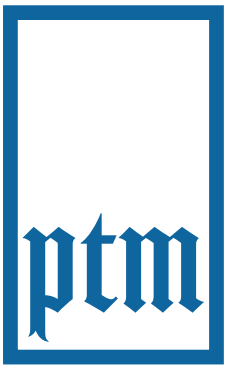
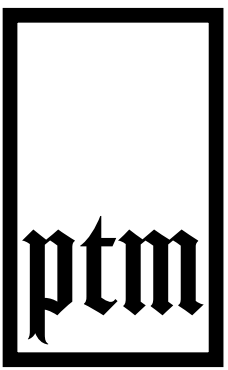


To Free the Ends

Nabil Al-Kinani



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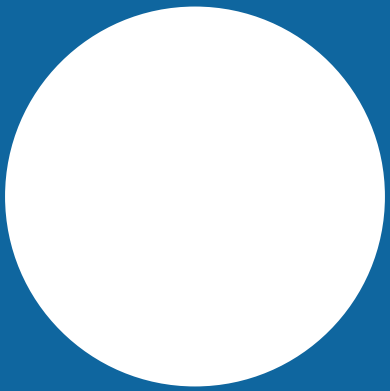


We recommend reading *Privatise the Mandem* (2021) alongside this book, as it covers essential material that supports this work.

Contents

Glossary

Privatisation

the transfer from public or government control and/or ownership to private ownership.

The Mandem

originates from Caribbean English, combining the words 'man' and 'them', and has been adopted in Multicultural London English. It refers to a diverse group of individuals, predominantly but not exclusively comprising racialised and/or working-class individuals.

Racialised People

a group of people classified as belonging to a particular categorised 'race' by others - for example, 'Black', 'Brown' etc. (n.b. Racialisation refers to the process by which societies construct and assign racial identities to individuals or groups based on perceived physical and cultural characteristics.)

The Ends / The Hood / The Block

refers to an area, neighbourhood, city, or space, often encompassing social housing estates that are owned by the state or public sector organisations.

Village

refers to a close-knit community; where shared identity, values, relationships, and collective practices create a strong sense of belonging amidst a city's larger environment.

Public Sector

a group of organisations that are usually owned and/or operated by government ("the state").

Private Sector (Developers)

a group of for-profit organisations that are usually owned and/or operated by private entities.

Commodity

a product of value that can be traded, bought, or sold.

Austerity

the conditions a population experiences as a result of reduced public spending, justified by "reducing luxuries" and subjectively non-essential expenditures.

Managed Decline

a process where the Ends is allowed to deteriorate in a controlled and gradual manner. This often occurs due to a lack of investment in maintenance, services, and infrastructure over time, resulting in poor living conditions, a decline in population, and increasing vacancy rates. The idea is to reduce an estate's viability or desirability, oftentimes as a prelude to demolition and subsequent gentrification.

Gentrification

the process in which a neighbourhood experiences a change that displaces existing inhabitants (people and businesses) and replaces them with wealthier newcomers.

Colonialism

the practice of taking full or partial control over another territory, occupying it with settlers, and/or exploiting it economically.

Migrant

an individual who moves from one place to another, especially in order to find work, opportunity, or better living conditions.

Capital

the resources and powers, includes economic (i.e. money), cultural, social, and symbolic capital.

Capitalism

an economic and political system in which a nation's trade and industries are controlled by private for-profit organisations, rather than by the public sector.

Lobbying

the practice of frequenting the lobby of a house of legislature to influence its members into supporting a desired policy and/or cause.

Freehold

having absolute control over a piece of land or a piece of property in perpetuity. A freeholder (also referred to as a landlord) owns the freehold of a property and the land beneath it. In other words, free hold to be understood as "free from holdings" of any entity besides the owner.

Property Management Company

an organisation that can own and manage a residential building.

Free Estate

a term used to describe an asset(s) that an individual owns and can control and may pass onto others through their will.

Development

refers to an advancement through progressive stages (i.e. 'improvements'), - specifically in relation to land and property, it refers to a bringing out of latent possibilities.

Estate Regeneration

the process of attempting to improve a housing estate by re-building, investing in infrastructure, and engagement of the community.

The Right to the City

the right to change and reinvent the city after one's desires.

Estate Remixing

the process of carefully adjusting and configuring the physical landscape so as to create an environment that best serves the Mandem.

Free Hood

a term to describe an estate that has been privatised and is in full control by the Mandem.

Utopia

first emerged in the 1516 book 'Utopia', written Sir Thomas More, which describes a utopia as an imaginary world that is in a perceived state of cultural and political perfection.

Hood Futurism

first emerged in 2013 as a subculture of Afro-Futurism. At its simplest, Hood Futurism is a genre that interprets the future of the Ends should it come under the ownership of the Mandem – a form of speculative fiction.

Free the Wandem

Chapter One

This was written for the Mandem. The "*Mandem*" being: the aunties, the uncles, the young bucks, the girls, the guys, the sisters, the akhis, the preachers and the sinners. Anyone and everyone that makes up our inner-city communities. Hear me out for a second...

The most powerful people in Britain are its landowners.

Think of a city as a complex mosaic of different land parcels, comprised of multiple villages, districts, and environments. In this urban mosiac, it is the landowners alone who have the power to change and transform the land they claim in accordance with their heart's desires – their land becomes a physical manifestation of their ambitions, wants, motivations, and values.

Generally, landowners may be classified as either private or public entities, each with their own respective agendas.

In many instances, those who privately own land in our cities view it as a commodity – a product or an asset to trade with, in the interest of financial gain ("profit"). And any changes made to land or property within their claim is generally shaped by those interests.[1,2]

In other instances, some parcels of land in our cities are owned by the state and are supposedly driven by the interests of its citizens rather than by profit. It is on these publicly owned parcels of land where we find the Ends - largely defined as Social Housing Estates, predominantly (but not exclusively) inhabited by the Mandem.

The gentrification of the Ends is one of the most pressing issues our cities face. In broad terms, gentrification is a market-driven process of the class remaking of urban areas. It involves the

'perceived rehabilitation' and transformation of the Ends by for-profit investors and developers, subsequently driving up property values - pushing original residents out of the Ends, and changing the social and cultural character.[3,4]

"There were brothers playing motherfuckin' African drums [here] for 40 years and now they can't do it anymore because the new inhabitants said the drums are loud. My father's a great jazz musician. He bought a house in nineteen-motherfuckin'-sixty-eight, and the motherfuckin' people moved in last year and called the cops on my father. He's not — he doesn't even play electric bass! It's acoustic! We bought the motherfuckin' house in nineteen-sixty-motherfuckin'-eight and now you call the cops? In 2013? Get the fuck outta here."

– Spike Lee, On Gentrification[5] (2013)

Private lobbying of the public sector incentivises the state to exploit the huge reserve of capital value in the estates ("property assets") under their ownership by selling it off at market rates, leading local councils to work alongside private developers - using policies, processes, and practices that displace the Mandem from their homes, in the name of regeneration.[6,7]

By transferring publicly owned parcels of land to the private sector, successive governments - regardless of their political persuasions - have allowed the gentrification of the Ends to proceed under the pretence of regenerating "*sink*" estates.[8]

For decades, our homes have been characterised by mainstream media narratives as uninhabitable and antisocial spaces. The term: '*sink estates*' has become almost synonymous with the Ends, creating a narrative that the Ends is a place for the socially deviant and criminal.

To Sink */sɪŋk/*

verb: descend to a lower level.
verb: to fall into a lower state, as of fortune; degenerate.
verb: to decline or deteriorate in quality or worth.

A Sink */sɪŋk/*

noun: a drain.
noun: a sewer.
noun: pit for sewage or waste, as a cesspool.

This callous mischaracterisation and pathologising language can be traced back as far as the 1970s.[7] For instance, in the Labour government's 1999 '*Urban Renaissance*' strategy, aimed at revitalising various British cities, 'sinking' estates were identified

as a pressing issue that needed urgent attention.[9] Similarly, in 2016, former Conservative Prime Minister David Cameron referred to the Ends as 'sink estates' in a newspaper article. He vividly described them as "*concrete slabs thrown down from brutal high-rise towers, with dark alleyways that become havens for criminals and drug dealers.*" He'd pledged to remove them and replace them with housing that is considered safe and attractive for residents.[10]

The *sinking* narratives and deliberate 'managed decline' of the Ends - driven by government mandated austerity measures introduced in the early 2010s - has been a key catalyst for state programmes and public initiatives focused on "estate regeneration." Estate regeneration (or "urban renewal") in this context refers to the spatial and economic restructuring of the Ends through investment in neglected and underfunded areas. In most cities, these regeneration efforts are frequently accompanied by the process of gentrification.[11]

In many cases, the term 'estate regeneration' is widely regarded as a euphemism for gentrification.[3,7,12] Gentrification inflicts widespread and devastating damage, which can be summarised as:[13]

SOCIAL DEGRADATION

As wealthier individuals move into gentrified areas, the Mandem are priced out due to rising rent or property costs. The intricate community network that organically develops over generations are disrupted as people are forced to relocate, often far from their Village – their established network of friends, family, and neighbours. This can lead to the Mandem experiencing increased feelings of isolation and

a loss of communal identity. Migrant individuals, in particular, often lose close proximity to others who share their cultural heritage, which manifests as a loss of access to culturally specific foods, businesses, and social systems essential for their survival and the preservation of their identity.

ECONOMIC EXCLUSION

Gentrification drives up the cost of living, making previously affordable areas unaffordable for lower-income residents. Displacement of the Mandem can mean losing proximity to their place of work, resulting in the need for longer commutes or, in some cases, losing their jobs entirely. The new, wealthier residents can often support higher rents and property prices, which leads to an economic barrier for those who originally lived there. Small, local businesses may also be driven out by rent hikes or replaced by higher-end establishments catering to a more affluent clientele, further marginalising the original residents economically.

CULTURAL CHANGES

Demolition of the Ends often erases the cultural heritage and character of the area, replacing it with an aesthetic that generally appeals to wealthier newcomers. The unique beauty and charm of the Ends are instead replaced by chain stores and luxury apartments, that cater to the incoming replacement population. This shift in culture and identity often alienates remaining residents, as they no longer recognise the place they once called home – creating a sense of cultural erasure.

