT TOGETHER!

The Free Breakfast for Children Program, organised by the Black Panther Party (BPP), has a powerful legacy. Around 10,000 children were fed daily across North America through this initiative. Based on need and not ability, the Free Breakfast Program offered a glimpse into a way of living that promoted the needs of people and collective action. Unfortunately, the state recognised the power of such an initiative and the program folded as a result of state interference, harassment and institutionalisation.

Many individuals and small communities, inspired by the work of the BPP, quietly took on their own programs as a matter of necessity, whilst other groups continued to organise in a big way. The Young Lords Organisation, a group of Puerto Rican activists in New York City, famously served free meals to over 2,000 people after occupying a church in the Hispanic community that refused to support them in providing a free breakfast program.

Closer to home and more recently, there has been a small but steady upsurge in grassroots groups centring collective eating and food provision through their social events. Digs, which organises in Hackney, offered free pizza at their recent social in April; Haringey Housing Action Group enjoyed a social picnic in May where people brought food to share together; and Our West Hendon is hosted a 'bring a dish' community celebration in July.

There is a conscious effort to create new spaces and situations which challenge the interlocking oppressions and stigmas experienced by many. Grassroots food provision is increasingly part of a broader political dynamic underlying how food is sourced collectively, cleaned, cooked, prepared, enjoyed and shared, and how eating together can offer a relaxed environment for organising and mobilising.

WHY

For over two years Housing Action Southwark & Lambeth (HASL) has been organising around the needs of people in our local areas, so that we can learn together, fight together and empower ourselves. We have regular meetings to discuss our housing and welfare issues, we take direct action to support each other, we hold skills and knowledge-sharing sessions, produce resource leaflets to hand out during our info stalls - and, with deepening poverty and inequality, it was a logical step for HASL to organise free lunch clubs for our members, supporters, our families, friends, neighbours, and anyone interested in HASL and what the group



does. People are also very happy to bring their kids to meetings and socials and we help each other with childcare - keeping our kids occupied with cake-making, games and other activities.

All of our lunch clubs are focused on bringing together people who are facing welfare and housing problems as a result of central and local government legislation and policy. We face economic exploitation because of eye-wateringly high rents and cost of living, weak housing security of tenure, unequal access to resources, and social and economic processes of gentrification and social cleansing. During this current phase of capitalist

restructuring, the difficulties people face are only getting worse. More and more people are forced into poverty every day and many can't afford to eat regularly or provide for those in their care.

People who come to the community meals are kind enough to bring fresh food for us to share, from quiche, marinated meat dishes, stews, fresh fruit, selections of cheeses and breads, to tarts, homemade cakes and chocolate fountains! We are also trying to build a network with local shops and market traders where we solicit and collect donations, so that we can sustain our monthly clubs and continue to provide the ingredients we need to cook and share food which is free, nutritious and delicious.

HASL is not a charity or a service that exists to fill in the gaps in welfare and housing provision that the state doesn't care about; it's a collective of people who share the lived experiences of trying to survive in London, keeping affordable roofs over our heads and making sure that we challenge and hold to account the institutions and those in power who are creating and implementing logics that willfully harm exploited and vulnerable people and throw them further into poverty. We are a group that is working to build a widespread movement that resists and struggles against oppressive and unequal value systems. We really are in this together and we encourage people to organise and take action!

HOW

We hosted our first free lunch club on Sunday 8th March 2015, at a local venue in Brixton provided by a resident from the nearby Guinness Trust Estate. We set up a facebook event page, gave out leaflets at our regular info stalls, and sent out a few tweets about the event. Lots of people came to socialise, enjoy each other's company and talk about the problems we face, whilst tucking in to some tasty home-cooked grub.

The first meal was successful, so we decided to continue with our monthly free lunch clubs, hosting our second one on Sunday 26th April at Papa's Cafe in Brixton. This meal was extra special as HASL also celebrated its 2nd birthday - two years of fighting together for the housing we need and are entitled to. We enjoyed a selection of meats, vegetable skewers and cheeses on a BBQ (a BBQ we were fortunate to get from a HASL member's neighbour) and were treated to delicious pasta dishes from some

great cooks in our midst, and a wide variety of hearty salads. Of course, the playground also helped to keep the kids busy!

Our more recent lunch clubs have been kindly co-hosted by our friends, the London Campaign Against Police and State Violence (LCAPSV). We had a great day at our 3rd lunch club, including lots of new faces, at a space in Elephant and Castle. There was tons of food on offer which was only possible because of the generosity of local people (we enjoyed eating burritos, with different fillings to cater for different tastes and preferences). We also had a wonderful selection of HASL-themed cakes, and the kids (and adults) had fun making and decorating cupcakes! For our most recent lunch club on 4th July, we organised a picnic in Burgess Park near the adventure playground. Over 50 people attended, bringing more than enough food to share (most of it secured via donations from local shops). It was a great atmosphere, with small circles of people relaxing and organising together under dappled shade.

We can only sustain and grow the lunch clubs with the help and support of others. If you'd like to help out collecting and/or cooking food, send us an email haslemail@gmail.com. Everyone is welcome, bring your friends, family and neighbours! Come along to a HASL meeting - you can find details at housingactionsl.org - If you have a housing or welfare problem, feel free to stop by, talk in confidence and take action.

The Structure of STATE EDUCATION

Intro: The Logic of State Education

Since their creation in 1870, state schools have experienced more, not less, direct political intervention in the structure and content of their teaching. Even before state schools were introduced there were fears of a political nature from both the upper and lower classes. The upper echelons of society were worried that mass education would lead the workers to "think" and ultimately come to a conscious, informed decision that collectively it was possible to revolt against the living and working conditions they had to endure. Many workers themselves feared that by sending their kids to government-controlled schools they would be subject to institutional indoctrination and would later be economically manipulated.

Sitting in a building listening to instruction from designated experts isn't necessarily the best route to education; we are increasingly able to continue education outside of our mandatory schooling through technological and social means. Alternative educational models continue to demonstrate the negative effect of bureaucratic models on children's capabilities to learn; The Netherlands provides an Open University where grades are prohibited, removing the culture of competition pervasive within institutional education.

The focus from recent Secretaries of State for Education on a new wave of academies and "free" schools has placed a requirement to promote particular notions and ideas to students while protecting them from what are deemed to be "inappropriate teaching materials". If an academy rebels and filters the required conservative cultural ideology from their teaching, the school's state funding can be cut. This ultimately means that the Secretary of State has dictatorial power over not only the content of what is taught in schools, but also power over the legal terms required to close down the schools they deem to be failing to achieve specific political aims.

