

Our Centre began as a squat over **40** years ago...



Our multi-racial Crossroads Women's Centre, opened by the Wages for Housework Campaign (WFHC), began as a squat at 129 Drummond Street near Euston station, London, in 1975. It was a diverse inner-city area – including many homeless Bangladeshi families living in squats. There was a great community spirit. Soon after the WFHC formed the charity, Housewives in Dialogue (changed to Women in Dialogue some years later), to run the Centre.

Several women's organisations were formed here by women using the Centre – Black Women for Wages for Housework, the English Collective of Prostitutes, Wages Due Lesbians, and Women Against Rape.

1975

We **exposed** the racism of the Council.



We occupied the Council buildings to protect our community.

The Bangladeshi mothers were among the first to drop in. Some were protesting against being injected with DepoProvera, the harmful long-term contraception.

As the area redeveloped, they wanted help to ensure they had secure Council housing before leaving their squats. Once in their new homes, we worked with them to get protection from racist attacks and ended up in an occupation of the Town Hall exposing the racism of the housing department – the squatting community had been much safer.

In 1976 the BBC filmed women's discussions at the Centre for the film, *All Work and No Pay*, co-produced with WFHC. Evicted in 1977, we squatted 138 Drummond Street. Women Against Rape organised its first march and public trial from there.

1977



We became the Kings Cross Women's Centre.

In 1978, facing eviction again, we walked into Camden Town Hall. One of us chained herself to the first-floor balcony and unfolded yards of a petition with thousands of signatures demanding a women's centre. A year later, Ken Livingstone, then Camden's Chair of Housing, gave us an 'official' squat at a token rent – a small rundown empty shop at 71 Tonbridge Street. This became the King's Cross Women's Centre.

Much happened from here including the publishing of *Black Women Bringing It All Back Home*, one woman's personal account of the work of immigrating from Barbados to the US; organizing two international conferences focused on women's contributions, and more groups formed including WinVisible (women with visible and invisible disabilities), Black Women's Rape Action Project and Legal Action for Women.

Every year hundreds of women came to the Centre for help or to volunteer, often both. We secured our first modest funding from Camden Council.



emotional housework, is done both outside and inside the home ... And we women are the first to defend and protect those in our care. It is usually women – mothers, wives, partners, sisters,

We said "Share the housework, **sweep** out the Nazis."



After an attempted arson attack by the National Front and homophobic graffiti on the front of our Centre, we organised a 500-strong community march to clear the NF out of the area. Our slogan was: 'Share the housework, sweep out the Nazis.'

A youth centre and a church hall kindly gave us space for a year. We prepared our participation in the Beijing UN World Conference on Women in these conditions.

In 1995 Tonbridge Street was redeveloped and despite months of local protest and legal action we were evicted. Unlike centres which closed down when funding stopped, we were saved by the dedication and commitment of volunteers and supporters used to managing on a shoestring.

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1995



We continue to keep **alive** the struggle...



We finally moved into 230 Kentish Town Rd in 1997, thanks to a sympathetic landlord.

We changed our name to Crossroads Women's Centre to remind us of our old King's Cross home and to remember the brave women of the squatter town of Crossroads, South Africa, who refused to be moved, keeping alive the struggle against apartheid through the hardest times.



1997



But, finally, we now we have a home...



In 2010 we were able to buy larger premises across the road at 25 Wolsey Mews, NW5 2DX. The 19th century building was originally stables, then a dolls' factory and a carpenters' workshop.

Buying our own building was made possible by the great generosity and commitment of volunteers, core users and supporters.

Some donated or lent from their modest inheritance or savings; funders topped up this huge contribution.

In 2012, after another huge fundraising effort to renovate the building, we moved into the new Crossroads Women's Centre.



2010