NEGATIVE HEALTH IMPACTS

The mental and physical health consequences of gentrification are significant. The stress and anxiety associated with displacement, financial insecurity, and the breakdown of social networks can lead to increased rates of poor health among those that are affected. The sense of uncertainty that accompanies the threat of losing one's home and/or community is a severe psychological burden. Furthermore, the loss of one's village that once provided emotional and social support can leave individuals without a critical safety net, increasing their vulnerability.

EDUCATIONAL ISSUES

Displacement often means that children have to leave their schools and adjust to new environments, which can disrupt their academic progress and social development. This instability can negatively affect a child's academic performance and overall well-being. Moreover, schools that serve gentrifying neighbourhoods may experience shifts in their demographics, with an influx of students depleting resources available and potentially leading to the marginalisation of students from lower-income backgrounds. As a result, the gap in educational opportunities and outcomes between wealthier and poorer students may widen, due to their lack of ability to supplement their education.

History has repeatedly shown that both public and private sector landowners consistently fail to address the needs of the Mandem and the Ends. Decisions about urban change made by

these landowners rarely reflect the interests of our communities. It often feels as if they are committed to a cycle of disinvestment, demolition and privatisation - where 'estate regeneration' programmes lead to the Mandem being forced out of the Ends, to live in far-away suburbs that diminish their social networks and sense of belonging.

This broken dynamic must end. The Mandem can no longer entrust the responsibility of the Ends to those who neither prioritise our well-being nor act in ways that protect our needs.

"[...] through the exercise of private property rights, [...] collectively buy a building [a space can] be used for some progressive purpose. [...] they can establish a commune or a soviet within some protected space."

– **David Harvey, Rebel Cities[14] (2013)**

So, how can we protect and preserve the Ends?

The answer: **We privatise the Mandem.**

Privatisation */prʌɪvətʌɪˈzeɪʃ(ə)n/*

noun: the transfer from public or government control and/or ownership to private ownership.

To *Privatise the Mandem* is to inherit control of the land where our village stands, to become independent of the multiple agendas that impact our lives. Privatisation allows us to become landowners, thereby allowing us to become some of the most powerful people in Britain. It has the ability to turn the Ends into protected havens within our cities, and allows us to operate and exist on our own terms. When privatising, we're granted sovereignty and agency. It redistributes power into our communities and permits us to set our own economic agenda - an agenda that's informed by our own social needs. It is an act of self-love and self-defence, and provides us with the means to insulate the Ends from market trends and political negligence.

In short: **we are able to free the Mandem.**

By exercising private property rights (i.e. buying the Block through Collective Enfranchisement[†]), the Mandem will not only be able to block and prevent gentrification efforts (since the state cannot sell land which is no longer theirs, and land which is not for sale cannot be bought by the private sector), but allows the Mandem to shape the Ends in accordance with our heart's desires (i.e. the Right to the City).

If we understand that the Ends across our cities are made up of diverse tribes and communities, each distinct in their own way with unique needs, then each tribe can address those needs in their own manner — by shaping the Hood using their own imagination and creativity.

[†] Refer to *Privatise the Mandem* (2021)

Privatising the Mandem affords us the freedom to be self-determining, the freedom to be self-sufficient, the freedom to be autonomous and sovereign, the freedom to restructure our environments, the freedom to imagine and dream, and most importantly, the freedom to make mistakes and to learn from them.

"Land is the basis of all independence. Land is the basis of freedom, justice, and equality."

– Malcolm X, "Message to the Grassroots" (1963)

Castles

Chapter Two

There's a beauty that exists in the Ends that's rarely communicated. Between the caged sports courts, chicken shops, concrete balconies, bookies, laundrettes, off-licenses and narrow alleyways, exists a people that are beautiful. This beauty is attributed almost exclusively to the Mandem — the fusion of all our different identities and cultures. The kinship one experiences in the Hood is unparalleled anywhere else. There exists a love and compassion that is derived from a shared geography and specific lived experiences. In spite of the hardships and challenges faced in the Ends, it is this very love that radiates and defines the Hood as beautiful.

Our beauty has been brought into question for decades - as the political classes and media outlets have continuously and unfairly portrayed the Mandem as gun-toting young people, with long-suffering mothers, absent of responsibilities. Traits that are often unfairly exhibited as typical for those in poverty. Many of these negative narratives come from entities and people who have not, and do not, exist or manoeuvre in Ends. Their narratives are often accepted as objective fact, despite rarely being based on verified information. Frequently, these negative accounts lean toward sensationalism, driven by the pursuit of readership or political agendas.

The vilification of the Mandem is shaped not only by negative attitudes towards race and racialised communities but also by the historical demonisation of the 'working classes.'

The danger of these false vilifications is that when they are misinterpreted, distorted, or deliberately falsified - they can have catastrophic consequences for the Mandem. Not only are negative depictions and stereotypes absorbed and internalised, but the constant exposure to these vilifications can also cause many of us to lose sight of our own beauty, eventually adopting

the caricatured versions imposed upon us. This constant barrage leads to fatigue and, ultimately, submission to the negative portrayals.[15]

This constant vilification of the Mandem is a major contributor to the 'sinking' narrative imposed onto the Ends, and forms the bedrock of the argument for Estate Regeneration.

This can no longer run.

To suggest that the Ends requires '*regeneration*' implies that there is a need for *generation* or *genesis* – that 'life' must be introduced to it via urban renewal. Yet, the reality is that the Ends already serves as the epicentre of cultural, economic, and creative activity in modern Britain. The Ends has given rise to countless accomplished and successful artists, athletes, cultural icons, fashion trends, politicians, and more.

It is the Mandem who are the architects of creativity and innovation that is so revered by the global community – a creativity and innovation that originates from the Ends. To assume that our creativity is supposedly borne from a place of *death*, a place that is absent of *life*, is simply false. In reality the Ends is full of life. It's full of love. It's full of compassion. It is from this richness that our creativity and innovation is born.

Despite our beauty, the characterisation of the Ends as an '*unsightly and outdated*' urban environment has been popular among built environment professionals, including politicians, architects, and urban planners. Many of whom believe that the Ends is poorly constructed and needs to be made *beautiful*. This perceived ugliness of the Ends is a significant catalyst for the estate regeneration efforts observed today – in many cases the regeneration process follows this pattern...

Implicit Bias 1

Many individuals, including those in the ruling and political classes in Britain, harbour implicit biases against people from different racial backgrounds and lower income levels. These classes also wield substantial power over urban transformation, either through private ownership or high-ranking positions in the public sector.[16,17]

Over-Policing 2

In Britain, implicit biases among the ruling and political classes result in over-policing, with Black and Minority Ethnic communities facing disproportionately more police attention than their White counterparts, as outlined in the Macpherson Report.[18,19] This over-policing primarily occurs in Ends occupied by Black and Minority Ethnic communities.[20]

Disproportional Crime Data 3

Crime statistics are published in public databases that log and record criminal activity by geographical location. The amount of crime data recorded in a specific area is directly proportional to the level of policing activity in that area.

Vilification 4

Profiling urban spaces based on crime data can create false narratives. These narratives, which associate high crime levels with a particular urban area and its inhabitants, can lead to the area being flagged for regeneration with the goal of reducing crime. However, the relationship between urban regeneration and crime reduction is tenuous and lacks substantial evidence.[21]

Estate Regeneration 5

Scores of families are displaced, and communities are torn apart – frequently followed by gentrification.

One could argue that the vilification of the Ends serves as a convenient narrative to justify regeneration and gentrification efforts that prioritises profit, at the expense of the Mandem. The systemic issues driving the stigmatisation and challenges faced in Ends are often overlooked, allowing landowners to present 'regeneration' as a necessity rather than a choice. Rather than addressing the root causes of social and economic inequalities in Ends, landowners opt for superficial solutions that prioritise (supposedly) aesthetic improvements and property value increases over the well-being of the Mandem.

The focus on the *ugliness* of the Ends diverts attention from the underlying issues of structural inequality and racial discrimination that contribute to the challenges faced by the Mandem.

A common argument for estate regeneration is that the Ends have reached the "*end of their building lifecycle*", and that these Blocks were "*originally designed as temporary structures*". However, such claims are often speculative, sensationalist, and lack substantial supporting evidence.[22] While it is true that most urban structures have temporary lifespans, their longevity can be extended through investment, careful maintenance, and refurbishment.[23] This is evidenced by the extensive literature dedicated solely to maintaining and renovating aging Victorian, Georgian, and Edwardian buildings — structures far older than the post-war housing that typically makes up the Hood.[24,25]

Our cities are shaped by the pursuit of beauty - whatever is deemed *beautiful* is often valued, preserved, and conserved. Whatever is considered ugly is often redeveloped, renewed, and regenerated into something perceived as having greater aesthetic value. However, the reality is that perceptions of '*beauty*' in urban spaces are ultimately subjective (meaning influenced or based on personal feelings, taste, or opinion).

This subjectivity of urban beauty is illustrated by the differing fates of two Blocks — the Park Hill estate in Sheffield (built between 1957 and 1962), and the Chalkhill estate in London (built between 1966 and 1970).

Both estates have identical Brutalist architectural expressions, and feature elevated walkways connecting multiple Blocks, often referred to as '*streets in the sky*.' The Chalkhill estate's design was based on that of Park Hill, and both estates were built using Bison concrete systems, resulting in almost identical buildings.[26,27]

In 2004, Sheffield Council transferred ownership of the Park Hill estate to private developers, Urban Splash, who recognised its value and chose to refurbish and retain its Brutalist features. Urban Splash's co-founder, Tom Bloxham, described the estate as "*[...] (dominating) the Sheffield skyline like a castle on a hill and it's been a privilege – if quite a challenging one – to be able to work with this Brutalist masterpiece and bring it back to life*".[28,29]

In contrast, the Chalkhill estate in London was viewed as haunting, blighted, and in dire need of regeneration.[30] In 1994, the Metropolitan Housing Trust demolished 1,900 houses and flats across the estate as part of the regeneration programme, following the transfer of ownership from the state.[31,32]

The contrasting fates of these two estates were heavily influenced by their landowners' perception of what looks *beautiful*. Each landowner's pursuit of beauty led to very different outcomes for the two estates.

