

‘in those days we occupied everything all the time’: Collecting Histories of Childcare Activism in London

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This paper explores the findings of the ongoing research and oral history project Grow Your Own, which since 2023 has been documenting and mapping some of the myriad ways in which activists and campaigners sought to change and increase childcare provision from 1970 onwards in London, England.¹ Grow Your Own has identified that childcare activism was a diverse movement which used a variety of tactics. This included community-based research, the lobbying of decision makers, policy development and direct action such as protests, occupations and strikes to push for more, and better, childcare provision wherever possible.² As suggested by these activities childcare activism was driven by an urgent need for childcare. To meet some of this need community and workplace based childcare projects were set up, such as childcare cooperatives, community nurseries and children’s centres. There was constant debate within the movement, not only about the best tactics to use to achieve their aims, but also regarding what kinds of provision they should develop and campaign for. Arguments centred on what kind of childcare would best meet the needs of young children, liberate the women who mainly cared for them and ultimately contribute towards the creation of a more equal and just society.

The primary purpose of the Grow Your Own project is to respond to present day childcare inequality by making the history of community-based childcare initiatives, campaigns and organising more visible and increasingly acknowledged in London, England, particularly by people affected by the lack of affordable childcare or who are campaigning for change in childcare today.³ Today, the provision of childcare has expanded dramatically, but access remains unequal. It is predominantly privately owned, expensive and with a largely low-paid, non-unionised workforce. This inequality of provision can be related to poverty as recent research has shown.⁴ Therefore, working with a contemporary campaigning organisation,

¹. By ‘childcare’ I mean forms of care and education for children aged between 0 and 5 that allows the child’s primary carers to work, study or pursue other prolonged activities. This distinguishes what is often called daycare or childcare from other forms of education and /or care such as playgroups, as they were commonly only open for short play sessions and often relied on parent volunteers, and many nursery classes or schools, as they offered half or short days, were not open in school holidays and commonly only took children aged three and over.

². The project is run by community history organisation On the Record, in partnership with campaigning organisation Post Pandemic Childcare Coalition.

³. Grow Your Own has been funded by Trust for London.

⁴. ‘Flying Against Gravity: The Lived Reality of Poverty in London, 4 in 10 Trust, <https://4in10.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/flying-against-gravity.pdf> (accessed 8 Mar. 2024).

Post Pandemic Childcare Coalition, a key part of our methodology at Grow Your Own has been to communicate the history of childcare activism to those affected by childcare inequality today. In 2023, ten project participants with personal experience of childcare inequality were supported to conduct their own research into the childcare issues that concerned them. They then made an eight-episode podcast series *Childcare Voices*.⁵ Ongoing plans continue to develop in 2024, with the launch of an online map, highlighting some of the historic childcare campaigns, projects, and initiatives in London, England the research has identified so far. We will also create a set of resources for people directly affected by the issue and people campaigning for change, as well as a series of interactive play sessions for parents/carers with children under-five years. By making material regarding past childcare activism from the mid- to late-twentieth century more widely available, the project aims to increase understanding about the historic roots of the current childcare crisis and assess how useful this understanding is for attempts to achieve good quality, affordable childcare for all in the present day.

Fig 1: Past and present staff, parents and children discuss Hackney's community nurseries at Hackney Museum, November 2023. Photograph by Sophie Polyviou for On the Record.

Research has included an exploration into what is held in existing archives, as well as building a new archive of documents and oral history interview recordings. An initial seven interviews with individuals were recorded in both single and multiple sittings. The interviews focused on the individual's involvement in childcare activism, with a semi-structured format and broadly adopting a chronological approach. Many of the interviewees have had long careers in the childcare and early-years sector, for instance by either running nurseries themselves, becoming academics and experts in the field of childcare, working for the Greater London Council and local authorities, as well as contributing their expertise to the New Labour Sure Start program as advisers or consultants. The interviews revisit historical key moments of London's childcare. This includes the brief period between 1982 and 1986 when childcare was extensively funded by the Greater London Council, changes to childcare after Labour's 1997 election and the rapid expansion of private, for-profit childcare in the twenty-first century.

The rationale chosen to record and share oral history, alongside using other archival sources such as campaign materials, publications and organisational records is because it provides, as Margaretta Jolly puts it, an 'archive of feeling, experience and voice, important

⁵. Acast, Childcare Voices <https://shows.acast.com/childcare-voices> (accessed 8 Mar. 2024).

