

GEM

A community of public scholars demanding and embodying liberation

Newsletter December 2024

Dear friends,

As we move through this time of the year, **at GEM we are reflecting on those who get to celebrate and those for whom celebrating is far from their minds.** While for some this is **a time of joy, gathering and festivity,** for others it is another **marker in the passage of loss and devastation,** whether collective or individual. And **for so many, it is a possibly discomfiting mixture of the two,** these seemingly conflicting feelings both present, both true and **both equally valid.**

As winter progresses, **our hearts remain steadfast in rage and in hope.** We send **love and solidarity to all those resisting,** from community encampments to community kitchens, from freedom fighters to families fighting to stay together. In particular, to all who are forced to fight to stay alive whether due to murderous regimes and ethnic cleansing, or violent policies inflicted on the most marginalised. **To all for whom these times amplify grief and loss, we see you and send gentle love.** And **to all who celebrate** this time of year, **may you have many reasons for joy.**

With love and solidarity, GEM Collective

* * * * *

Links to find us on social media:

Bluesky: <https://bsky.app/profile/gemcollective.bsky.social>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/gemresearchcollective/>

Twitter: https://twitter.com/gem_collective

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/@gemcollective>

Solidarity for Sudan

[Click this link to watch videos from the event](#) on our YouTube channel

This **September, GEM organised** with a number of groups to hold ***Solidarity for Sudan, hosted by*** and collaborated on with [Dalston Solidarity Cafe](#). The event was a **beautiful collaboration** with [Captain Support](#), [London for Sudan](#), [Madaniya SDG](#), [East African Collective](#) and [Nejma Collective](#). With poetry, art and personal sharings, it was a reminder of the beauty, strength and collective spirit of the people of Sudan, as well as all they have suffered and continue to face.

We raised awareness about the ongoing counter-revolutionary proxy war in Sudan, and funds for two Sudanese causes:

- [Saving AlGeneina's Classrooms Without Borders project](#)
- [Hope Relief and Rehabilitation for Disabilities Support](#)

See our [Solidarity for Sudan resources page](#) on the GEM website for further information on collaborators and other Sudanese groups, more about contributors, and links to readings and other information on Sudan.

This event was **funded by a Synergi Grant award** from NSUN.

“for young people who are all of ours”

Free the Manchester 10

“In **May 2022, 10 black boys were found guilty by association**, the majority for harms they didn’t commit. It’s **an ongoing, racist injustice...**” - [Kids of Colour](#)

Last week, **communities** packed out the Royal Courts of Appeal to **support the boys**, known as **the Manchester 10**, who appealed the verdicts inflicted on them by a racist “justice” system.

“The state commits to prosecuting young people they perceive as disposable, forgetting that communities who experience or recognise racism and injustice will come out fighting for young people they have never met...for young people who are all of ours, to send a message that we are catching up with and coming for state violence: it will not live on forever.” - Kids of Colour

The appeal outcome is due in January 2025. Find out more and what you can do to support the boys via [Kids of Colour’s statement](#), and their comprehensive [Twitter thread on the case](#).

* * * * *

Trans Kids Deserve Better

Trans children and young people started the **protest network group** [Trans Kids Deserve Better](#) in response to the lack of care and dignity afforded trans kids in the UK, in particular in relation to the denial of gender-affirming care.

“In the UK, we as trans young people don’t have the right to access gender affirming care. We used to spend years on waiting lists for medical support, but now the doors are fully closed to new patients. The **medical support we need is extremely time-sensitive, and many of us die waiting.**” - Trans Kids Deserve Better website.

The group [occupied the space outside the constituency office of UK Health Minister Wes Streeting](#) earlier this month after he banned puberty blockers only for trans children. They have **carried out many direct actions**, and continue to campaign for the rights of trans children and young people. You can find out more about their work and how to support it [on their website](#).

Things that have struck us

Rest is Not Resistance, and That is OK: On Cancer, Grief, & Audre Lorde

A [blog post by Trey Washington](#) - later published as an article in [Scalawag](#) - **exploring grief and challenging the simplified idea that “rest is resistance”**, which by itself lacks the nuance and context within which Audre Lorde made the original statement upon which it is based.

Washington writes about their **personal loss** and the realities for themselves and so many who most **need rest, time, and space to grieve and are unable to afford it** in the capitalist, white supremacist systems within which we exist.

Related explorations of this theme and [Lorde’s A Burst of Light](#) can be found in two further pieces: [There is No Self-Care without Community Care](#) by [Aimaloghi Eromosele](#), and [Reclaiming Audre Lorde’s Radical Self Care](#) by [Kathleen Newman-Bremang](#).

* * * * *

REAL/Paradigms

REAL/Paradigms is **“A students of colour collective with the aim to decolonise Cardiff University.”**

This community of students are **currently building** their collective, and are initially **inviting other students of colour to join them**. Their aims include **sharing their own reality** and lived experiences, demonstrating the presence of colonialism all around us, and **uncovering the inequalities hidden by the university** (and arguably the whole of academia).

[Their website](#) features resources, an opportunity for students to share their stories, and a promise of more to come.

GEM Members' updates

Black Out Here and There online exhibition

“Black Out Here and There focuses on the **experiences and reflections of some Black people in/from Scotland and Wales**, while acknowledging the **connectedness of experiences and histories elsewhere**, such as internationalist solidarities and struggles for freedom around the world...

Work in the exhibition relates to dreaming, storytelling, otherworldliness, intimacy, family, love, remembering, holding, releasing, and more.”

GEM's [Francesca Sobande](#) is one of the featured artists, as well as being part of the team that **dreamt up and brought *Black Out Here* to life**.

* * * * *

Retreating to myself

[Oluwatosin Daniju](#), GEM member and GEM's Legacy and Project Manager, will be taking **three months off at the beginning of 2025**, a time for much-needed **rest, reflection and self-discovery fully supported by GEM**.

“The past 6 years have been amazing in many ways, but also so full of loss, challenge and difficult changes. I'm hoping this time off will be **a chance to recalibrate and put systems in place that will support my [neuroexpansive](#) self to move through the world a little easier** once I return. I'm super **grateful** to everyone that is **GEM for the support**, both practical and moral, that is **allowing me to take this time off without worry** - it really feels like an active example of GEM's aim to **[“make our lives more livable!”](#)**.”

Insha'Allah, Oluwatosin will return after Eid-ul Fitr.