Park Hill Estate, Sheffield




Refurbished, retrofitted, and, preserved.

Chalkhill Estate, London




Demolished and reconstructed.


The pursuit of beauty has been a major topic in British politics for generations, shaping the country's cityscapes according to the views of those in power throughout time. The concept of beauty has been debated since the earliest days of human civilisation, and in some cases, the pursuit of it can be destructive. For example, in November 2018, the British government set up the 'Building Better, Building Beautiful' Commission, a group of experts focused on promoting 'beauty' in the UK's built environment – where Roger Scruton, co-chair of the commission, famously said during a public debate on 24th January 2019:

"If it hadn't been so ugly to begin with, the whole problem would never have happened."

He was referring to the Grenfell Tower fire that occurred on the 14th of June 2017.

Accounts and documents collected from the '2019 Grenfell Inquiry' highlighted that the cladding responsible for the spread of the fire was a low-cost method of improving the appearance of the tower and to insulate the building.

Planning documents for the façade works highlighted that: "*due to its height, the tower is visible from the adjacent Avondale Conservation Area to the south and the Ladbroke Conservation Area to the east*" and that "*changes to the existing tower will improve its appearance especially when viewed from the surrounding area*".

Prioritising the tower's appearance for nearby residents over the safety of Grenfell's residents resulted in a decision to install

highly flammable cladding to its exterior, even at the cost of safety. The landowners of Grenfell Tower prioritised making the building appear more beautiful, over ensuring the safety and well-being of its residents.

In the case of Grenfell, the pursuit of beauty had tragic consequences. Grenfell Tower was labelled an eyesore, prompting efforts to enhance its appearance. However, in the pursuit of beauty, over 72 lives were lost.

Beauty and its perception are fundamentally influenced by an individual's tastes and values. In his work, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (1979), French anthropologist and sociologist, Pierre Bourdieu argues that an individual's tastes and values are shaped by their social origins. These origins involve factors such as education, race, upbringing, heritage, lineage, and one's position within society's social hierarchy.

Bourdieu explains that an individual's perception of what is 'beautiful' is primarily shaped by their '*habitus*,' which he defines as "a subjective but not individual system of internalised structures, schemas of perception, conception, and action common to all members of the same group or class."

In other words, our habitus is a set of deeply ingrained beliefs and habits that are shared by people from the same social group. These beliefs and habits are not something we consciously think about; instead, we pick them up naturally through our experiences and upbringing.[33]

When people operate within an environment that shapes their habitus, especially among others who share a similar habitus, they often become less aware of it. Bourdieu uses the analogy of a '*fish in water*' to explain this, contrasting it with the discomfort of

being a '*fish out of water*' when outside one's habitus. The more ingrained our habitus is, the more we accept it as the absolute truth. As a result, anything outside our own habitus is often seen as wrong, illegitimate, or lacking in beauty.[34]

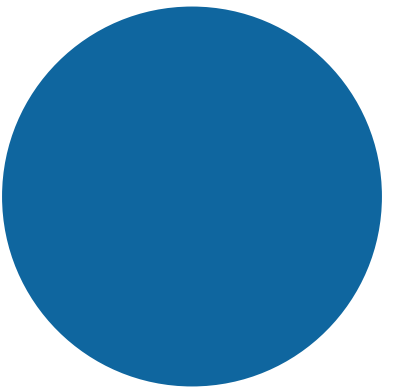
So, it begs the question: who decides what is considered beautiful? Whose habitus shapes perceptions of beauty within the city?

The Ends have often been labelled as ugly — a judgment rooted in the habitus of those who neither value us nor recognise our beauty. This judgement is shaped by people who do not have our best interests at heart and create false narratives about the Mandem.

It's time we redefine our narratives. We need to create a new story, one shaped by our own experiences, not by the biases of others. A narrative grounded in truth, not prejudice. We must affirm this truth:

The Ends are modern-day castles. And these castles are inhabited by Kings and Queens. And the Ends, along with its inhabitants, are nothing short of beautiful.

That is the truth.



Guns & Butter

Chapter Three

Once the Mandem take control of their land and privatise the ownership of their Ends, their Hood becomes protected under private property rights. This means that the state cannot interfere with the peaceful enjoyment of our property, deprive us of our possessions, or subject our property to external control. Furthermore, these private property rights ensure that there is no obligation to sell our freeholds to outside parties, like for-profit developers.

Essentially, our Hoods become independent and sovereign – they become *Free Hoods*.

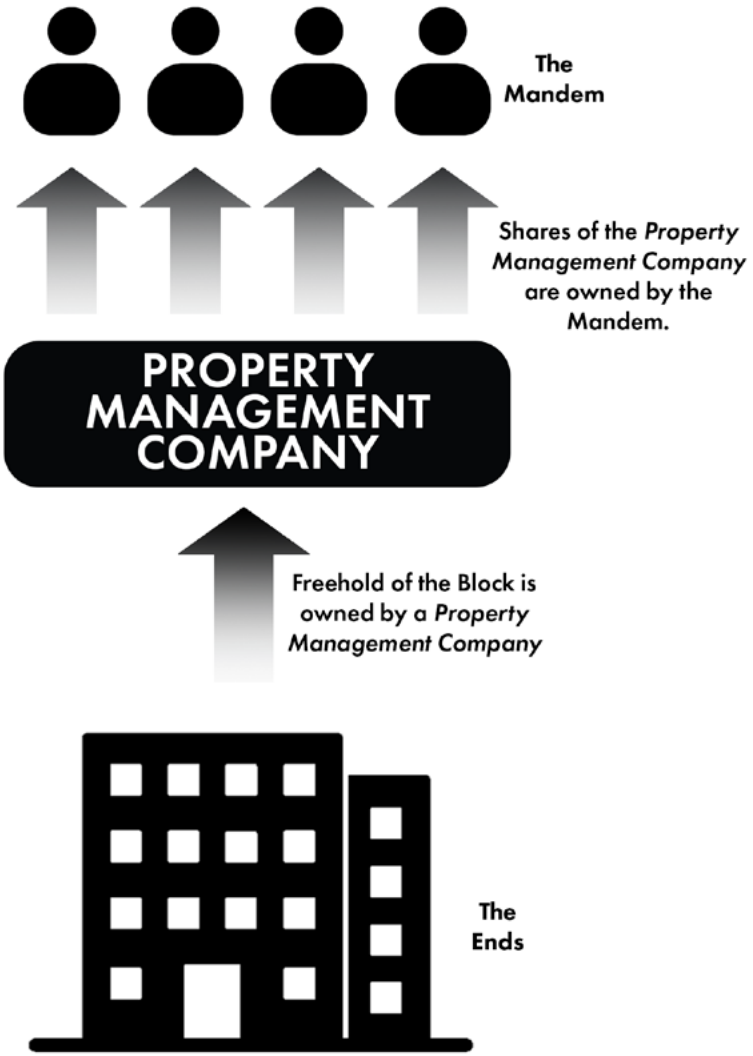
Free Hood */fri: hʊd/*

noun: a term to describe an estate that has been privatised and is in full control by the Mandem.

The term "Free Hood" is fitting, as it echoes the concept of a *Free Estate*, which describes assets that an individual owns, controls, and can pass on to others through a will. When the Mandem acquire the freehold of their Block through Collective Enfranchisement[†], each one of the Mandem's stake in the P*roperty Management Company* that owns the freehold becomes their *Free Estate*. This means their share in the Free Hood can be passed down to future generations, securing the legacy and autonomy of the Ends. See page 34.

[†] Refer to *Privatise the Mandem* (2021)

Ownership Structure of Free Hoods:



One of the first challenges a Free Hood will face as an autonomous, sovereign entity is figuring out the balance between "guns and butter." This comes from a basic economics concept that represents the tough decisions the Mandem will face between investing in defence — "*guns*" — or in production — "*butter.*"

GUNS — *for defending*

"*Guns*" refer to the systems and practices that creates safety and security for the Ends and the Mandem. This could manifest as having security teams patrolling the Hood, or making sure we have a voice in political spaces that can protect our interests.

The main custodians of our "*guns*" are our **fighters** – where their primary objective is to defend their Free Hood.

The rise of Free Hoods across Britain will undoubtedly cause unrest and disruption — across all political, economic, and cultural spheres. Our fighters must be ready to protect the Hood, across all spheres at all times. The act of creating Free Hoods is in itself an act of dissent, and it will make many uncomfortable. We must be ready to defend ourselves, because our freedom will threaten those who benefit from keeping things as they are.

Many will argue against the autonomy of the Mandem. Some will question our right to control our own spaces, while others will attempt to undermine our progress, claiming that our independence threatens the status quo. But make no mistake — our freedom will be seen as a challenge to those who profit from keeping us disempowered. And it's exactly because of this resistance that we must remain vigilant.

> **"Nobody in the world, nobody in history, has ever gotten their freedom by appealing to the moral sense of the people who were oppressing them."**
>
> – **Assata Shakur,** ***Assata: An Autobiography***

Our fighters must protect the Mandem from ill will, from those who would rather see us divided than united in our pursuit of sovereignty. There will be those who aim to infiltrate, mislead, and deceive the Mandem for their own personal gain. These individuals will try to exploit our resources, our vulnerabilities, and even our sense of community. They must be stamped out – our fighters' duty is to safeguard the Ends from exploitation and to ensure that our freedom remains untouchable.

Our fighters must be equipped to not only defend the Hood physically but also shield the Mandem from malicious intent. This includes recognising those who would harm us — whether through bad business deals, predatory policies, or manipulative tactics aimed at destabilising us. We must be wise to their methods and swift in neutralising any threats to the Mandems collective well-being.

Our fighters need to be well-versed in defending the Free Hood on all fronts — politically, economically, and culturally. Politically, they must engage with public institutions and government bodies to ensure that our voices are heard, our rights are protected, and our interests are considered. Economically, they need to guard against external forces that

might try to exploit our resources or undercut our economies. Culturally, they should preserve the integrity of the Hood, making sure that our traditions, values, and way of life are not diluted or erased by actors with their own agendas.