... for public understanding – indeed, for public action.⁶ Whilst not full biographical life-story interviews, which Jolly says attempts ‘to listen to the whole story the long way’, the interviews’ follow a more fluid chronology that traces the interviewees’ lifelong involvements with childcare, often starting with brief descriptions of their own childhoods and their mothers’ experiences.⁷ Using oral history as a method within the project allowed the interviews to examine and explore not only the events related to the relevant period of childcare activism but also the meanings made of them within the life stories of participants. As Alessandro Portelli put it, oral history ‘tells us less about events than about their meaning’.⁸ For instance, most of the people interviewed were born between 1937 and 1950, and so were children during the 1940s and 1950s. Their mothers often had had experience of working during the Second World War and many struggled in the postwar period when they were not able to continue in their paid work. Some of the interviewees directly referred to their mothers’ experience as being confined to the home in explaining their determination to work and create the childcare that would allow them to do so.⁹ This aids in understanding the motivations of at least some of the childcare activists who emerged in the 1970s.

In addition, as part of the Grow Your Own project, we also recorded three interviews with pairs or small groups of people who were involved in the same campaigns or childcare groups. From these findings, we have organised public discussions, or memory sharing events, around specific subjects such as the Islington Nursery Strike in 1984 and Hackney’s community nurseries. The group interviews recorded at Grow Your Own allowed the participants to discuss their ideas and experiences of their collective work on campaigns such as the Southwark Childcare Campaign, or childcare projects such as the Fleet Street Nursery, together. Although interviewing in groups precludes more detailed discussion of each individuals’ life story, this method has been useful because it has allowed the participants to share their memories collectively, mirroring the way they worked together in the past.

Several interviewees have also engaged in the collective work of the project in a variety of ways, from sitting on the advisory group and helping to organise events, through to commenting on and helping shape the project’s outputs. This participatory approach to working is an attempt to disrupt the ‘social divisions’ between the professional oral historian

⁶. Margaretta Jolly, *Sisterhood and After: An Oral History of the UK Women’s Liberation Movement* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 40.

⁷. Jolly, *Sisterhood and After*, 41.

⁸. Alessandro Portelli, ‘What makes oral history different’ in *The Oral History Reader*, eds. Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson (Oxon: Routledge, 2005), 67.

⁹. Margaretta Jolly writes that *Sisterhood and After* interviewees’ ‘growing up stories’ helped explain why their activism took certain paths in *Sisterhood and After*; 70.

and their 'source' who the Popular Memory Group argued were 'at best ... left untouched, unchanged by the whole process except in what they have given up – the telling'.¹⁰

In 1970, the National Women's Liberation Movement Conference at Ruskin College, Oxford voted on the Women's Liberation Movement's first four demands. Alongside equal pay, equal education and opportunity, free contraception and abortion on demand, the conference agreed a demand for free, twenty-four-hour nurseries.¹¹ As the 1970s progressed, activism around childcare grew; there were childcare co-operatives, community nurseries, nursery campaigns, childminder groups, local under-fives umbrella organisations, and trade union campaigns for workplace childcare. Furthermore, the creation of new forms of training and qualifications for early-years workers, industrial action by childcare workers, campaigns against racism in early-years provision and attempts to create childcare services that were anti-racist, anti-sexist and accessible to all children was gaining momentum in England. Drawing towards the latter part of the twentieth century there were efforts to coordinate these grassroots, predominantly local community initiatives, on regional and national levels. However, as observed by Sarah Stoller in *Inventing the Working Parent: Work, Gender, and Feminism in Neoliberal Britain* (2023), the complex and nuanced movement of childcare activism has been commonly overlooked, even within feminist historiography. Stoller's book also includes an overview of childcare activism in Britain from the 1970s onwards.¹²

Campaigns and community action around the issue of childcare, from the late-twentieth century, proliferated in part because while the numbers of women in work who had or expected to have children were steadily increasing there were few, if any, childcare options available to them.¹³ During the Second World War the state had greatly expanded nursery provision for working women.¹⁴ However, this was reversed after the war when the Ministry of Health handed control of the nurseries back to local authorities, cut their grants and took back the wartime nurseries' requisitioned buildings. In post-war England state-provided full-time daycare (distinguished from nursery education which had shorter hours and was not meant to allow parents to work) was only available through local authority Social Services departments. However, these only served a limited number of the most highly-vulnerable children,

¹⁰. Popular Memory Group, 'Popular Memory: Theory, politics, method' in *The Oral History Reader*, eds. Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson (Oxon: Routledge, 2005), 85.

