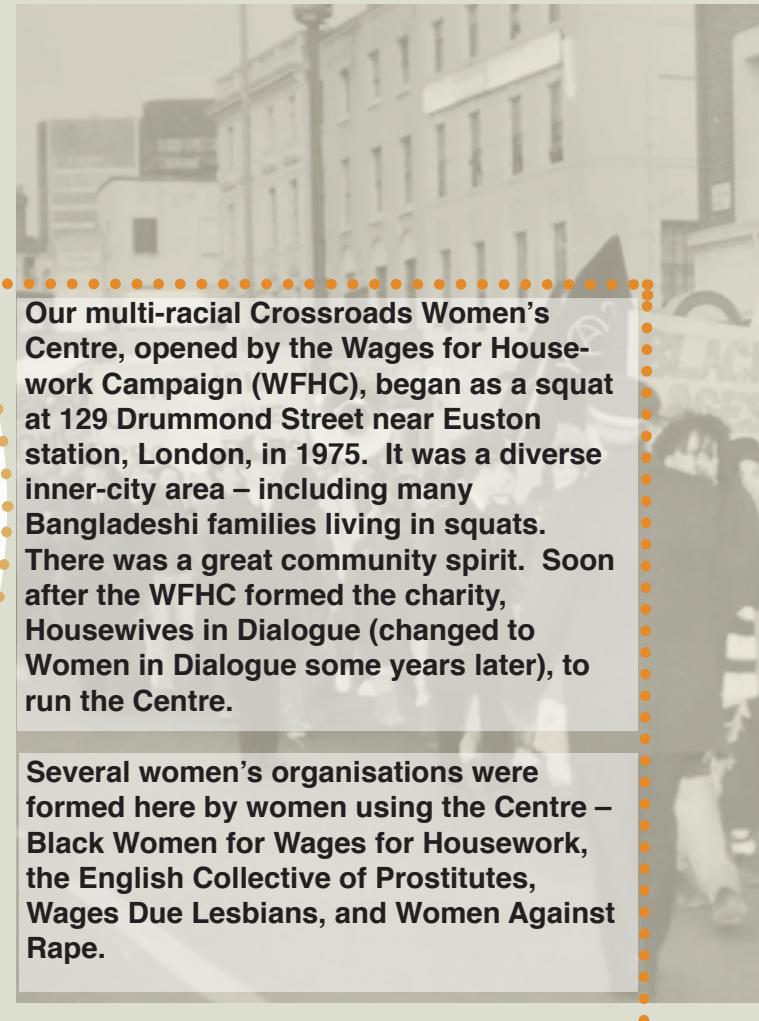


1975

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 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