One of the strengths of a Free Hood lies in its ability to protect itself from all forms of attack — whether they come from within or outside our Block. We must remain alert and prepared, because the creation of Free Hoods is not just an act of independence but a direct stand against a system that was never built for us. Our survival and prosperity depend on how well we can defend ourselves, our land, and our people.

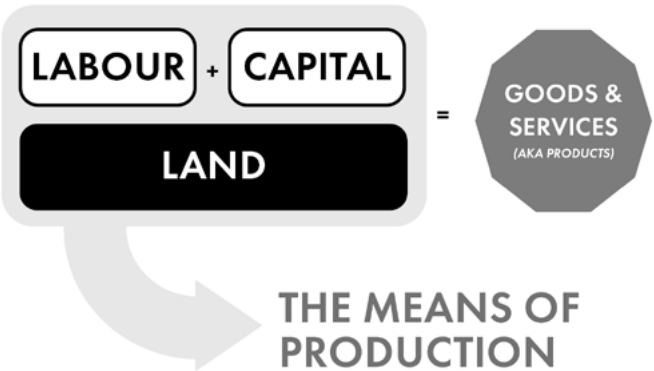
BUTTER — *for building*

"*Butter*" represents the physical infrastructure and services that meet the everyday needs of the Mandem. This includes things like education, healthcare, access to nature, and more. But "*butter*" also refers to the goods and cultural products created by the Mandem that contribute to the local economy, such as music, arts, sports, knowledge, and fashion. These outputs not only sustain the Ends but help build a thriving economy that reflects our cultures and identities.

The custodians of "*butter*" production in Ends are our **farmers** – where their primary objective is to nurture the Mandem and create prosperity. Our farmers are the creators, educators, healthcare workers, and local leaders who ensure that the Mandem have everything needed to thrive. They play a key role in building a sustainable and prosperous future for the Ends.

Modern economic systems rely on what's called the "*means of production*," which consists of the combination of land,

labour, and capital. Together, these elements are fundamental for producing goods and services.[35]



Land, in particular, serves as the foundation upon which economies are built. In this way, whoever owns land holds immense power over what can be produced (i.e. owning the "*means of production*") and how wealth flows through the Ends. This is especially true in metropolitan cities, where land is a key resource for generating productivity and economic growth.

Owning the Ends means owning the "*means of production*". When our farmers harness their creativity (and "labour"), they are not only able to produce for the Free Hood, but also for neighbouring areas, the wider city, and the global community at large. This opens up the opportunity to generate capital that can be reinvested into the Hood, ensuring its ongoing success and maintenance. The creative and innovative potential of the Mandem is limitless, and it's this power that will drive the Ends forward.

As interdisciplinary artist Daniel Oduntan put it:[36]

> **"All of our major cultural moments and shifts have been built on social housing [...] We create it, shift the culture and push it out to the world [...] Ends becomes this Mecca and the way things are done becomes a bible [...]."**

By tapping into this creative energy, new capital brought into our Free Hoods can be used to support and subsidise our "*butter*" infrastructures — such as heating networks, electricity, agriculture, healthcare, transportation, and telecommunications. It also includes cultural and creative spaces that help retain and support our farmers — places like museums, art galleries, theatres, libraries, music venues, rehearsal spaces, cinemas, creative arts centres, studios, production facilities, incubators, and more.

In short, the flow of new capital into the Free Hood will enable us to build and sustain the physical and cultural foundations that serve the Mandem, fostering a thriving, self-sufficient economy that's free from outside exploitation.

Key Functions of Guns & Butter Infrastructures in Free Hoods:

It's important to emphasise that the Mandem are not limited to exclusively assuming the role of a **farmer** or **fighter**. We are not restricted to a single role — if someone primarily acts as a farmer, they can still step into the role of a fighter when the situation calls for it, and vice versa. At times, an individual may need to assume both roles, or they might choose to focus on just one. What's essential, however, is that each Free Hood holds both farmers and fighters.

Striking the right balance between guns and butter is crucial for the survival and prosperity of the Ends. In times of peace, there may be less need for fighters, as the focus shifts toward building, creating, and nurturing the community. During those moments, farmers — those who provide vital services and infrastructure — become the backbone of the Hood. They support the economy, culture, and soul of the Ends.

However, when war or conflict arises, the need for fighters becomes undeniable. In those moments, defending the Hood takes priority, and our fighters step up to protect what the farmers have built. During these times, the fighters safeguard the space where the Mandem live, ensuring that the Hood remains safe from external threats.

Both roles are equally important and rely on one another. Farmers create the foundation upon which the Mandem thrive, and fighters protect that foundation when it's under attack. Without farmers, the Hood cannot grow or sustain itself; without fighters, the Hood cannot defend what has been created.

In short, the Mandem need both farmers and fighters to maintain balance, because the strength of a Free Hood comes from having the ability to both build and defend in equal measure.

Hood Futurism

Chapter Four

By taking control of the Ends through private ownership and remixing them, we not only stop outsiders from imposing their visions of a '*regenerated*' estate — a vision that often leads to dispossession, displacement, and gentrification — but we also open the door to a new future for the Hood.

Privatising the Mandem can be a game-changer, sparking the imagination of new possibilities for the Ends as the power shifts from the state to the Mandem.

It is inevitable that each community, with its unique identity and needs, will come up with its own vision for the future of its Hood. When we ask, '*what could we do if we controlled the Ends?*', the answer would look different depending on the imagination of each collective. This means we'll see a variety of futures unfold across the city, each one a reflection of the community it serves.

These futures are not some distant, utopian fantasy. The word '*utopia*' comes from the Greek words *ou* (meaning "not") and *topos* (meaning "place") — implying a future that doesn't really exist. But when we talk about 'Privatising the Mandem', we're talking about real, achievable futures. These are practical, possible futures, where the freedom to shape the Ends can lead to continuous improvement and positive change.[37,38]

With this freedom, anything is possible. We'll have the freedom to try new things, make mistakes, and learn from them. We will undoubtedly fluctuate between good times and bad times. When we get it right, we can build on those successes. And when we make mistakes, we'll learn from them, adjust, and keep moving forward. It's a process of growth — some changes we introduce will be good, sometimes not — but overall, we'll be moving towards something better than what came before. Over time, with this freedom, we'll develop a deeper understanding

of ourselves and what it means to become better; not just for ourselves, but for wider society.

Mistakes will happen, and when they do, charge it to the game, learn from them, and move on. Progress will also happen, and when it does, we'll celebrate it, share it, and keep building.

It's important to remember that as we improve and evolve the Ends, we might have to let go of some old beauties and comforts, and will undeniably face new problems — but this is the cost of freedom.[38] But the freedom to be self-determining is worth that cost.

To ensure our Hoods thrive and succeed, the Mandem must have a clear vision for their Hood, and make conscious decisions about who they are, what they want their Ends to achieve, and how their Block serves them, the wider city, the country, and the world. Our success can only be realised if we have a clear vision, guided by strong and inspiring direction. Without it, the Ends will remain vulnerable to those who seek our downfall.

"If we don't handle our independence well, colonisers will return in the form of investors."

– **Simon Mwansa Kapwepwe, Zambian politician, and contributor to Zambia's liberation from colonial rule**

To support in achieving this, we need to create memories for our future selves — reminders of the world we wish to bring into being. These dreams and aspirations form the foundation of **Hood Futurism**.

Hood Futurism first emerged in 2013 on Tumblr through an account called 'YungFuturist'. It is a visual style that fuses the vibrant energy of contemporary Black art, performance, and culture with the imaginative aesthetics of science fiction and futuristic elements. Hood Futurism has carved out its own identity as a subculture within the larger realm of Afrofuturism.[‡]

In the context of land and space, Hood Futurism describes a vision of the future shaped by the lived experiences and perspectives of those in the Ends. It focuses on how design, investment, technology, and innovation can be used to improve the lives of the Mandem, addressing both challenges and opportunities faced by the community.

At its core, Hood Futurism is a genre that imagines the future of the Ends when the Mandem take ownership.

Hood Futurism can be expressed through countless mediums — music, film, photography, painting, animation, literature, theatre, etc. It also extends to architectural renderings, estate management strategies, planning minutes, contracts, etc. Though it is a form of speculative fiction, Hood Futurism does not stray far from reality, unlike other forms of speculative fiction or alternate histories. Instead, it is grounded in the present history of the Ends and envisions a possible future shaped by the Mandem following privatisation.

Hood Futurists are individuals who use their skills, creativity, and discipline in new and imaginative ways in order to serve the future of the Mandem and the Ends.

[‡] Tumblr accessed 15th April 2024 [hoodfuturism.tumblr.com]

It is imperative that Hood Futurists abide by the following code:

WHO A HOOD FUTURIST MUST BE:

A servant to the Mandem.
You ain't benevolent, and ain't doing nobody no favours. You're a servant, nothing more.

An individual who loves all the Mandem.
Yes, all of them. The 'bless' ones and the 'not-so-bless' ones.

Someone who listens attentively to the Mandem.
You don't always know best. Listen to what your people have to say. They have the answers.

An individual who wants to protect the Mandem from badness.
You have to cast out badness - on a physical, spiritual, emotional, intellectual, and social level.

Someone who's committed to delivering changes that are in the interest of the Mandem.
The only change that is welcome is change that benefits the Mandem.

Someone who's open to collaborating with others and welcomes new thought.
Allow the solitary ting. The link ups have to run regularly.

Someone who possesses the audacity to try new things.
Stay audacious. Stay dangerous.

Someone who recognises the power, beauty, and authority of the Mandem.
We don't need no external validation. We trust in us.

An individual who is bound by their word.
No lying. No euphemisms. No dishonesty.

Someone who understands the Mandem's pasts.
You have to know where you come from, to know where you're going.

Someone who recognises the various personalities and identities that make up their hood.
The Mandem are not a homogenous monolith. Have you considered everyone?

An individual who moves with grace and forgiveness.
Kindness, consideration, and compassion is the name of the game.