¹¹. Ibid., 26.

¹². Sarah Stoller, *Inventing the Working Parent: Work, Gender and Feminism in Neoliberal Britain* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2023).

¹³. Angela Davis, *Pre-school Childcare in England, 1939–2010; Theory, Practice and Experience* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2015).

¹⁴. Ibid.

considered to need daycare as a form of protection from their home lives.¹⁵ In stark contrast, at the other end of the class spectrum, childcare was available to those affluent enough to be able to afford help, for instance by hiring a nanny. Anyone who fell between these two groups had few childcare options.

Fig 2: Southwark Childcare Campaign on a demonstration. Photograph courtesy of Linda Smith / Grow Your Own archive, Bishopsgate Institute

From the early 1970s onwards, campaign groups were established in most London boroughs, demanding more publicly funded nurseries, more and better support for childminders from local authorities and better pay and working conditions for childcare workers. Often these groups also helped to fundraise for and open 'community nurseries' in their local areas. Some groups, like the Islington Nursery Campaign, were connected to local chapters of the Working Women's Charter Campaign.¹⁶ The Southwark Childcare Campaign was initiated by the Women's Committee of Southwark Trades Council.¹⁷ In 1975, nursery nurses employed by Hackney Council took extended industrial action for better pay and conditions. The following year the nursery nurses, Hackney Trades Council and Hackney Under-Fives joined forces to form the Hackney Nursery Campaign, which agitated for more nursery places, pay parity amongst the various kinds of childcare workers, better support for childminders and against the closure of existing nurseries.¹⁸ In 1977, the London Nursery Campaign brought local campaigns together to coordinate, and in July 1980, the National Childcare Campaign was established.

During this period community-based childcare facilities were established in response to local needs, especially within working class areas, but also significantly, connected by broader social and political aims. When Sue Finch, one of the founders of Market Nursery (a community nursery in Hackney) in the early 1970s, was asked, as part of the Grow Your Own project, what she hoped to do with her time once the nursery she founded was in operation, she replied that she was just as motivated by collective purpose than by her individual needs:

Well, it was what I wanted for myself, but ... I could see that ... from the point of view of women without childcare, you can't have a life that's anything but staying in the

¹⁵. Davis, *Pre-school Childcare in England*.

¹⁶. Working Women's Charter Campaign Newsletter 4, Grow Your Own archive, Bishopsgate Institute (hereafter BI). The Grow Your Own archive has not yet been deposited but will be available at Bishopsgate Institute on completion of the project.

¹⁷. National Childcare Campaign newsletter 1, Dec. 1980, Grow Your Own archive, BI.

¹⁸. Working Women's Charter Campaign Newsletter 4, Grow Your Own archive, BI.

home. And it was one of the demands that came out of the Oxford conference ... free childcare, 24-hour childcare on demand. So, in a way, I felt like I was kind of choosing what I wanted to do, which of the demands to focus on, and that it meant women could be politically active ... I mean, [there are] still only one in three women in Parliament. But in those days, it was a tiny proportion, even tinier proportion. ... For that generation, we were seeing that our mothers were very frustrated ... if they weren't working, and I suppose very few women were going to university and there were very few options for women ... So, it was what I wanted to do. I didn't know that when I went to university. I hadn't seen that. But I think as soon as you have a child, it all comes much clearer that you're not going to get anything done in life if you can't find a way of collectively looking after children once you have them.¹⁹

The Children's Community Centre in Highgate New Town, North London, England, was one such collective response to the need for childcare. One of the earliest community nurseries in London, it grew from the twelve Women's Liberation groups in the London Borough of Camden. It opened in 1972 and served as a model for many of the community nurseries that opened later in the decade. Sue Finch, one of many to do so, visited the centre for inspiration before Market Nursery opened in 1975.