Failing On Its Own Terms

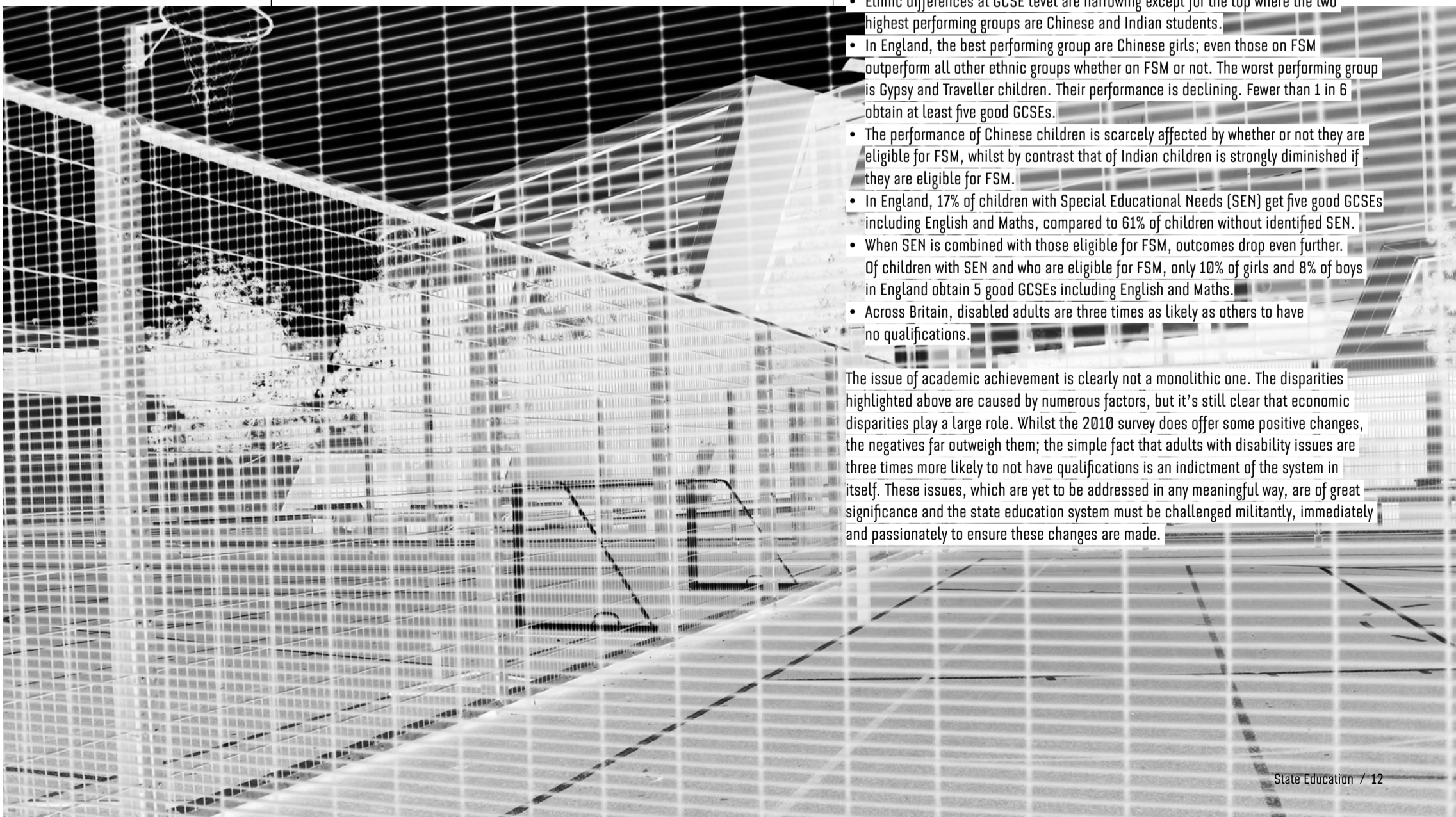
The statistical models with which academic achievement is measured by the state are often problematic and be a significant role in perpetuating the educational inequality still persistent within state schools today. Complex human beings are reduced to simplistic statistical judgements, preparing them for a world of work under capitalism. Even if we do accept this statistical model as signifying academic achievement it still fails by its own standards.

Educational inequality is still a significant factor in the UK education system, and economic disparity between students continues to play a determinant factor in the grades achieved. In 2013, to cite one study of many, Ofsted revealed that only 38.1% of Free School Meal (FSM) pupils gained five or more GCSE A*-C compared with 64.8% of their non-FSM peers. Also, according to a parliamentary briefing report in 2012, Black Caribbean boys were highlighted as being far more likely to be excluded from school (the majority of pupils who are excluded have either Special Educational Needs, are eligible for Free School Meals or are Black Caribbean), are twice as likely to be characterised as having behavioural, emotional or social difficulty compared to White British boys, and are most likely to have the lowest attainment levels (Gypsies, Roma and Travellers, excluded). Despite government reforms over the decades, these problems are just scratching the surface of the issues that persist within the state education system.

Research from 2010's How Fair is Britain survey also provides evidence that attainment continues to be strongly pegged to socio-economic background, as well as gender, race and special needs. Here are a few headline findings:

- Girls outperform boys routinely at aged 5, at age 16 and at degree level throughout Britain.
- Ethnic differences at GCSE level are narrowing except for the top where the two highest performing groups are Chinese and Indian students.
- In England, the best performing group are Chinese girls; even those on FSM outperform all other ethnic groups whether on FSM or not. The worst performing group is Gypsy and Traveller children. Their performance is declining. Fewer than 1 in 6 obtain at least five good GCSEs.
- The performance of Chinese children is scarcely affected by whether or not they are eligible for FSM, whilst by contrast that of Indian children is strongly diminished if they are eligible for FSM.
- In England, 17% of children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) get five good GCSEs including English and Maths, compared to 61% of children without identified SEN.
- When SEN is combined with those eligible for FSM, outcomes drop even further. Of children with SEN and who are eligible for FSM, only 10% of girls and 8% of boys in England obtain 5 good GCSEs including English and Maths.
- Across Britain, disabled adults are three times as likely as others to have no qualifications.

The issue of academic achievement is clearly not a monolithic one. The disparities highlighted above are caused by numerous factors, but it's still clear that economic disparities play a large role. Whilst the 2010 survey does offer some positive changes, the negatives far outweigh them; the simple fact that adults with disability issues are three times more likely to not have qualifications is an indictment of the system in itself. These issues, which are yet to be addressed in any meaningful way, are of great significance and the state education system must be challenged militantly, immediately and passionately to ensure these changes are made.



Gendered Education

According to Martin Lawn & John Furlong, the structure of education has become increasingly centred on the 'use value' of school subjects (this concept is entirely distinct from a Marxian understanding of the term, and instead refers more to factors such as 'employability' in a capitalist context), with subjects such as business and law taking precedence over other subjects such as sociology. This is because social sciences in particular are stereotypically seen as being less useful when entering the labour market. Influential advisor to Michael Gove [the previous Secretary of State for Education], Dominic Cummings, went so far as to claim that large amounts of social science work among "third-rate higher educations" are of questionable value.

State-funded secondary schools also appear to be affected, with many schools deciding not to include subjects based on their potential use value. Not only that, but the curriculum of state-funded schools appears to be gendered, with pupils being socialised into preferring and pursuing particular subjects.

One member of our collective, after having attended a state-funded all boys secondary school in South London, confesses to having been left with no idea what sociology was, or even psychology. Besides history (which they felt alienated from), there were no social sciences being taught in their school. Upon attending college they found that they were one of only three boys in a sociology class of about 20. It was not long before they felt alienated and began to wonder if they were studying a "girl's subject" - a label they had heard a few times from fellow pupils.

The concept of a 'gendered education' is not new. While boys are encouraged to study sciences and business-orientated subjects, girls are often encouraged to do more 'feminine and caring' subjects which require more empathy and in some cases subjective analysis. This would explain the absence of subjects such as 'Health and Social Care' from boys' schools and their prevalence among girls' choices (in 2009/10, 95.8% of GCSE health and social care pupils were girls).

As a result we witness large gender disparities regarding academic attainment, which then often forms the basis for career choice. The figures for the 2014 A-level results collected by the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) show that a gender gap is still very apparent within the UK education system. Over 80% of students who took their sociology exam were girls. Almost 80% of psychology exam-takers were girls. While over 65% of mathematics, economics and physics exam-takers (all stereotypically masculine subjects), were boys. Interestingly, it is the 'girl subjects' that are often seen as being less 'career-focused', which basically means that these subjects are least likely to lead you to a stable career with good pay. As a result we see a glass ceiling being created for girls from a pretty early age; they are socialised into preferring the subjects where the pay is less and any career is more unstable.