WHO A HOOD FUTURIST CAN'T BE:

An individual who does not honour women, men, and everybody in their Hood.
Sort out your issues – because you cannot serve those you do not honour.

Someone who is willing to offset the responsibility of their Hood onto another.
Palming off your duties to someone else? Dead. You don't handle business.

Someone who acts alone and cannot be held to account by the Mandem.
Can the Mandem check you? Do they know who you are?

Someone who expects to be loved in exchange for their love.
This ain't transactional. Don't be a beg.

Someone who seeks to make economic profit from the ends.
Exploitation ain't it.

Someone who's unforgiving and resentful.
Heal yourself before you try heal the hood, because hurt people hurt people.

Self-interested.
It is not about you.

An individual who seeks retribution and revenge for historical pains.
You can't allow others to inherit your beef. You have to take yours with you to the grave.

An individual who does not place the YGs on a pedestal.
The village has to embrace the next gen. Non-negotiable.

Believes that the mandem are a homogenous monolith.
There's more to the Hood than meets the eye. Chat to your neighbours more

Someone who speaks the business of their hood unnecessarily.
Don't be loose lipped. Don't be a chatty patty. And obviously, no snitching.

Someone who is complacent.
Never get gassed. There's always work to do.

Someone who believes they are incapable of making mistakes.
Humble yourself. Ediat.

Believes in the superiority of a given race, gender, and/or class.
Kmt.


WHAT A HOOD FUTURIST VALUES:
Love
Integrity
Honour
Respect
Loyalty
Dignity
Humility
Prosperity
Autonomy
Life

Following the Hood Futurist Code is a commitment to uplifting the Mandem, fostering love, integrity, and loyalty - while actively working towards creating a prosperous future driven by respect and self-determination.

Ultimately, Hood Futurism is about reimagining the Blocks we live in through the eyes of the Mandem — not as passive inhabitants, but as active architects of our own future.

Remixing

Chapter Five

Ends

Landowners hold a unique power: they can physically transform the land they own, turning it into a reflection of their values and ambitions. This ability gives them significant influence over the world around them, as the land becomes a way to express both individual and collective ideals. Only landowners hold what's known as the '*Right to the City*,' (the right to change and reinvent the city after one's desires) meaning they have the authority to shape their surroundings and, in doing so, directly impact the future of cities across the world.

In other words, it is our landowners who decide what the city looks like.

And it is these landowners who have left the Ends blighted with no maintenance and care.

According to writer Adrienne Maree Brown, the world we live in is shaped by someone's imagination — people build the world around them based on their vision of it. However, the values driving this imagined reality aren't absolute truths.[39] Historically, these imagined values have rejected the worth of the Mandem, labelled the Ends as ugly, and turned land into a commodity to be bought and sold to the highest bidder. All of which when combined, leads to the displacement of the Mandem, and gentrification of the Ends.

We currently live under the influence of White patriarchy, a system built on capitalist and supremacist values – a system that dates back to the 16th Century.[40] This system systematically marginalises and oppresses the Mandem, not only by restricting access to resources and opportunities, but also through urban renewal projects that further displace and isolate our communities.[41]

The Ends and the Mandem are trapped within a capitalist system that values profit above all else. In capitalism, what doesn't make money or become a business is often dismissed. Morality, ethics, and fairness can be overlooked, while greed and individualism are prioritised. Silence and obedience can be bought.

Many cities across the globe are being shaped by for-profit developers who are limited by capitalist values, stifling the creation of equitable cities. Urban change, driven by speculation, maintains the status quo and ignores the needs of the Mandem, perpetuating social inequalities.[3,42]

"The place in which I'll fit will not exist until I make it."

– **James Baldwin, from a letter to Sol Stein (1957)**

But if the Mandem followed the tenets of 'Privatise the Mandem' and gained the means to transform the Ends, a new vision for the city could emerge — one built on the collective imagination of the Mandem, rather than that of outsiders. Imagining '*what might the Ends be like*' through the eyes of the Mandem opens the door to many possible futures. By claiming ownership of the Ends, and creating Free Hoods, the Mandem could envision futures free from oppression — by dismantling violent systems and building structures focused on prosperity, integrity, and healing.

When the Mandem become landowners, we gain the power to imagine, create, and shape the Ends according to our imaginations. And rightfully so, because the ability to imagine what the Ends could be like should belong to us, the inhabitants.

And although, we must avoid idealising or romanticising the Ends, as that would ignore the real challenges we face – we simply cannot depend on solutions for the Ends from outsiders who are disconnected from our experiences, and who bring cultural biases, conflicting values, and preconceived notions about us. Many of whom imagine the Ends without the Mandem. The Mandem must lead the way in shaping these solutions, as no one is better positioned to address the problems we face than the Mandem themselves.

While others have used their power to "*regenerate*" the Ends, we may use our own power to meet our needs and tap into our creativity to transform the Ends into something new. After all, we are no strangers to creativity — it's widely acknowledged that the Ends is the birthplace of British culture and creativity in all its forms.[43–45]

Mixtape culture, for example, is a cornerstone of British creative and cultural production — born in the Ends and driven by British Black culture.[44,46] Musical genres like grime, trap, road rap, garage, and others have provided a vital outlet for the Mandem in Ends, offering a lifeline to those often excluded from economic and social opportunities.

It's common for these musical genres to **remix** popular and chart-topping songs, creating new musical renditions. Through this creative process, the Mandem craft their own versions of mainstream tracks — often without the benefit of the significant investment, top-tier A&R expertise, and professional production that typically back the originals. Remixing provides a vital creative outlet for the Mandem, who often lack access to such resources.[47] In some cases, a single song can inspire numerous remixes — each unique and reflecting the specific Hood's aesthetic and shared vocabulary.

While remixing can sometimes extend the continuity of the original work, in most remixed music emerging from Ends, there's a deliberate break in continuity. The original track is often mined or stripped for components to create something entirely new. In the end, the remix distances itself from its predecessor, placing more emphasis on the creativity of the remixer rather than the original piece.[48]

When it comes to transforming and reshaping the Ends, an opportunity emerges for the Mandem to apply the same logic and principles to land as we do to music — where, like remixing, we can create our own version(s) of the original.

Through privatisation, the Mandem can apply the concept of "*remixing*" to land (i.e., remixing Ends), moving away from terms like "*estate regeneration*" and rejecting the notion that the Ends is a place without life.

By remixing the Ends, we can break the continuity of how the Ends are currently experienced, reimagining the present-day Hood to create a new one. This remixed Hood distances itself from its predecessor — a space shaped by the imagination of former landowners — and instead highlights our vision of the Ends, rather than the original.

By remixing the Ends, we can adjust and reconfigure urban elements to create an environment that better serves the Mandem. Our approach must prioritise minimal new construction, favour the refurbishment of existing structures over demolition, and focus on strategic interventions to maximise improvements. We may be able to create places for amenities that promote our talents and skills, whilst supporting local jobs and creating a local economy that serves our economic agendas – informed by our needs. This may entail focusing on creating infrastructures for talents

related (but not limited) to food, fashion, sports, and music. As the Mandem remix the Ends, they are able to craft their own vision of how the land under their ownership looks and functions.

> "[We] need a spot where we can kick it, a spot where we belong, that's just for us, [...] where we can drink liquor, and no one bickers over trick shit, a spot where we can smoke in peace, **and even though we G's, we still visualise places, that we can roll in peace.**"
>
> – Tupac Amaru Shakur on his posthumously released 2002 song "*Thugz Mansion*"

There are three key rules that must be followed for estate remixing to be successful:

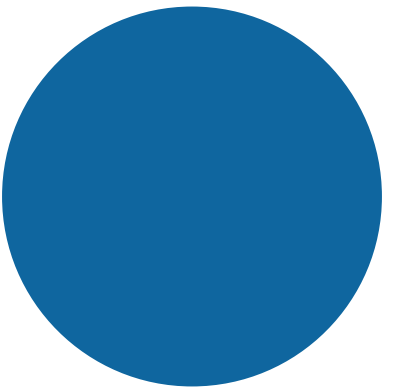
1. Act in the interest of the Mandem as a collective.
2. Support the creation of an environment that reflects the Mandem and their values.
3. Unlearn societal norms and conventions to foster new norms and practices that better suit the Mandem.

Remixing estates is guided by the aforementioned principles, but the outcomes will not be uniform. Each Hood will interpret estate remixing in its own way, shaping it around the unique values and identities of its community. By prioritising local knowledge and lived experiences over a top-down, "cookie-cutter" approach, this process will create a dynamic city — a city reminiscent of a complex urban mosaic that recognises and celebrates the rich diversity of the Mandem.

In addition to the core remixing rules, estate remixing can be further guided by the following principles. While these are not strict mandates (except for those marked with an asterisk, which are mandatory), they serve as provocations for consideration:

- **Renovation and refurbishment of buildings should take precedence over demolition.***
- **Displacement of the Mandem is strictly prohibited.***
- **Create infrastructures and economies that serve the Mandem, both in new and current ways.**
- **Celebrate the lineage and pay homage to the Mandem.**
- **Protect and ensure the safety of the Mandem.**
- **Safeguard the authority and sovereignty of the Mandem over the Ends.**
- **Strengthen relationships between nature and the Mandem.**
- **Inspire love, joy, and beauty for the Mandem through culture and creativity.**

The potential unlocked by land under our ownership is vast, and the possibility for our cities to reflect our beauty is one of boundless promise. With such promise, we would rather live in the imagination of the Mandem.



Making Ends Meet

Chapter Six

Our world is divided into two major economic regions: the Global North and the Global South. This divide was first introduced by former West German Chancellor, Willy Brandt in his 1980 report, '*North-South: A Programme for Survival*', often called the 'Brandt Report.' The report highlights the 'Brandt Line,' which clearly shows the stark economic differences between these two regions.

World Map illustrating the Global Divide:

In simple terms, the Global North, which makes up about 1/5th of the world's population, controls roughly 4/5th of the world's wealth. Meanwhile, the Global South, home to the remaining 4/5th of the population, holds only 1/5th of the world's income.[49–51] The distribution of wealth across the North and South is extremely disproportional, and a key feature that connects many countries in the Global South is their shared history of colonialism — as most were once colonies of Northern nations.