1977

# 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



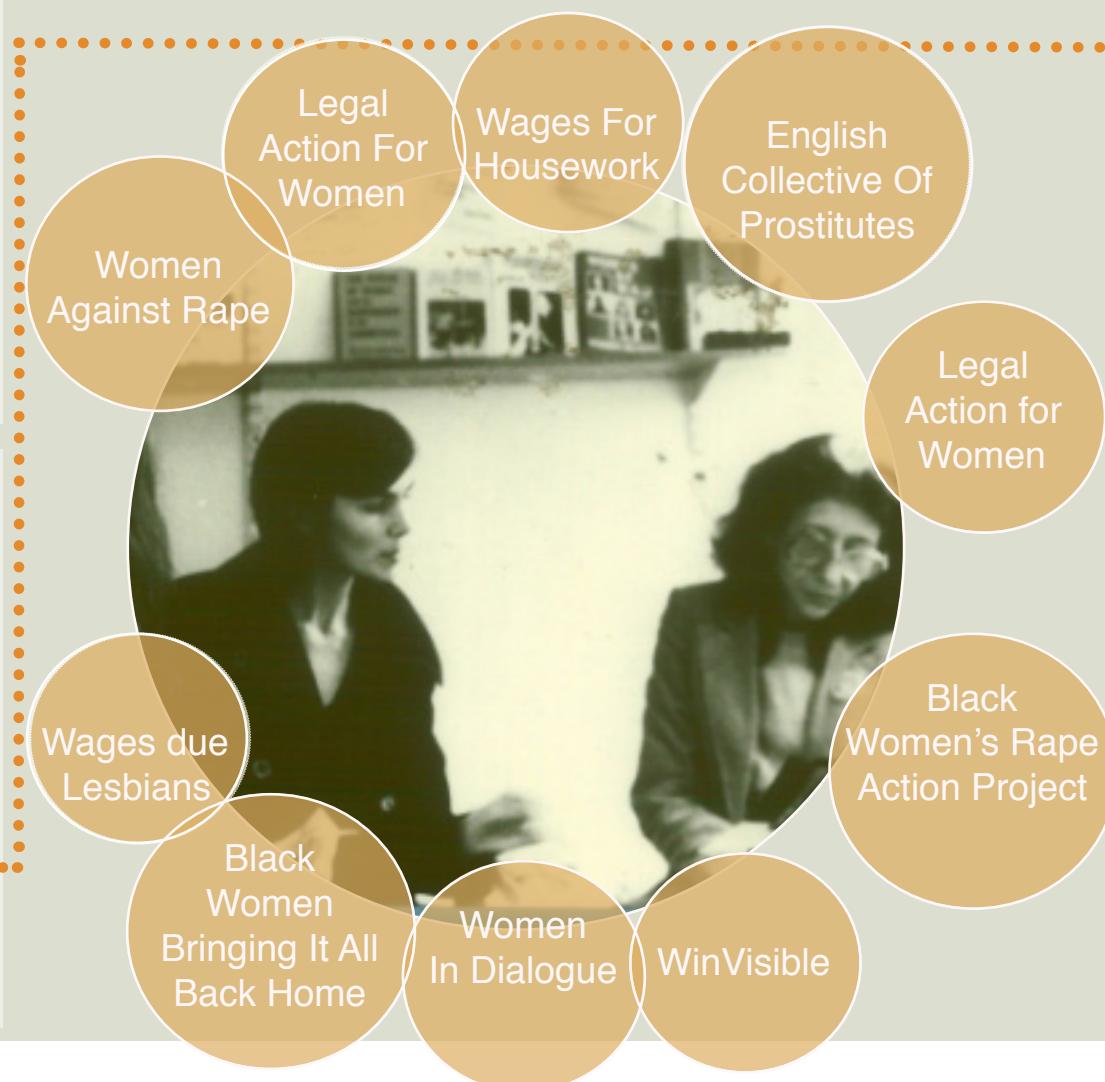
1978

# 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.



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this 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,

1982

# We began... Bringing It All Back Home

Our first conference brought together over 350 women, mostly of colour, whose origins were at least 38 countries. It was a memorable event, that took two years of discussion and organising.

The full proceedings are published in *Strangers & Sisters: Women, Race & Immigration*, edited and introduced by Selma James. Available from Crossroads Books.