This only partially explains why men dominate the high-paid jobs, particularly positions such as managers, even in sectors dominated by women. Here we also see an association between the 'use value' of subjects and the gender that they cater to. 'Boy subjects' are assumed to lead to better careers thus giving them a better 'use value' and in some cases, even allow men to conquer female-dominated careers without the 'necessary' qualifications.

Perhaps we could go as far as to say that state education primes children for a world of heteronormativity. This certainly appears to be the case when we look at sex education in state schools. Sex education is vital to ensuring that young people, and later adults, know how to maintain a healthy sexual lifestyle. Not only that, but sex education also makes young people aware of risks, Sexually Transmitted Infections, and how their bodies work. According to the Sex Education Forum, education appears to have an enormous impact on the sexual health of young people, so why sex education is not mandatory in schools (outside the realm of science) is beyond belief. A national survey showed that 32% of young people found the information they received on sex and relationships to be of little or no help. This comes as no surprise when you consider that parents are allowed to withdraw their children from certain parts of sex education, consequently leading to students getting a skewed and misinformed picture.

Inadequate sex and relationship education (SRE) can leave young people disillusioned and vulnerable to exploitation. Examples of this can be seen in the Metro's Youth Chances Survey 2014 where over 80% of LGBT respondents said that their schools did not even have posters or leaflets showing diversity of sexuality or gender identity, while 90% were either unaware of a school policy that protected LGBT staff/pupils or did not believe one existed. This corresponds with the fact that self-harm and suicide rates are highest amongst young gay, lesbian and transgender people.

One obvious conclusion here would be to make SRE inclusive and flexible. There should not be a preference to a particular sexual identity and pupils should not be able to miss out on aspects of SRE that their parents or school deem inappropriate or 'irrelevant' for their child. Having an ALL-inclusive SRE is beneficial to all pupils because it will help them understand that not everybody falls into heteronormative categories, and that that is okay. It is also imperative that SRE focuses more on the relationships side and does not shy away from the darker topics such as sexual violence and grooming. Relationships education also needs to expand beyond the realms of marriage and monogamy, as those are not the only relationship forms or desires.

Whiteness in the Classroom

The idea of an inclusive curriculum stretches further than the gendered aspect of education. Despite some 'slight amendments', state school curriculum continues to be unreasonably narrow and whitewashed. Michael Gove emphasised this by dropping Harper Lee's novel *To Kill a Mockingbird* from the national curriculum last year. The theme behind the novel is prejudice, something that is still going strong in Britain; making it an integral piece of literature, not just for learning but for gaining a deeper understanding of how our society operates. By replacing it with content focused 'more on tradition', Gove has effectively stifled this important focus on modern inequalities within English literature classes. Not only that but he's effectively omitting the little relatability this subject has with pupils from various backgrounds.

During a conversation about our school experiences, a member of our collective said that she found English in school to be both uninteresting and unmotivating due to the fact that it only contained books by white authors and their stories were aimed at a white audience. However, she admitted to loving the course anthology when it was explored in school because it included stories from across the world. She was unable to identify with the whitewashed content but instead drew inspiration from the women writers of colour who were not British but she felt she could identify with all the same. By eliminating valuable non-British content from the curriculum, schools risk further alienating a vast number of pupils who come from different backgrounds. It must be understood that pupils may identify with non-British authors for a variety of reasons and that this is increasingly the case because of the diversity and dual identity that exists within schools. Pupils might consider themselves British but at the same time identify with a culture that is considered non-British because of their parents or family origins.

The history curriculum is a prime example of whitewashing. Inner city state schools, in particular, do a disservice to their pupils who tend to be more ethnically diverse. Although as British inhabitants it is important that we learn British history, it is also equally important for histories of other countries and continents to be explored. History plays an integral role in the formation of identity. If all the historical, powerful figures that pupils are exposed to are white men, then those who do not identify with the 'white male' are more likely to be disillusioned with their identity.

Similarly, if the figures pupils identify with are always associated or connected with subservience and powerlessness in relation to one another (as is the case with much of 'black history' in the curriculum), there's a good chance that pupils will internalise those assumptions of inferiority. If schools want to empower all children and young people they need to stop painting Britain's history in a superior light and at the expense of other histories. The inclusion of Ancient kingdoms and dynasties (perhaps as a comparison to the British Empire) or the inclusion of different ethnic presences in Victorian Britain for example, would be of great benefit to pupils of all backgrounds. With this there also needs to be an emphasis on women figureheads, as history tends to neglect the massive role that women have played.

The current curriculum for state education has been rather slow in adapting to the changes in society. It is not inclusive to LGBT and for all the talk of a multicultural Britain, the curriculum doesn't reflect this at all. Colonialism, slavery and immigration overlaps British history and 'tradition' with many many other histories and traditions, so there is no reason as to why they should not be acknowledged. We are well aware of the fact that the vast majority of the population represent a particular ethnic group, however with existing diversities, the media, internet and gentrification; the curriculum cannot afford to NOT be inclusive. We are not suggesting that everything is represented in equal proportions, but if the representation (or lack thereof) of a person(s) within the curriculum, does not attempt to dispel negative stereotypes or connotations associated with said person(s) then it cannot be classified as inclusive.

R Movement is an intersectional grassroots organisation that aims to help local communities through educational organisation in the hopes of pursuing liberation.

ECSTASY & WARMTH

by Automnia

For the last few weeks I've been caught up in the idea of fugitive planning. In their book *The Undercommons*, Fred Moten and Stefano Harney talk about "an ensemblic stand, a kinetic set of positions... embodied notation, study, score", which is "practiced on and over the edge of politics, beneath its ground." The quick melody of these words has haunted me since the election, and this is, undoubtedly, because it rhymes so tightly with what I have been seeing around me. The events of May seem to have released a quiet wave of conversation, a new, gently building movement of talking to make plans, and of planning to escape the unbearable future the new government appears to promise.

But this is also planning as an excuse to escape a more than unbearable present. We call ourselves together so that we may sit in the warm darkness that collects in the back of pubs, and so that we may be there amongst the people who make us feel less alone, less scared, less helpless. Yet no matter how much we feel it, we always sense the need to deny it. No, we say, we didn't come to be amongst one another, but to produce; we point proudly to our fulfilled agenda, highlight our action points, bask in the sense of accomplishment that comes from the setting of new things to accomplish.

This denial is a symptom of the poisoned bodies we make our politics with; bodies envenomed by the workerism and the heteronormative masculinity that turns us against care, no matter how much we may secretly crave its embrace. Marx said that "tradition weighs like a nightmare on the brains of the living", but it is far more of a poisoning than a bad dream. The rhythms, modes and movements of work and patriarchy cannot be overthrown by some momentary awakening; their potency is a virtue of their piercing pervasiveness. Like toxins they hide within us, and from us seep into our spaces. It is this poison which eats our organising from within, but also this which attacks it from without. When Owen Jones spits bile about "leftwing meetings serving as group therapy" it is this poisoning that moves him. The sad truth is that he has become so used to the toxins of work and machismo that an antidote to them makes him sick.

I haven't got all that much to say about praxis, I will leave that to others far more incisive and clear-sighted than myself. Instead I am interested in the strategies and tactics already diffuse within the reproduction of antagonistic life. By antagonistic life I mean the living of all those for whom daily survival is synonymous with struggle. Here I am, as I think we all are, forever indebted to Silvia Federici, whose work so acutely identifies "the destruction of our means of subsistence [reproduction]" as being fundamental to the oppressions we experience. The agents of this destruction take a multitude of forms; they can be the racist on our bus, the sexist on our street, the transphobe in our bathroom, the landlord at our door. They are police brutality as much as they are poor pay, they are ill health as much as they are ill will.