These colonial pasts continue to affect these nations today, as many still struggle with the long-lasting impacts of resource theft and unfair economic trade carried out by their former colonisers. Many of the economic challenges faced by the Global South in the 21st Century can often be traced back to these historical injustices.[52–55]

You might think this information has no relevance with freeing the Mandem, but it's more relevant than it seems...

Many of the Mandem are descendants of immigrants, the children of former colonies who came in search of better opportunities and a more prosperous future. We now reside in the multicultural pockets of Britain's major cities, and our presence in the Global North is a direct consequence of the exploitation, extortion, and destruction of our ancestral lands.

The movement of people from the Global South to the North is complex, shaped by both "*push*" and "*pull*" factors. Push factors — such as prejudice, war, and persecution — often stem from decisions made in the Global North and drive people away from their homelands. On the flip side, pull factors, such as economic opportunities, draw people toward cities in the North in search of a better life.[56,57]

Migrants from the Global South often end up in the countries of their former colonisers — not necessarily by choice, but due to pre-existing travel routes, policies, and infrastructures established during the colonial period.[58–60] A key example is the British Nationality Act of 1948, which granted British citizens entry to Commonwealth nations (previously colonies of the British Empire) — this policy was mainly designed to preserve what was left of the British Empire. However, what wasn't anticipated was that racialised Commonwealth citizens would

use it to gain entry into Britain. Over the following decades, many others sought refuge in Britain, fleeing conflicts like wars of independence (e.g., Bangladesh in the 1970s), expulsion (e.g., East African Asians in the 1970s), and failed uprisings (e.g., the 2011 Arab uprisings). Many were invited by Britiain, such as in the 1950s, when the Windrush generation were invited to rebuild the country, providing much-needed labour following the end of World War II.[61]

The Mandem are concentrated in large metropolitan areas because these cities are hubs of economic activity, especially in the Global North. It's in these urban centres that the Mandem seek and find capital. As they settle, they contribute to the rich cultural diversity of these cities, creating a vibrant blend of traditions that shapes the modern multicultural city. The Mandem, whether first-generation immigrants or descendants, inherit this cultural fusion, living and thriving in the Ends. This urban dynamic is not unique to Britain; it can also be observed in cities like Paris, Berlin, and Madrid.[62]

"Whether in England or France, we do not deal with the feds. Whether in London or Paris we do not sit on the fence."

– **Headie One and Koba LaD, in *Link in the Ends* (2022)**

As a result of this potent multiculturalism, the Mandem have become some of the most influential creators of cultural capital in the world — and cultural capital can be exchanged for economic capital. And "capital" goes beyond just economics

— sociologist, Pierre Bourdieu's 1986 theory on *The Forms of Capital* breaks it down into four categories: economic, cultural, social, and symbolic.[63,64]

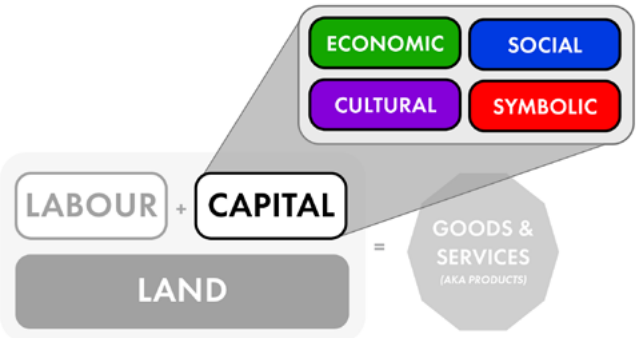
Summarised below...

Economic Capital Represents income, commodified assets, intellectual properties, savings, and pensions	**Social Capital** Represents relationships, friendships, networks, and alliances
Cultural Capital Represents cultural practices (and the skills that arise from them), culturally specific goods, cultural knowledge, and cultural traditions	**Symbolic Capital** Represents accomplishments, prestige, reputation, awards, diplomas, and recognition

These forms of capital are interconnected and can be exchanged — for example, cultural capital can be traded for social capital, and cultural capital can also be exchanged for economic capital. A full table of examples detailing these exchanges can be found in the appendix (page 89).

Modern economic systems are built on what's known as the "*means of production*" — the combination of land, labour, and capital. These elements are fundamental for producing goods and services, which when traded, generate new capital (whether cultural, social, symbolic, or most often, additional economic capital).[65] The key is that control over these *means* determines who benefits from that wealth.

Illustration of the Different Forms of Capital in relation to the *Means of Production*:



Historically, the capital and labour of the Mandem have been exploited by landowners who controlled the *means of production*. But when the Mandem gain ownership of the Ends, creating Free Hoods, they tap into one of the most powerful levers for building economic capital: land ownership. Having control of the land directly connects to owning the *means of production*.

By combining our land (the Ends), labour (our talent), and capital (cultural, social, symbolic, and economic) into productive, culturally significant, and profitable ventures, the Mandem can generate economic capital that benefits not just us, but also for neighbouring areas, the wider city, and the global community at large. This frees us to live on our own terms, free from external interference.

The economic success of our Free Hoods relies on collaboration, and success is unlikely to be achieved in isolation. No organisation, city, or nation has ever developed entirely on its own, and Free Hoods are no different. To thrive, we need to build relationships and partnerships with others - in other words: **to make ends meet, we have to make Ends meet.**

One way we can build these partnerships is through a commonly used agreement structure adopted by numerous cities across the world called: *Sister Cities*.

Sister cities are partnerships between towns, cities, territories, or districts — often across different countries — aimed at fostering friendship, cultural understanding, and economic cooperation. These relationships may be formal, legally binding agreements or symbolic partnerships, but they almost always arise from a desire to exchange resources and support mutual growth.

The benefits of a sister city relationship include the introduction of policies that promote economic exchanges (such as reduced tariffs on imports and exports, preferential agreements to encourage exclusive trade, investment incentives, and joint ventures) along with opportunities for cultural, symbolic, and social exchanges (these might include educational exchange programmes, shared cultural festivals and celebrations, creative exchanges in the forms of artist commissions and exhibits, language learning programmes and diplomatic gestures).

Free Hoods, functioning like cities within larger metropolitan areas, can establish sister city relationships with other Free Hoods that share similar principles and values.

By following the sister city model, Free Hoods across Britain could exchange resources and knowledge, strengthening the

Mandem and supporting mutual success. Additionally, sistering Free Hoods would allow us to formalise and scale up informal systems of cooperation that are already ingrained in our cultures, such as interest-free saving schemes such as the Arab '*silfah*', Jamaican '*pardner*', Latin American '*tanda*', etc. However our sister city connections don't have to be limited to Britian — they can extend across the globe.

New sister city relationships can be formed between Free Hoods in the Global North and cities in the Global South, becoming global infrastructure that helps bridge the economic divide between them. By enabling the exchange of social, cultural, symbolic, and economic capital from the North to the South, wealth can be redistributed with the goal of creating a more equitable global society. This effort can also support economic reparations for the crimes of colonial theft and inequality that persisted into the 21st Century.

The overall process for wealth redistribution is outlined in the appendix, on page 90.

The success of this process depends on the collaborative efforts of different diaspora communities across Free Hoods in the Global North — working towards achieving privatisation and establishing sister city relationships with cities in the Global South.

The overall process of wealth redistribution through sistering Free Hoods can be broken down into four phases...

Phase 1:
ALL MONEY IN, NO MONEY OUT

Free Hoods above the Brandt Line can extract economic capital from Northern economies by trading cultural capital unique to the Ends. This exchange must be unequal in a way that benefits the Free Hoods, but without harming the wider public. The late and great Ermias Joseph Asghedom, also known as Nipsey Hussle, summed up the goal of this phase perfectly: "*all money in, no money out.*" His vision was for his Hood in South Central LA to become economically self-sufficient, emphasising financial responsibility, internal investment, and wealth accumulation. In short, spend less and stack more.

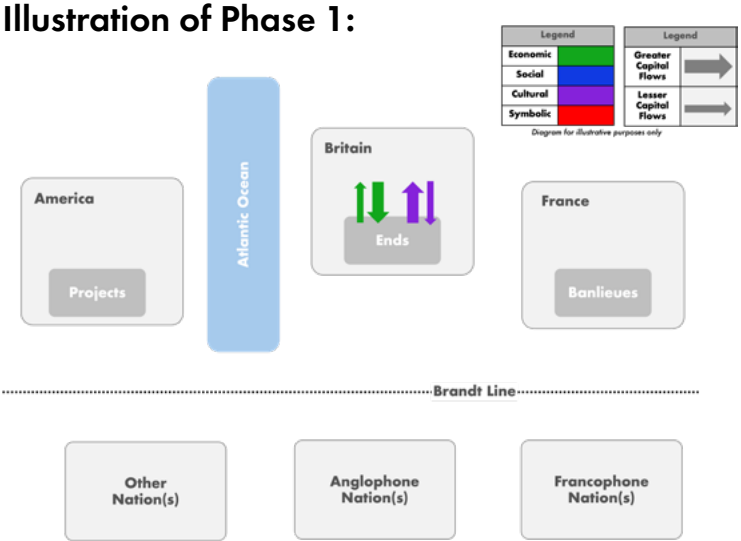
But this isn't just about saving - it's about circulating. Every pound, dollar, or euro spent by the Mandem should remain in our ecosystem, passing through multiple hands before it ever leaves the Ends. This means building infrastructure - from corner shops to creative agencies - that is owned and operated by the Mandem. It means hiring within, buying from each other, and setting up services that meet our own needs. We must rewire how we think about wealth. Too often, success in the Ends is measured by individual escape: the one who "makes it out" and leaves the Block behind. But true wealth isn't individual - it's communal. If your wins don't benefit the Ends, they're just cosmetic. This phase is about rooting wealth, not fleeing with it.

