



WORKS

Squatting also opened and continues to open doors that would have otherwise put pressure on movements: having a rent-free physical space to live and organise means that the weight of working a full-time job is lifted, freeing up time, money and energy to put into activism and bringing the community together. On top of this, the act of living in a communal setting can provide ground for the constant exchange of ideas, skills, trust and understanding between people in the movement, as well as breathing an air of autonomy and freedom necessary for revolutionary struggle. It should not be a privilege to be able to do these things, but a human right. In the free society to come, a society without money and property ownership, we will essentially all be 'squatters'. Residing and interacting with the land on our own terms will afford us the time and energy to connect to those around us without the normalisation of exploitation that gives rise to white supremacy, patriarchy, ableism and queerphobia.

Today, the memory of Black squatters has been wiped from much of our consciousnesses. Certain Black squats met a tragic fate through arson attacks, police raids and evictions, amped up by the 1981 Brixton riots which increased policing and targeting of Black movements and Black culture. The general squatting movement also suffered massively from Thatcherite policies like "right-to-buy" – a scheme that reduced social housing values in order to encourage tenants to purchase their rented dwellings. This liberal policy drew a sharp line between respectable and illegitimate ways of living, economic productivity and laziness, citizens and outlaws, subsequently condemning squatters to the realm of parasites.

More stringent measures in place to clamp down on squatting and an expanse of neoliberal ideologies has pushed oppressive hands into peak capitalist initiatives such as property guardianship. This is where property owners rent out rundown buildings – or would-be-squats – at the almost usual market price of ordinary rented accommodation. This not only short-changes the people who have no option but to rent such dire accommodation but acts to rid squatters of their homes and spaces while commodifying the tenets of squatting itself.

Despite this, squatters still fight for their right to occupy buildings. The recent occupation of a disused police station in Clapham Common, 200m from where Sarah Everard disappeared and in reaction to the insidious PCSC Bill, highlights the political power of squatting. This occupation saw a coalition of squatters, feminists, anti-fascists and Black liberation groups enter the building, which spread anxiety through the establishment and resulted in a brutal eviction, where bailiffs violently attempted to take protesters off the roof of the building and off a crane. One instance saw a young Black woman who was defending the building being