The only real way to survive these things is to plan, and that is what most of us do. We go out with friends that we know will have our backs, that will bash back, that won't take that, and then we go home and take the pills a comroge had leftover. We huddle close behind our mates to slip through the barriers, we drop the kids with our parents and do the washing at our neighbours. We plan, we organise, and we do so every day, without ever pausing for long enough to call it politics. We have our own practices, our own thinking, our own "embodied notation, study, score." Fugitive planning is always already a fact of our lives.

What concerns me is the reproduction of this planning, which is also, of course, the reproduction of the antagonistic life which begets it. It feels like surviving is often trying to find something worth surviving for, and if this is true of how we survive it should also be true of how we organise. Thus we come to two affects I feel are essential to the reproduction of our lives: ecstasy and warmth.

The ecstatic is the moment of transcendental intensity; it's in clubs and gigs when you are lost in the crowd and the music. It's that feeling when you're not quite sure where you are, but the reason you go out is to get back there. It's those moments of ecstasy which help us endure the tearing tedium of survival; they are so precious to us because they offer some release, some escape, however fleeting. This is, I guess, the essence of living for the weekend. *Saturday Night Fever* is a film about the ecstatic. Can we think of a better avatar of this affect than Tony Manero? "Fuck the future" he says to his boss, "tonight is the future, and I am planning for it!"

Football is also a game about the production of ecstasy. It's a theatre that writes itself, and that, at its best, always writes

them from cutting us up. You tell your friends you have nightmares about cops and they listen to you, tell you that they have them too. It doesn't make the nightmares go away of course, it never does, but it weakens the shadows they cast on your day.

As I said at the beginning, the potential for warmth resides in many of the meetings we already have. What is needed is to stop fighting its existence. Instead we should embrace the inherent warmth of true collectivity; ask one another about our lives, offer aid where we can, push the contours of our struggles beyond the narrow borders of the "political". We should not be afraid to linger after the agenda is finished, nor to take pleasure in the simple fact of being there, amongst comroges, amongst friends.

Perhaps we can imagine communism as the elucidation of this warmth and ecstasy, as their emergence from the exceptional into the everyday. Communisation then appears to us as the conscious attempt to create spaces and collectivities conducive to the production of these affects. Our fugitive planning already involves holding club nights or going to the football, but what I am calling for is for people to accept such activities as fundamental to the reproduction of antagonistic

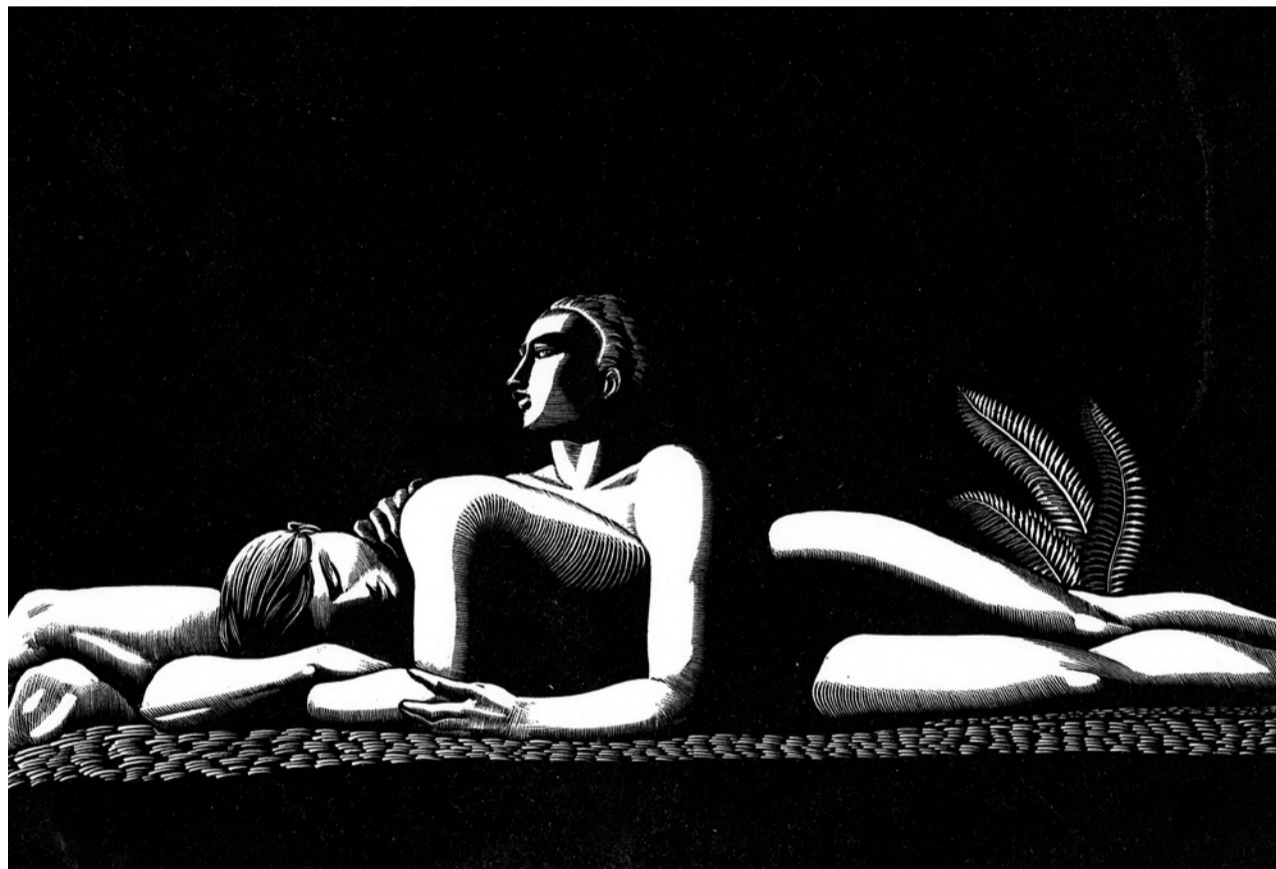
life. Likewise we already trade meds, share nightmares and hold one another, but again these are seen as ancillary acts, as mere consequences rather than constituents of our struggle. My dream is of a politics that recognises the vitalness of ecstasy and warmth, and that comprehends their vitality – their power of life and growth. I can see this power shaping new forms, new organisations, new institutions even. We could have clubs like the CNT and clinics like the Panthers, finding as much excitement in the former as we did care in the latter.

More important, however, is that we allow this recognition to inform all of our politics, that we don't isolate it in a few of our spaces but rather embrace it in all of them. Together, ecstasy and warmth are the precondition of any revolutionary project; they dim the pain which annexes our dreams and they bring us to those moments which make us dream anew. We must, as a matter

of great urgency, escape the logic which says that struggle must destroy us and make us miserable, and instead begin to build cultures which are as loving as they exciting.

Let us reach for the ecstasy beyond us then, allow ourselves to stretch out for it as far as we think we can. But, at the same time, never let our attempt to grasp the ecstatic pull us away from that which is already around us; the great warm embrace of our comroges. Reaching and embracing by turns, we find that by which we may become something more, more animated, more exhilarated, more cared-for, more loved. In warmth and ecstasy we find the possibility of living a life infinitely greater than that which we currently live.