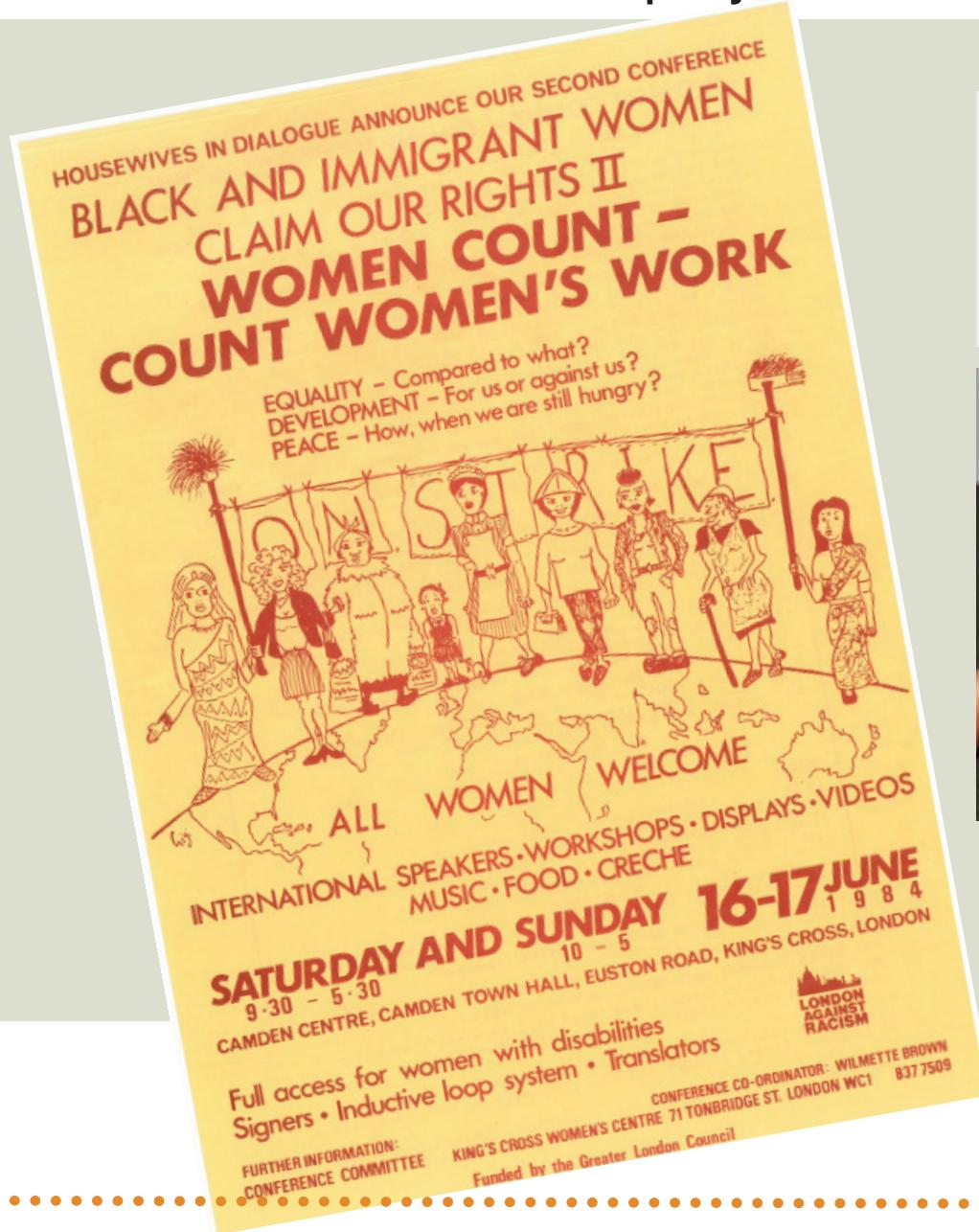
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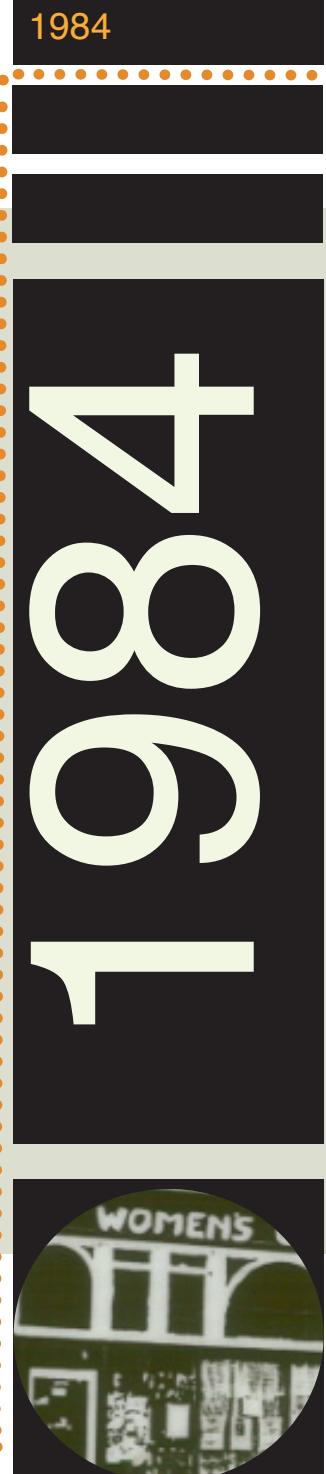
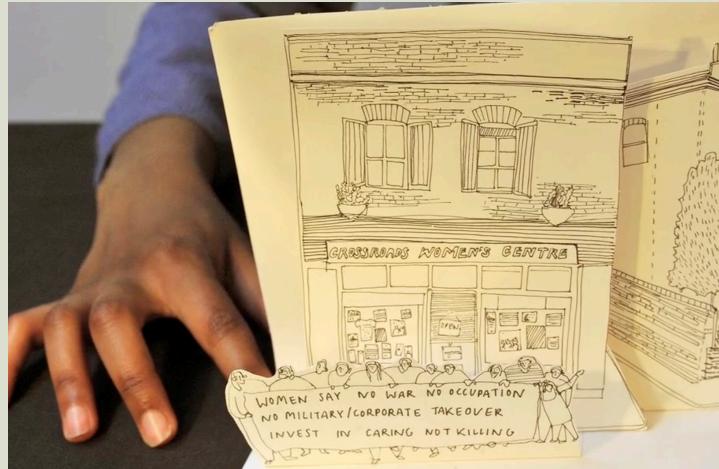


sisters, daughters, grannies and aunties – who are the driving force of justice campaigns, whether or not we are prominent or even visible in them." Selma James, *The Global Kitchen*, 1985.

# We devised projects and activism on womanhood.



Our second conference brought together 500 women. Held on the eve of the UN Decade for Women (1985-95), we used its themes – Equality, Development, Peace – as a springboard to put across grassroots women's point of view and demands and questions to governments, highlighted in this conference poster.