Part of this requires recognising our value. For decades, institutions and corporations have mined our culture without paying us what it's worth. In Phase One, we flip the script: cultural capital becomes economic capital only when we own the means of

production. That means owning intellectual property, controlling distribution, and understanding the value chain. Not just being the talent, but being the publisher, the promoter, the producer, and the plug. Additionally, this phase calls for financial discipline and political clarity. We must not be distracted by the illusions of wealth - designer fits, luxury cars, or status symbols that pour our hard-earned capital back into systems that never cared for us. This isn't to shame individual choices - it's to remind us that every pound spent is a political act. Either it builds our freedom, or it funds someone else's power.

Free Hoods must establish economic models that prioritise cooperation over competition. We can no longer afford to replicate the zero-sum logic of capitalism. Instead, we create closed-loop systems - cooperative businesses, mutual aid networks, savings collectives - where profit is shared and purpose is central.

Illustration of Phase 1:



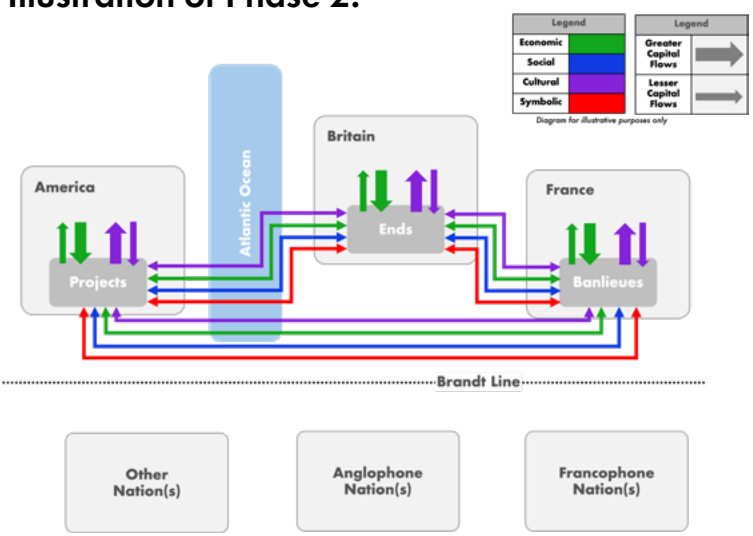
Phase 2:
BREAKING BREAD

As time goes on, Free Hoods can support similar Hoods across the Global North (like the 'Banlieues' in France or the 'Projects' in the United States) in becoming privatised and forming their own Free Hoods. These Free Hoods can further the mission of extracting economic capital in their own respective Northern economies. Forming sister city relationships between these Free Hoods opens up new opportunities for capital exchange, boosting the extraction of economic capital from Global North economies. This ongoing extraction, combined with the exchange of various forms of capital facilitated by these partnerships, allows for cross-subsidisation among Free Hoods - further enabling the continuous production of goods and services ('products'), driving further economic growth and economic extraction.

The sistering of Free Hoods and the consistent exchange of social capital between them help unify our voices, amplifying our influence on political agendas. For example, multiple Free Hoods in the United Kingdom may simultaneously lobby for new legislation or the repeal of existing laws, with the aim of benefiting the Mandem. Similarly, Free Hoods across both France and Britain can join forces to push for changes to regional legislation. But beyond the strategy, this phase is about solidarity. It's about understanding that no Free Hood can stand alone. The same systems that marginalise the Ends in London are at play in the Projects of New York, the Banlieues of Marseille, and the tower blocks of Berlin. Despite language, cultural or historical differences, the lived reality of being overpoliced, underfunded, and overlooked is shared. This phase is a call to connect the struggle.

To "break bread" is to share not just resources, but trust. It is to move beyond individualism and towards collective advancement - to see that your Hood's freedom is tied to mine. Through intentional partnerships, Free Hoods can build a global feedback loop of support: a system where wins are shared, strategies are passed on, and capital circulates with purpose. This phase also lays the foundation for collective political influence. One Free Hood lobbying for policy change may be dismissed - but a chorus of Free Hoods? That's a movement. Whether it's demanding new housing legislation, resisting gentrification, or advocating for youth investment, cross-border coordination multiplies impact. Free Hoods can become power blocs - cultural, economic, and political. Crucially, Phase 2 is about organising laterally - not vertically. No Free Hood leads another. This isn't about building empires; it's about building networks. Relationships must be reciprocal, respectful, and rooted in shared values. Every Hood brings something to the table: one may have capital, another deep cultural influence, another legal infrastructure.

Illustration of Phase 2:



Phase 3:
TIPPING THE SCALE

At this stage, Free Hoods across the Global North will control significant portions of the economy within their regions - the Mandem will experience abundance as a result of economic surplus. The main challenge for Free Hoods during this phase will be to give up this surplus, by building sister city relationships with cities in the Global South and transferring substantial economic capital across the Brandt Line.

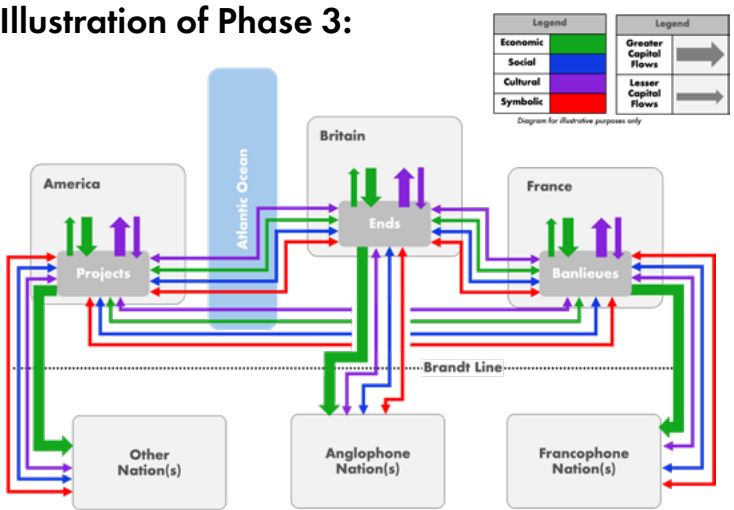
Free Hoods will undoubtedly face challenges in executing this phase, because prior prolonged exposure to scarcity and denial of opportunities, will make it difficult for us to divest from abundance, furthermore feelings of entitlement to the benefits of privatisation may prove challenging when trying to incentivise the transfer of wealth across the Brandt Line. We must overcome such temptations of greed.

Another challenge our Free Hoods will face is the possibility that cities in the Global South may be hesitant to engage with the diaspora in the North. While we may share aspects of genetic heritage - significant cultural, economic, and political differences could create barriers to forming sister city relationships across the Brandt Line. But, again we must overcome.

Another key issue is how the South exchanges capital and products with the North. It is crucial that imports and exports are conducted ethically, ensuring they are produced by choice and not under exploitative conditions. We must consider how new demand from Free Hoods in the North impacts the South's supply chain. Capital exchanges should be structured to guarantee equitable trade, ensuring; (1) the South is not exploited for the North's benefit, and (2) the South experiences a net gain in their local economies.

It is paramount that Free Hoods avoid repeating the "saviour" complex exhibited by colonisers in the past. We must not replicate the hierarchies we experience in the North, where subjugation of others is often seen as necessary for success. To build prosperous sister city relationships, we must rid ourselves of any superiority complex that may have developed while living in the Global North.

Illustration of Phase 3:



Phase 4:
ALL GOOD IN THE HOOD

As Phase Three progresses and the global economic balance begins to shift, the economies of the Global North will gradually lose their monopoly over economic capital, while those of the Global South begin to gain strength and stability. If done correctly, a pivotal moment will be reached — a moment of equilibrium, where both regions possess proportional access to resources, opportunities, and power. This is the ultimate aim of the Free Hoods framework. But it's also one of its greatest tests.

This moment must be approached with great care and humility. While the struggle for balance requires strategic force, maintaining balance demands emotional maturity. We must not allow ourselves to become what we fought against.

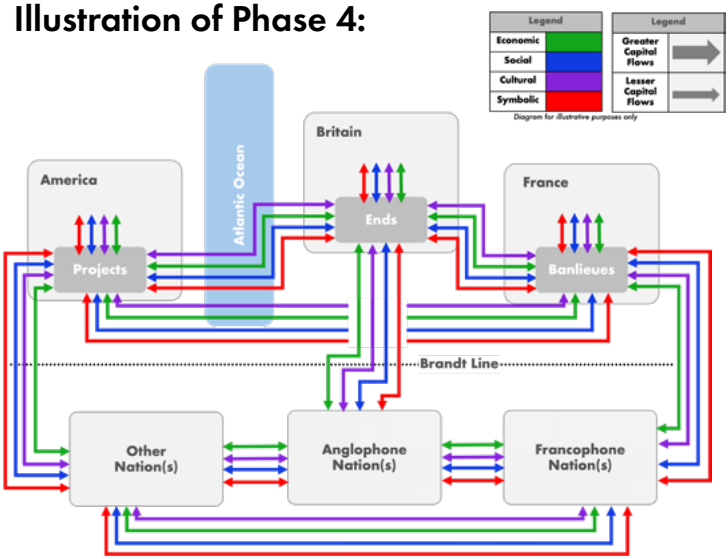
The Brazilian philosopher Paulo Freire, in his seminal work Pedagogy of the Oppressed, warned that the oppressed, when handed power, may begin to imitate their former oppressors.[66] In the context of global economics, this means there is a real risk that the Global South - after centuries of marginalisation - may begin to exploit the Global North in return. But justice cannot be built on vengeance. If extraction continues beyond equilibrium, we risk reproducing the same hierarchies that we set out to dismantle. What was once a revolutionary act becomes a new cycle of domination. That cannot happen.

To protect against this, we need vigilance. Free Hoods must cultivate a deep-rooted political consciousness that recognises the seduction of supremacy and resists it at every turn. Our liberation must not come at the expense of someone else's. The point is not to flip the script — it's to write a new one entirely.

Another challenge is emotional. After generations of scarcity, trauma, and exclusion, the impulse to hoard, to protect, to dominate can feel justified. But real freedom requires us to release the grip of fear, to move from survival mode to stewardship. We must understand that power is not ownership - it's responsibility.