Our survival may well be radical, but our flourishing is revolutionary.



towards moments of utter excitement. There has been much talk of late about Clapton FC; a football club where a group of fans called the "Clapton Ultras" have gained a reputation for the inclusive and radical crowd they create on the terrace. Many people have focused on the songs the crowd sings or the flags the crowd waves, but this all misses the point – the most important thing is the crowd itself. Indeed to be more specific what really matters is that which the crowd is consciously producing – the potential for ecstasy. I will never forget the moment James Briggs scored an implausible free kick in Clapton's cup final against Barking. The feeling was indescribable, but ecstasy is the word that comes closest to doing it justice; a joy multiplied a thousand times by its communising in the crowd. What makes Clapton special is that this feeling can be enjoyed by those excluded from other football grounds, be it by the bigotry of the crowds inside them or the cost of the tickets you need to even experience that. My point is this; that the taste of the ecstatic need not be limited to those straight white men wealthy enough to buy season tickets for Premier League clubs.

We cannot, however, survive on excitement alone. The ecstatic is only potent when it is surrounded by this other, crucial, affect: warmth. It's hard to find another word for what I mean by warmth, for it is really a composite of many feelings: safety, closeness, comfort, ease, rest. I suppose warmth is being released from custody to find your friends waiting, but it's also watching a film in quiet company. Warmth is what makes our struggles bearable, it softens the edges of our anger and our pain and stops

WHY IS MY CURRICULUM WHITE?

By Neda Tehrani

'Why Is My Curriculum White?', a campaign set up by UCL in 2015, aims to grapple with an academic curriculum in which a white voice is overbearing and all-permeating. The campaign highlights the crucial necessity to reflect on academia's complicity in white supremacy; in the case of UCL, not only is complicity alone detected, but a contribution to its very foundations through the legitimisation of racist ideologies.

Scientist Francis Galton coined the term 'Eugenics' in 1883, which advocates the improvement of 'genetic stock', its process inextricably linked to that of racial differentiation. Later, in 1904, Galton's views were legitimised through UCL's institutionalisation of 'National Eugenics': 'the study of the Agencies under social control, that improve or impair the racial qualities of future generations either physically or mentally.' UCL provided Galton with a residential office and a laboratory to conduct his research. While this initial 'inheritance' is a part of the university's past, there remains a failure on their behalf to acknowledge the abhorrence of Galton's dehumanising science of race. UCL claim to fight for equality, yet simultaneously expect BAME students to walk past a celebrated laboratory, a collection and a lecture theatre named after a man who threatened their entire existence.

Just as the ability of white people to colonise indigenous people was viewed as a mark of evolutionary success by Galton, the Academy and its curriculum has inherited this mindset where the white voice is viewed as a sign of superiority and continues to drown out the voices of people of colour. Throughout this piece, I argue that it is the currents of structural domination by white people alone, rather than some immutable 'truth' of the supremacy of the white thinker, that explains why our curriculum is in fact white.

For people of colour, this project is imperative for more than one reason. A distinction needs to be drawn between the notion that people of colour should have their work receive a platform based solely upon the need for equality in numbers and the idea, which goes one step further, that their work in fact generates creativity, ultimately enriching not just the lives of fellow people of colour, but the lives of white people also. The white curriculum, therefore, is not simply an injustice to people of colour alone, its injustice consists of large scale deprivations of knowledge that result from broad systematic and institutionalised academic racism.

Edward Said's Orientalism best articulates the notion of the white enlightened 'Self', who can be contrasted with an irrational 'Other',

namely people of colour. The education system has inherited this oppressive ideology - the dichotomy referred to here driving academic curriculums world-wide, with subjects taught through the authoritative lens of the white gaze. Each student undergoes their own experience regarding works explored in their own time, which they find to be undervalued and excluded from curriculums. One that I find to be useful in this discussion is James Baldwin's novel, *Giovanni's Room*. Baldwin may be a black man, but he did not, in this instance, write about his race or the black experience. Baldwin wrote about white people. He wrote about queer white people. He explored the painstaking nature of love through the complex lens of both parental and romantic relationships. Ultimately, he wrote about the human experience, challenging the notion that the ability to explore this is reserved for the old 'great' white men of literature. While it should not have to be argued that black people are able to write on matters outside of their race, it appears vital to remind people of this fact.

When it comes to producing universal art, people of colour are excluded from 'greatness' by default as a consequence of institutional tendencies to reproduce 'greatness' through whiteness. We live in a society whose artistic scene suggests that black people are only able to create art with regards to race; black actors are rarely offered mainstream or leading roles unless a film to do with slavery or other aspects of their oppression is being produced. bell hooks claimed that she grew tired of experiencing white people's need for her to discuss her sadness as opposed to her strength. In other words, what is implicit here is the view that white people are able to capture the human condition in their work, while black people are confined to discussing a very specific, albeit important, one-dimensional part of their own identity exclusively. The reservation of artistic creativity for white people appears counter-intuitive: it denies and ignores those people whose experience is routinely omitted within the construction and production of the mainstream - cinema, books, television programmes, and the academic curriculum - though these are the experiences best placed to speak of the human condition given their ability to occupy numerous worlds - the world of the oppressor through which they have no choice, the world of the oppressed, and all the creativity borne out of such experiences.

As a graduate of a philosophy-based degree, a piece by Nathaniel Coleman - Research Associate in the philosophy of 'race' at UCL, also involved with the campaign - entitled 'Philosophy is Dead White - And

Dead Wrong', articulates many of my concerns with regards to the discipline. Many branches of philosophy also pride themselves on the idea that they are 'objective' and neutral in principle and method and the value of this in arriving at conclusions regarding the human condition. But when studying, it is not hard to see that the model of objectivity is undoubtedly Eurocentric, white and male. This is the notion explored by Coleman, who stresses philosophy's refusal to treat people of colour as philosophers; 'We are less than 1 percent of all employed philosophers. None of us is yet a professor.'

Coleman underlines what I believe can be referred to as the myth of white objectivity, discussing the belief that white philosophers are the only ones who should be 'taking care' of asking fundamental questions about reality and existence, even when such critical inquiry consists of debates on race. Not only is it the case that the myth of the superiority of white 'objectivity' must be debunked as a concept, but the value of subjective and particular experience in widening our insight must also be stressed. The Academy must acknowledge that people of colour are just as valuable in their philosophical contributions as white people, but also that their experience often means that they in fact have more to add to a discipline that covers the realities of the human condition. Ultimately, Coleman's overall point is of emphatic significance: 'Stereotype threat and attribution bias are killing our prophets.'

Professor Patricia Hill Collins makes a similar argument with regards to the sociological significance of the 'outsider within' status, which shines light on the associative problems of the exclusion of people of colour and the dominance of white people in academic research. For Collins, black feminist activists possess a humanist vision of society, which is valuable in a sociological context. Black women's awareness of the interlocking nature of oppression means that they are able to make significant contributions to sociological

debates concerning not only their own experience but also that of black men, fellow people of colour, women '...and the dominant group itself.' Collins' argument for the value of black feminist thought and what this can contribute to sociology can be paralleled with UCL's campaign, which argues for the value in a diverse curriculum and what this can contribute to our learning more generally. Both Collins and UCL engage with epistemology, by attempting to shift the sources of our knowledge - which is dominated by white supremacist thought - in order to widen our insight.