However, eighteen months after opening, they wrote that the 'the euphoria we experienced at actually opening the place in December 1972 had been replaced by a growing awareness of real contradictions in a scheme such as ours'. The centre was based in a short-life property, given to them rent-free in a redevelopment zone. The families living in the local area were often placed there in temporary accommodation, lived in poor conditions, and needed to work. The Children's Centre was insufficiently funded by the council and relied on voluntary labour provided by parents to supplement the paid staff, and the nursery did not charge any fees. They reflected that their model could only work, 'where parents – and especially women – have the time, energy, and confidence to organise their own nurseries. Most do not'. They concluded that 'schemes such as ours are not going to solve the national child-care problem ... Although we recognise the limitations of our model, we'd still like to see more neighbourhood-based nurseries controlled by parents'.²⁰ One of the things they hoped for at their centre was that the people involved would,

learn how to struggle collectively for what they want (and to learn that that can be enjoyable as well), and to take back some of the power that has been alienated from

¹⁹. Interview with Sue Finch, recorded by Rosa Schling on 28 Feb. 2023, Grow Your Own archive, BL.

²⁰. The Children's Community Centre: 123 Dartmouth Park Hill, N19, Jul. 1974, [75HR/P/01](#), The Women's Library, London School of Economics (hereafter LSE).

them. The Centre, despite its contradictions, has at least glimmerings of being a place where these things can happen.²¹

Trade unionists and childcare campaigners also sought to address the lack of childcare for working women by establishing workplace nurseries. Similarly to community nurseries, some of the interviewees acknowledged that they perceived this solution as at best an interim measure. Sarah Stoller describes how campaigners for workplace nurseries were keen to show they remained committed to achieving a comprehensive state-funded system.²²

Ann Field who helped establish the Fleet Street Nursery, a workplace nursery for media workers, began the group interview recorded by referencing the debate around whether workplace nurseries were the best approach:

And what emerged was a bit of a difference of opinion shall we say about whether we should concentrate solely and wholly on state and municipal funding. Or whether we should also ask for private funding or workplace nurseries as it was called at the time. And I started out really completely opposed to the idea of workplace nurseries for a whole variety of reasons. But realised actually that for practical purposes it was really a necessity, we needed both, and a number of others in the NUJ and in my union, NATSOPA, at the time, we felt the same, we thought well, we've got to try and bash up our employers to do something about it.²³

After a long, six-year campaign to establish itself, the Fleet Street Nursery opened in 1986. It shared a building with the Kingsway Children's Centre, which had been opened by a different group of trade unionists in 1977 in Wesley House, central London, following two years of negotiations with employers. Kingsway Children's Centre was a form of workplace nursery used by a group of participating employers, who then paid two-thirds of the cost of their employees' nursery places. This allowed the childcare provided to be of high quality but at an affordable cost for parents. The Fleet Street Nursery was similarly funded in part by employer subsidies. The disadvantages of these central London nurseries included having to travel to work in the rush hour with young children and little outdoor play space, but these were far outweighed for the people interviewed by the opportunity to take up high quality affordable childcare.²⁴

²¹. Ibid.

²². Stoller, *Inventing the Working Parent*.

²³. interview with Ann Field, Mike Pike and Jill Mann, recorded by Rosa Schling on 28 Jun. 2023, Grow Your Own archive, BL.

²⁴. The building both nurseries were based in, Wesley House, was owned by the West London Mission when the Kingsway Children's Centre began, and the project was allowed to use a space that in 1912 had been the country's first ever purpose-built creche. In 1983, Wesley House was bought by

Other workplace nurseries were aimed at specific groups of workers with needs, such as the Blackshaw Nursery at St George's Hospital, Tooting. This nursery opened in 1982, although Wandsworth Childcare Campaign started fundraising for it in 1977. It had longer opening hours in order to cater for NHS shift workers, although it was not quite open for twenty four hours.²⁵ In the late 1980s, it was open from 7am to 7pm, three days a week and 7am to 10pm, two days a week.²⁶ Sarah Rackham, one of the campaigners who helped to open the nursery, remembered that the nursery looked after the babies of specialist intensive care nurses in the hospital: 'they would come back to work when their babies were six weeks old because they could come in [during] their shifts and ... feed the babies'.²⁷

Students and staff in higher education also campaigned for creches and nurseries in universities, colleges, and polytechnics to allow women to study. Nursery campaigner Jenny Williams campaigned for a nursery at Middlesex Polytechnic in the early 1970s, when she studied there. During her interview, she explained how many students at the Polytechnic at the time were from West Africa and, due to the lack of alternative childcare available, were forced to use foster care for their children while they studied. The Polytechnic also had a Trade Union Studies course, often taken by industrial workers. Some of these students joined in the nursery campaign. Jenny who was interviewed for the Grow Your Own Project, explained:

So, it was lovely because it wasn't just these feminist women, it was these guys as well who did actually appreciate why we needed it [a nursery]. And what we did in those days was we occupied everything all the time. And so we occupied. Well, I tell you, it was quite funny. We had this debate and we were going to basically push for this nursery. And we had a space identified and I sort of worked out the cost. We knew how much it was costing and everything. And the directorate were just intransigent. They just didn't want to know. So, I always remember on the Friday evening, um, we were approached by another sort of political group saying, 'We don't think the time is quite ready'. And I said, 'Well, tough on Monday morning we're going to occupy the director's office'. And I said, 'Anyway, most of the guys have gone home and the decision's already been taken'. And it was always very funny because what they had done is that they had talked to all the caretaking staff. So caretaking staff knew what

the Greater London Council's Women's Committee to safeguard the future of the Children's Centre, after which Wesley House became a centre for women in central London that included the National Child Care Campaign's offices alongside the two nurseries and other women's organisations. Records of the London Centre for Women, Newsletter 1 about A New London Centre for Women, Jul. 1985, 5LCW, The Women's Library, LSE.

²⁵. National Childcare Campaign newsletter, Jun. 1981, Grow Your Own archive, BL.

²⁶. Employer's Guide to Workplace Nurseries, 1988, 7HEF/03/03, The Women's Library, LSE.

²⁷. Interview with Sarah Rackham, recorded by Rosa Schling on 30 Mar. 2023, Grow Your Own archive, BL.

was happening and we did. There's this picture in *The Guardian* of all of us sitting in the director's office waiting for an agreement. And we eventually got an agreement, and we had a nursery set up and it was right in the middle of the building, actually, another portacabin. And what was really sad was that some of the children hadn't seen their parents for like three months. And so we had loads of tears because parents were bringing their children in and it was really, really, you appreciated that you were doing something positive. And so the nursery and it went on for a long time and then we had a national campaign through the NUS about childcare and quite a lot. I mean, really quite a lot of nurseries in colleges got set up as a consequence of that.²⁸

In working class areas like Newham in east London, access to free or low-cost childcare was especially needed. 'Newham's first Children's Centre', as it was described to me in interviews recorded in 2017 developed from a playgroup founded in 1967. The founder, Judith Marchant, described how the playgroup was established by a group of mothers, known as the 'Young Wives', who met at the Memorial Baptist church in Plaistow. At the time there was very limited provision for under-fives in the area, but playgroups were rapidly springing up across the country, and the idea took off in Plaistow.²⁹ Judith Marchant, a qualified teacher, was increasingly asked by local women for all-day care for their children while they went to work. In response to this the Children's Centre, which included daycare alongside the playgroup, opened in 1977. By 1978, a second Children's Centre was opened at another location nearby. From 1974, the centre offered an Opportunity Group for disabled children that ran alongside the playgroup. A Family Centre was also then opened in the subsequent years, which provided families with emotional support, free clothes, a toy library, and a food bank.³⁰ This combination of inclusive care, education and family support are key features of the children's centre model, that was later drawn upon by the New Labour government for their Centres of Excellence and Sure Start programmes.

On the other side of London, in North Kensington, two pioneering nursery centres, Maxilla Nursery Centre and Colville Nursery Centre also opened in the late 1970s. The model they developed inspired many childcare activists. Maxilla Nursery Centre was a purpose-built complex constructed under what was the new Westway motorway. It combined a nursery school with full-time childcare, including provision for under-threes and a parent's centre used for drop-in activities, education and training. It provided a free, universal, and high-quality service for any child under-five years who lived within a small geographical area surrounding

²⁸. Interview with Jenny Williams, recorded by Rosa Schling on 12 May 2023, Grow Your Own archive, BI.

²⁹. Davis, *Pre-school Childcare in England*.