There's also the question of how sister cities in the Global South respond. Some may be hesitant to partner with Free Hoods in the North. While ancestry may connect us, lived experience often divides us. Many in the South may view the diaspora with suspicion, especially those raised in countries once responsible for their exploitation. And that suspicion is not unfounded. We must not enter these relationships with saviour complexes or superiority. We are not "returning" to save the Global South.

Illustration of Phase 4:



Free Hoods not only grant the Mandem autonomy over their land and resources, but also provide a platform for wealth redistribution and fostering solidarity across global divides.

To many, this global scale of intervention might sound utterly unrealistic — even mad. The idea that Free Hoods could contribute to an ambition of redistributing wealth worldwide may seem far-fetched. Yet, it is possible. The potential of making Ends meet is immense and unpredictable, with consequences that could have a profound impact. True, it does sound mad — but sometimes, bringing about positive change requires a little madness.

"I would like to leave behind me the conviction that if we maintain a certain amount of caution and organisation, we deserve victory [...] You cannot carry out fundamental change without **a certain amount of madness.** In this case, it comes from nonconformity, the courage to turn your back on the old formulas, the courage to invent the future. It took the madmen of yesterday for us to be able to act with extreme clarity today. I want to be one of those madmen. [...] **We must dare to invent the future.**"

– **Thomas Sankara, during an interview with Jean-Philippe Rapp (1985)**

Sister cities are but one of the many tools and infrastructures at our disposal should we succeed in transforming our Ends from 'perceived' sink estates into free estates (i.e. Free Hoods).

Not for Sale

Chapter Seven

21st Century contemporary society prioritses the *individual* (i.e., the 'self') over all else, often at the expense of the *collective*. In today's world, society incentivises and rewards the pursuit of personal success, wealth, and status above everything. The status quo fosters a culture where individual ambition is king, and the collective good is overlooked. While the desire of personal success can drive progress, desire without a vision to serve others threatens collective prosperity. When privatising the Mandem, we run the risk of being blinded by our own success at the cost of the success of the collective. If our individual interests outweigh the needs of the Ends, the very essence of the collective will be undermined.

This cannot be allowed to happen.

Many will argue that the Mandem have no rightful claim over the Ends, and that our identities are not intrinsically tethered to geographical locations. They may assert that the physical spaces we inhabit are just that — mere locations with no lasting impact on our sense of self or community. However, this perspective overlooks the profound value of human experience; as it is within these very spaces that our culture, values, relationships, and unique social symbols emerge. These elements are the bedrock of identity, shaping how the Mandem see themselves and their place in the world.

For many of the Mandem, the Ends is not just a physical place, but a source of status, belonging, and identity. It is here that generations have built their sense of community, developed shared practices, and forged bonds that transcend the physical space itself. The cultural significance of the Ends is inseparable from the lives of those who live there. Thus, to claim that the Mandem have no ownership over the Ends is to misunderstand the deep connection between identity and place. The Mandem derive not just status, but their very identity from their Ends —

an identity shaped by lived experiences, shared struggles, and collective aspirations.

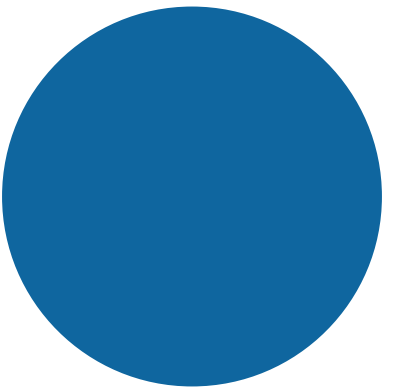
Many will argue that our successes are purely our own, and that we owe nothing to anyone else. This is a lie. We owe the communities that built us – after all, it takes a village to raise a child. We are all, in one way or another, products of our environments — mere amalgamations of the people who shaped us. We are patchworks of those who came before us, and those who walk beside us today. Our success is not ours alone — it's the culmination of the efforts and influence of the people around us. We must not believe the fabrication that our success occurs in isolation; and it is for that very reason that we must always remember that we are accountable to our village. We are responsible to the aunties, the uncles, the young bucks, the girls, the guys, the sisters, the akhis, the preachers and the sinners. Each one of them plays a part in shaping who we are, and we, in turn, shape them. In this interconnected web, we owe it to each other to build with the very people that have been instrumental in making us who we are.

Many will argue that we should abandon the Ends and seek prosperity elsewhere. They will argue that once we own it, we should sell the Ends and treat it like any other commodity, cashing in on the capital from its sale. And while one can understand where this sentiment comes from — especially given the challenges of managing land and buildings that have suffered from years of neglect and decline — selling it would mean giving up the power that comes with owning land. Because whoever holds land decides how it's used, from how we grow our food to how much space we reserve for nature, and even controls the means of production. This isn't just about owning a piece of property; it's about holding the keys to influence over nearly every aspect of life. It's essential to remember that the

foundations of Britain's political system are built on the protection of landowners — the lords of the land. The history of land ownership in Britain stretches back to the 11th century, when William the Conqueror's Norman invasion of 1066 ended with him declaring that all land in England belonged to the Crown. William parcelled out large swathes of land to his barons and the Church, while keeping a significant portion for the monarchy. This is how the power dynamics of land were cemented, with the Domesday Book in 1086 marking the first official record of land ownership. For nearly 800 years following this, land continued to be enclosed — meaning land that commoners once used for grazing and subsistence was seized by the aristocracy and the gentry. By the early 20th Century, what used to be around 30% of England's land accessible to the public was reduced to just 3%. Many of today's largest landowners can trace their holdings back to William's distribution of land nearly 1,000 years ago.[67] Selling our land would mean surrendering our power, just as William's allies gained power through his allocation of land. In short, land is inherently scarce, and giving it up voluntarily means giving up control over our future.

Many will argue that we should lease or rent our newly acquired buildings to the highest bidder to maximise profits. But here's the problem: by doing so, we'd be commodifying our Hood and displacing ourselves in the process. To chase the biggest profits, we'd have to cater to those with the most disposable income — the gentry. This would lead to the Mandem essentially gentrifying their own Ends, pushing themselves out in the pursuit of capital. When we replace the people who make the Ends what it is with outsiders, the soul and essence of the Hood is lost. Our homes risk becoming nothing more than profit-generating machines. But let's be clear, this doesn't mean we can't put our buildings to work. There are countless ways for the Mandem to generate wealth without displacing ourselves.

Remember, when we couldn't get on their radio airwaves, we built our own stations. When we couldn't break into their fashion houses, we created our own brands. When they wouldn't publish our stories, we printed our own books. If there's one thing we know how to do, it's hustle. We're the go-getters of society. But our homes, our community, our village, our power — those things are not for sale.



Epilogue

This future is not a distant fantasy — it's real and within reach, because the Ends has always been the birthplace of real change across the world. Look no further than Somers Town, a small Hood in northwest London. From a humble flat there, George Padmore, a key Pan-Africanist, journalist, and revolutionary, helped change the course of history. Padmore was instrumental in the creation of Ghana — previously the Gold Coast — as the first self-governed African state to emerge from colonial rule, freeing West Africa from British imperialism.[68]

When Kwame Nkrumah came to London in 1945 to study law, Padmore welcomed him into his flat in Somers Town. This meeting sparked a lifelong friendship that would go on to shape the future of an entire nation. Nkrumah returned to Ghana in 1956 and led his people to independence in 1957 as the country's first president - and Padmore joined him, helping guide the political path that led to Ghana's liberation. And all of this started from a small flat in a Hood in northwest London.[69,70]

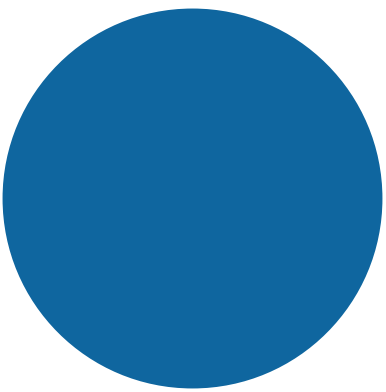
George Padmore *(1903 - 1959)*

Kwame Nkrumah *(1909 - 1972)*

Our Hoods have always been home to some of the world's most brilliant minds — minds that have and will continue to change the world.

All it takes is one Block — just one. The moment that one Block is successfully privatised by the Mandem, a chain reaction will sweep across Britain. The birth of the first Free Hood will act as a catalyst, setting off a domino effect that will reverberate through our cities, towns, and neighbourhoods - inspiring the Mandem from other Hoods to follow suit. With each Block that follows, our cities will start to transform — shaped by the Mandem, for the Mandem.

The future belongs to us. It's coming — maybe not overnight, maybe not as quickly as we hope — but make no mistake, the Mandem will be free. One Block at a time.



Appendix

Table of Exchanges of the Different Forms of Capital:

	Economic	Social	Cultural	Symbolic
Economic		Sponsoring the Mandem to pursue further education and gain access to new professional networks.	Funding training initiatives that give the Mandem new creative skills.	Donating time and resources can significantly boost the Mandem's social standing and public image.
Social	Membership at institutions and professional networks may provide access to shared resources.		Individuals who share disciplines/trades will hold stronger bonds as they create communities of practise and/or unions.	Assumptions about individuals who are considered reputable are often based on their associations.
Cultural	Exposure to cultural practises facilitates the creation of cultural products that may hold financial value.	Individuals who are culturally competent are granted more access to more social networks.		Having extensive experience within an industry or network can aid in the creation of a positive reputation.
Symbolic	Showcasing accomplishments and successes can establish credibility and result in exposure to new economic opportunities.	Professional recognition(s) can help establish connections and build networks.	A positive reputation can present opportunities for individuals to be invited to participate in cultural networks.	

Overall Process of Redistributing Economic Wealth:

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Design by:

FREEDOM & BALANCE

To privatise is to own the Ends, to run the Hood, and to control the Block.

Nobody can buy the Ends, if it ain't for sale. Nobody can sell the Ends, if they own it no more.

Privatising the Mandem affords us the freedom to be self-determining, the freedom to be self-sufficient, the freedom to be autonomous and sovereign, the freedom to restructure our environments, the freedom to imagine and dream — and most importantly, the freedom to make mistakes and to learn from them.

In short:
we are able to free the Mandem.

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