The significance of Audre Lorde's 'The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle The Master's House' - used as a slogan for the campaign - is evident here. Lorde asks the vital question: 'What does it mean when the tools of a racist patriarchy are used to examine the fruits of that same patriarchy?' Lorde's question reminds us that the genesis of oppressive ideologies need to first be confronted, before oppression can be abolished. Academia has a tendency to think of itself as having progressed, but when the white voices are still drowning out those most marginalised, why should people of colour accept their insufficient inclusion as a mark of equality? Lorde answers her own question, arguing that 'it means that only the most narrow parameters of change are possible and allowable.' It is not enough for the stories of people of colour to be told, and aspects of their oppression to be explored, it is more significant to ask: who are telling these stories? An act of political activism consists in ensuring that the voices of the excluded are centralised first and foremost. The intelligence and success of 'Why Is My Curriculum White' as a campaign resides in its aim of dismantling the master's house. I would encourage those that are not a part of the group to join it and marvel at the amount of self-educating we all have to do - especially for those of us with a degree, who are often unable to differentiate between what is taught, and what is true.

IMMIGRATION RAID MEETS FIERCE RESISTANCE AT EAST STREET MARKET

Rabble London

Recently, Home Office immigration enforcement teams have been increasingly targeting the East Street market in Walworth, London, with no less than five raids in a single week. On Sunday 21 June, they came again at 5pm and snatched one man from a fish shop, presumably accused of working without legal documents.

But this time, things were not going to go so easy for the thugs in blue. After call-outs went out through the local grapevine, and also on social media, people from the area, including the nearby Aylesbury Estate, rushed down to the scene. The Home Office snatch van was blockaded and penned in on a side street off the market. The bullies retreated inside the van with their prisoner while people surrounded it with both their bodies and with makeshift barricades, the tyres were let down, and it was pelted with rotten fruit and eggs from the market.

The Home Office thugs called in reinforcements, who arrived in six police vans, with dog units, plainclothes cops, and a helicopter circling overhead, as the street was cordoned off. In spite of this, the crowd kept on growing as more people from the estate and nearby streets joined in, local teenagers called up their mates, others arrived after seeing it on Twitter.

The stand-off continued for over an hour, the local police clueless about what to do next. Then three vans of Territorial Support Group (TSG) riot cops arrived, tooled up in full body armour. The TSG pushed through, escorting the

Home Office van as it limped out on deflated tyres. They came under sustained attack as new barricades of street furniture kept getting thrown up to stop their progress and hails of rocks, bottles, traffic cones, etc., kept them at bay. At least one TSG cop was knocked to the floor, a riot van windscreen and other windows were broken.

In the end, they managed to get their prisoner out, and also took one more arrested from among the resisters. After the immigration van had got out the crowd kept blocking the TSG vans with commercial wheelie bins and other barriers to continue the fighting. Eventually, visibly shaken by the angry mob, the TSG managed to escape. After giving them a rowdy send-off, the crowd danced to a blaring mobile sound system.

This was concerted angry action which brought together local teenagers, Aylesbury Estate residents, anarchists, and whoever was in the street and not going to take this shit lying down. If we could meet more raids with resistance like this it would seriously screw up the system of repression. This is the response we want to be growing on our streets, every day of the week.

What's happened since then? First of all, many people's thoughts have been with the prisoners: both the Pakistani man originally grabbed by the Home Office; and the man brutally snatched by riot police during the resistance. The first has been lingering inside an immigration detention centre. The Anti-raids Network



and others have helped organise legal support and other practical solidarity for this prisoner.

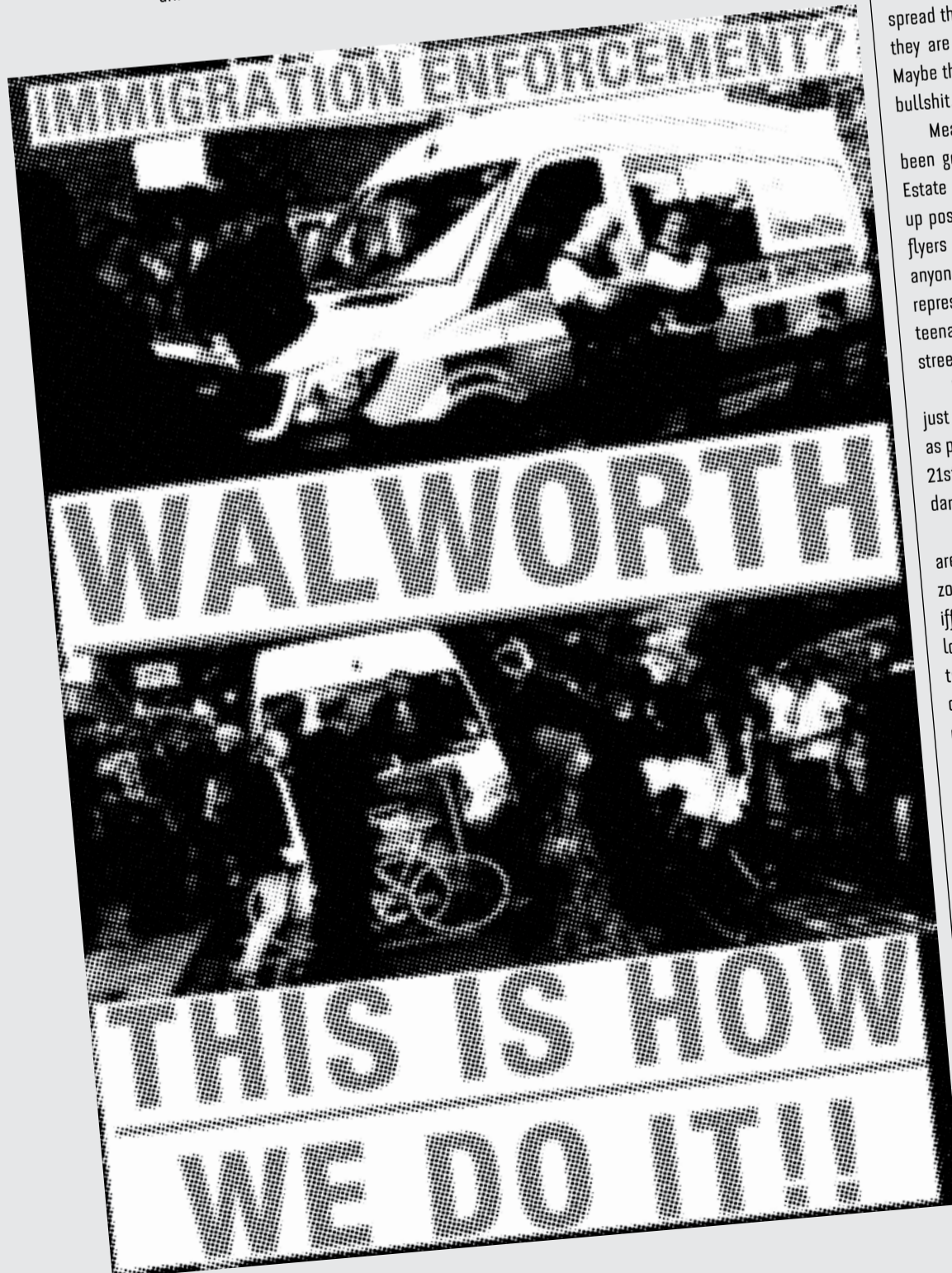
The second prisoner was taken away in a police van and disappeared for six hours, during which time he was repeatedly assaulted by the cowardly filth holding him hostage. He was then locked up for three nights - all of which were serenaded with rowdy demos. He now faces charges of "violent disorder" and a prison sentence if convicted.

The forces of order have been trying to sow fear of a clampdown on the streets. The day after the resistance, cops went round the market and into shops asking for information on the "disorder". They have since tried to spread the idea, through local press etc., that they are "looking for more people" involved. Maybe this is serious, maybe it's all the usual bullshit, who knows.

Meanwhile, people from the area have been going out on East Street, the Aylesbury Estate and the whole neighbourhood putting up posters about what happened, handing out flyers including tips and legal information for anyone threatened by Home Office or police repression, and just chatting face to face with teenagers, market people, and everyone in the streets about what's happening.