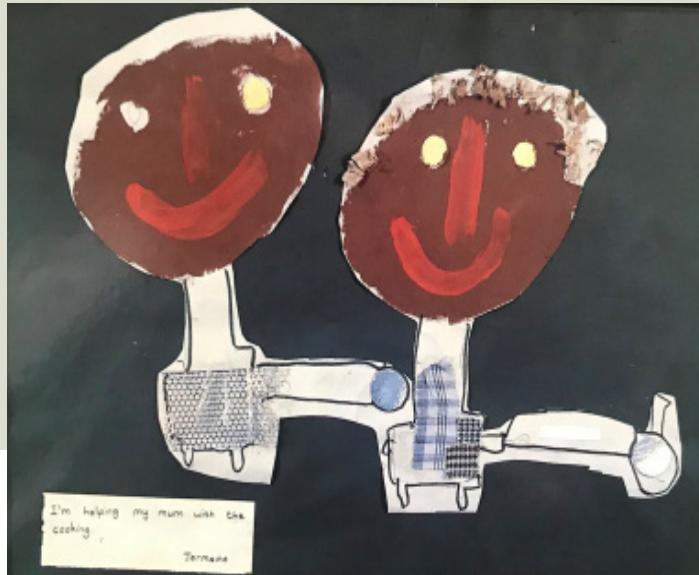


"Caring for others is accomplished by a dazzling array of skills in an endless variety of circumstances. As well as cooking, shopping, cleaning and laundering, planting, tending, harvesting

# We grew...

**Who Works for Me?** - Our hugely successful anti-racist anti sexist project with 20+ schools in Inner London and Tameside involved girls and boys aged 3 to 15 years.

In drawings, paintings, poems, essays, they counted and honoured through young people's sharp, honest eyes, the caring work the women in their lives did for them, their families and communities. They reflected their mums trials, lesbian households, and joyful moments and more. Some, girls especially, counted their own work in classroom and home.



Women do two thirds of the world's work for 10% of world assets. (United Nations figures, 1995)

**Schools Project 1989**

- \* Drawing out what children know about the work women do for their families and communities
- \* Enriching their experience with information about women's work in different countries
- \* Contributing to multi-cultural and non-sexist work in schools.

**Who Works for Me?  
Mum/Auntie/Sister/Ganny...**

Children and young people are invited to discuss, draw, paint, photograph, evaluate and/or write about

- \* what work women do with/for them - mothering, cooking, teaching, nursing, tidying up, advising, comforting, budgeting, decorating; repairing; putting up shelves; sewing clothes . . .
- \* what work girls do - babysitting, cleaning, doing errands, tidy the classroom, establishing that they are 'as good as the boys'
- \* what work women do on the land - growing food, fetching water, tending livestock . . . in Third World and industrialised countries

**send for free teachers resource guide**

Materials include: factsheet; women worldwide speaking about their evaluations of what women's work contributes to economies everywhere

**Entries by end of summer term for Local Exhibitions  
to be followed by a National Exhibition in**

**An exhibition of work so far, is available**

**Open to Infants, Primary and Secondary Schools and Sixth Forms**

**TIME OFF FOR WOMEN** is a project of TIME OFF FOR WOMEN, an international network of women's action co-ordinated by the International Federation of Women's Action Committees to press for implementation of the UN Convention on the Elimination of all forms of discrimination against women in every country's constitution and law.

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1995

# 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.’

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.

Women in Dialogue as an organisation in Consultative Status with the UNECOSOC (Economic and Social Council) had an international delegation to the UN World Conference on Women in Beijing 1995. That year, the UN Development Programme valued women's unwaged work in the home, on the land and in the community at \$11 trillion dollars worldwide – yet still viewed by many as an underestimate as it neglected simultaneous activity and underpayment in the waged workplace. WinD submitted evidence supported by 1500 NGOs from many countries to win the historic decision by governments to measure and value women's unwaged work in national accounts.

2020 is the 25th anniversary of Beijing but progress on implementation is slow, and Women's poverty is as persistent as ever, despite growing acknowledgement of the huge burden of unwaged caring work done by women and girls all over the globe, on top of low paid work and schoolwork.



LOGO



*this 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,*

1997-2010

# 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.



*sisters, daughters, grannies and aunties – who are the driving force of justice campaigns, whether or not we are prominent or even visible in them.” Selma James, The Global Kitchen, 1985.*

1997-2010

2010-present day



And, finally, we now 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.

We  
were saved by  
the dedication of  
volunteers and  
supporters.

2010