³⁰. BI, Holding the Baby, HTB/2/1/21, Timeline: Children's Centre, c.1990.

the centre, termed the catchment area by local authorities.³¹ Funding for the centre, described by ILEA, as ‘the jewel in their crown’, became increasingly difficult to maintain once the New Labour government replaced supply-side funding with demand-side funding given to parents. This was through tax credits and childcare vouchers, which was never financially sufficient to sustain operation. Maxilla Children’s Centre, as it became in 2004, was hard fought for and despite the funding challenges did not fully close until 2015.³²

Community, workplace and university/college nurseries were part of a wider movement that reflected, debated and argued about what the best form of childcare provision for young children as well as their parents/carers. For some of those involved, grassroots solutions such as community and workplace nurseries were seen as an interim measure, only needed until a universal, state funded – but democratic and flexible – system for the care and education of under-fives was achieved. There was much debate about how democratic and flexible it should be, and how much control should be conceded to the state. The grassroots solutions developed to address the lack of childcare described above were vital testing grounds for new forms of collectively organised childcare, and the practical experience gained by running these projects aided participants in clarifying their thinking about what kind of childcare system they wanted to create. Perhaps most importantly, they put into practice ideas about combining the care and education of under-fives, which as Jane Lewis has written, would finally become widely adopted as part of the first national strategy for childcare brought in by the Labour government in 1998.³³ The early nursery centres and children’s centres provided a model for activists at the time, showing what could be achieved if sufficient funding was available.

Fig 3: The Do-It-Yourself Nursery by the London Nursery Campaign, front cover. Booklet held in the Grow Your Own archive, Bishopsgate Institute

In comparison to the flagship nursery centres, the community nursery model could at times be seen as a cheaper option by some of those in government keen to avoid responsibility for a comprehensive, state-funded system. Many of those involved were aware of the tension between organising community or workplace based childcare solutions while simultaneously campaigning for better state-funded provision, as the example of the Children’s Community Centre above reveals. Campaigners continued to debate and

³¹. Maxilla Archive, “The Early Years” <http://maxillaarchive.com/the-early-years/> (accessed 8 Mar. 2024).

³². Maxilla Archive, “Tightening the Screw” <http://maxillaarchive.com/tightening-the-screw/> (accessed 8 Mar. 2024).

³³. Jane Lewis, ‘The Failure to Expand Childcare Provision and and to Develop a Comprehensive Childcare Policy in Britain in the 1960s and 1970s’, *Twentieth Century British History*, 24/2 (2013), 249-74.

consider this issue. This can be seen in this extract included in the London Childcare Network's January 1986 newsletter in a report on the Tottenham Under Fives Centre, a new community nursery initiated by the Tottenham Childcare Campaign. The network wrote:

It has taken a lot of energy, time, and commitment [to start the nursery] and it is sometimes argued that for a campaign to get involved in a particular service provision drains a campaign of the energy needed to maintain campaigning on all levels for under 5s and out of school care, in an area, or a borough. However, it is also important for campaigns to sometimes set an example by trying out new initiatives, and to point a local authority in new directions by showing what can be done. This particular Childcare Campaign has also gained a lot of fresh energy from actually achieving something positive and concrete. Perhaps other Childcare Campaigns could write in with their ideas about their ways to campaign, and how they see their role.

Today the wider, structural changes that would make high-quality childcare and early-years education available to all – such as the system envisaged by the National Child Care Campaign in 1985 of 'comprehensive, flexible, free and democratically controlled childcare facilities funded by the state' – remain unrealised.³⁴ Although she does not discuss the movement for childcare, and to what extent it managed to impact on the decisions of those in power, Jane Lewis has written that by the end of the 1970s, this was inevitable as 'the foundations for the kind of mixed economy of provision and fragmented service that have continued to characterise childcare in Britain were firmly in place'.³⁵ However, despite or perhaps more importantly because of the movement's unfinished nature, the work done in this period to develop and test a vision of the way forward contains much vital relevance to people interested in resisting the neoliberal, fragmented model of childcare in contemporary England. And, as Stoller concludes, more work needs to be done to fully understand the 'highly complex world of left childcare activism that emerged in the 1970s and to map its consequences for the childcare available to British families'.³⁶ This work is urgent both because of its relevance to the present moment and because interviews need to be recorded while the movement remains in living memory. The map and archive Grow Your Own have produced are an attempt to initiate work across London, England, and make the products of this research project more accessible and widely available.

³⁴. Records of the London Centre for Women, Newsletter 1 about A New London Centre for Women, July 1985, 5LCW, The Women's Library, LSE.

³⁵. Lewis, 'The Failure to Expand', 274.

³⁶. Ibid., 59.