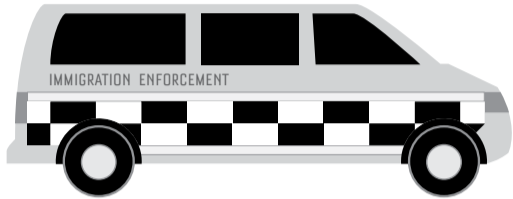
In short: the East Street resistance wasn't just a brief moment one afternoon. It carries on as people use the energy and momentum of the 21st to make new connections and grow solidarity in the area.

Like much of inner London, the Walworth area is under intense attack by an army of zombie parasites: property developers, bailiffs, Home Office scumbags, cops, businesses, local politicians, hipsters, and others seeking to profit from / control / screw up the lives of others. These often work hand in hand — for example, at Deptford Market, immigration raids are coordinated jointly by local government agencies as a tool to push out migrant workers and open the way for gentrification.



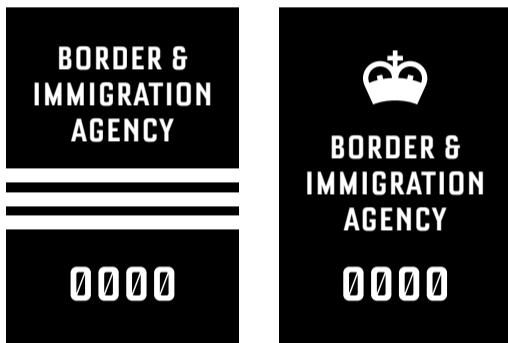
HOW TO SPOT AN IMMIGRATION RAID

Anti Raids Network



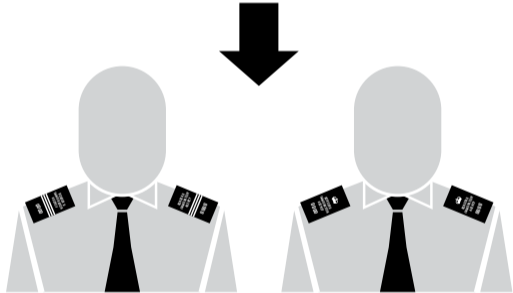
HOW DO THEY ARRIVE?

Vans marked IMMIGRATION ENFORCEMENT
Sometimes unmarked white/blue/black vans accompanied by police car.



WHAT DO THEY LOOK LIKE?

Should be wearing UKBA insignia/numbers on shoulders.
They often hide them.



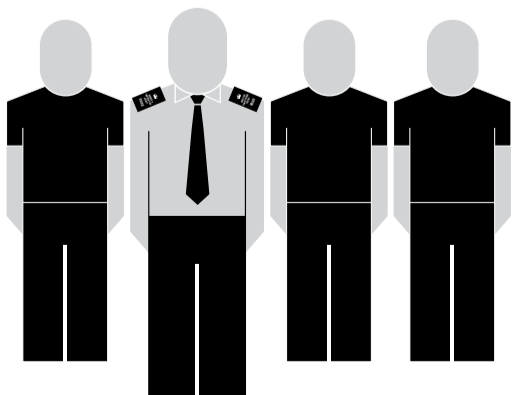
WHERE DO THEY GO?

Streets, Train & Tube stations,
Buses, Workplaces, Homes.



HOW DO THEY ACT?

Arrive in groups, sometimes with plain clothes officers.
Often block entrances/exits.



HOW CAN YOU HELP?

If you see someone being stopped by UKBA officers or police on immigration grounds, and your immigration status does not put you at risk, we recommend you:

- 1 Immediately make the person aware they do not have to answer questions & they can leave
- 2 Remind the officers of the law
- 3 Film the incident, where possible asking the person stopped if that's ok, or just film the officers involved. This may be useful in making a claim in the event of an unlawful stop or arrest.
- 4 Record lapel numbers of officers involved
- 5 Make other members of the public aware of what's happening
- 6 Get witnesses' contact details if the stop leads to an arrest or the person wants to pursue it afterwards.
- 7 Attempt to pass on a phone number to the individual if you think the stop will lead to arrest
- 8 Do not get aggressive or physically obstruct officers if you want to avoid arrest for obstruction.
- * If you want to refer to their guidance when speaking to Immigration Officers, everything can be found in Chapter 31 UKBA Operational Enforcement Manual: tinyurl.com/7b7s9yn

network23.org/antiraids,
[@AntiRaids](https://facebook.com/antiraids)

PROVO

by Jil Daniel

PROVO, 1965-1967

The Amsterdam-based counterculture movement, Provo, first emerged in the city's *Spui* square in 1965 where artist and magician Robert Jasper Grootveld held his ritualistic "happenings" in, as always, a pro-pot, anti-tobacco and advertising-free setting.

Provo began in Amsterdam but it later spread to other cities in the Netherlands, Belgium, Sweden, Germany, a number of Italian cities and even the United States. In the Netherlands of 1965, it quickly became the talk of the town: a youth movement combining art and politics and its actions were shaking up the country. Provo is now considered one of the first major countercultural political movements of the late 1960s.

Provo was named after a term coined by Dutch author Wouter Buikhuisen in a Criminology PhD thesis completed in January 1965. In this study, Buikhuisen uses the word "provo" to refer to one of the subjects of his paper: marginalised groups of young people, street-oriented youth, dropouts or other Dutch equivalents of Britain's "teddy boys" and France's "blousons noirs". But make no mistake: Provo's motivating force and outlook had little to do with brawling and gang rivalry and its members were not ones for street fighting.

And yet, by choosing the name "provo" for his movement, Roel Van Duyn, one of Provo's founding members was sending a firm, openly provocative message of opposition to Dutch society. This came as no surprise given that Provo's earlier pamphlets were rooted in anarchist thought, were well-versed in the work of Bakunin and poured scorn on the sense of ownership and the Dutch monarchy.

From the spring of 1965 to 1967, Provo went from being a small group of members to a large scale movement. Two years after it was set up, the group self-dissolved in May 1967. Though Provo's years of activity were short-lived they marked a milestone in the history of European protest movements from the second half of the 20th century.

Provo's birth certificate seems to have taken the form of a signed tract dated May 25th 1965. Provo's *Provokaties* ("provocations") were released a month later and a huge number of facts were made public in these small printed posters. Some of the printed matter that Provo issued struck a painful chord: Princess Beatrix's marriage to a former Wehrmacht soldier, confidential reports on the levels of pollution in the air as well as the Queen's fake abdication speeches. A few days after releasing their *Provokaties*, Provo's eponymous newspaper's very first issue was released, on July 12th 1965.

Provo's ideas were largely spread in the streets through "happenings" and other themed events but the group's history was also very closely linked to the production of printed material: flyers, posters, placards and magazines were produced in large quantities. The variety of printed resources probably totals a fairly high number, of which the following are but a conservative estimate: 50 different magazines in the Netherlands alone and more than 15 different ones in Belgium. Most of these magazines reached only five issues. In 1965, the group's initial

productions were held in confidence (Provo's first issue was printed at an estimated circulation of 500 copies, of which 400 had been confiscated). By 1967, some of Provo's printed matter had reached substantial quantities (1000 to 10,000 copies) meaning that specific methods of distribution had to be put in place. Provo's members, supporters and friends had taken on this task and were selling copies of the magazine in the streets.

Rob Stolk describes Provo's distribution methods:

"Soon enough, it became clear to us that Provo's distribution was solely dependent on our ability to produce it. Demand was high



[...] The print run of Provo's later editions reached 10,000 copies. These copies had been partially paid for. When a new Provo rolled off the press, youngsters would take piles of magazines with them. Loe Van Nimwegen (Provo's printing administrative member) handed each of them 25 copies. They sold those copies for 70 cents or so and had to pay us part of that sum of money. Of course, some of those guys never came back, others just kept on selling Provo. Some of them sold a couple of hundred copies on a single day; this meant that they would have enough money to last the entire month. Lack of stimulus must have been the problem: we needed it to keep things going. We also tried to distribute the magazine via Van Gelder. With Provo, supply never met demand and that was the magazine's strength, it had become such a curio: those who managed to get their hands on a copy of Provo were very lucky. That being said, Provo's distribution methods left a lot to be desired and were downright amateurish.*

Most of Provo's printed matter was produced with whatever means were at hand: mimeograph and offset machines were either bought or borrowed off Provo's supporters and Rob Stolk, who was the head of Provo's printing unit in Amsterdam remembers having to move the printing machines on numerous occasions so as to prevent the authorities from seizing the equipment. On other occasions, Provo used printing presses that other newspapers were using at the time: *De Volkskrant's* press was used to print "*De Teleraaf*" ("*raaf*" is the Dutch term for "crow") which parodied the reactionary newspaper "*De Telegraaf*".

Considerable budget and time constraints meant that the magazine's layout was often treated as a low priority. Yet, as a result, the combination of illustrations, photographs, manuscripts, typescripts and newspaper cuttings gave Provo's overall composition a rich and diversified tone.

"The magazine's layout and design matched the aesthetics of a certain type of culture: that of non-commercial design. Provo was a strong reaction against annoying and boring mainstream printed matter," says Rob Stolk.

Provo's printed matter often received very little care and attention. However, this wasn't always the case. Experienced designers were also working within the Provo movement and some of these people were producing exciting images.

Notable works include illustrator Bernard Holtrop (Willem)'s satirical drawings and caricatures. Holtrop often



worked with Provo and was also the head of the "*God, Nederland & Oranje*" newspaper which was printed by Holtrop at the time. Other notable designers include Kees Graaf and Iris de Leeuw (who was designing graphic content for "*Ontbijt op Bed*"). Graaf and de Leeuw were members of *Luuks*, Provo's group in Maastricht.

Their work was eye-catching and characterised by its striking use of colour and silk-screen printing. Among those who dealt with the printed page were some of Provo's most active members: Rob Stolk, Roel van Duyn, Hans Tuynman, Olaf Stoop, Auke Boersma, and many others. Most of their graphic contributions involved producing and assembling hand-written texts though these were not elements one would come across in elaborate or even conceptual design.

"Some of the designers working within the Provo movement were producing stunning and remarkable design elsewhere: these were costly productions that Provo's printed matter couldn't compete with. But then again, our intention was not to challenge that type of design. In that sense, Provo's subversive design didn't produce beautiful printed matter.*"

By saying these words, Rob Stolk was obviously understating Provo's rich, vibrant and inspiring compositions.

* Pamphlet 2, a series of exhibition leaflets for Experimental Jetset's exhibition "*Two or Three Things I Know About Provo*", W139, Amsterdam, 2011.

Translated from french by Solen Le Dizez / images: provo-images.info



www.bit.ly/GiveUpActivism

www.bit.ly/DeathToAssemblies

Silence in a meeting isn't a licence for the dominant people to speak. Maybe stay quiet, see what happens...

www.bit.ly/ThePartyIsOver

MARCHING THROUGH AN EMPTY CITY

JOIN OUR THING

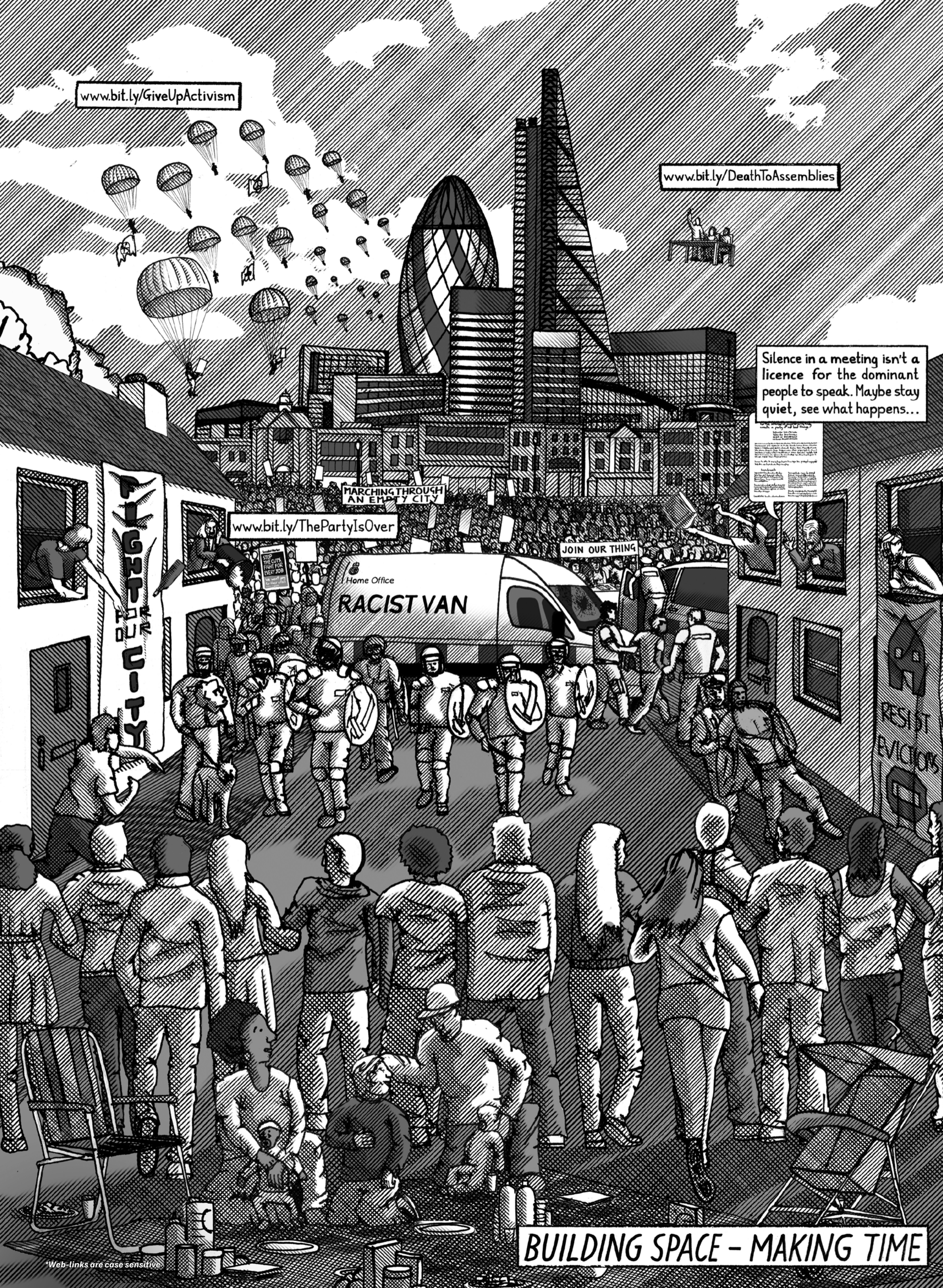
Home Office
RACIST VAN

STOP THE PARTY

RESIST EVICTIONS

BUILDING SPACE - MAKING TIME

*Web-links are case sensitive





SURVIVAL

PENDING

LIBERATION