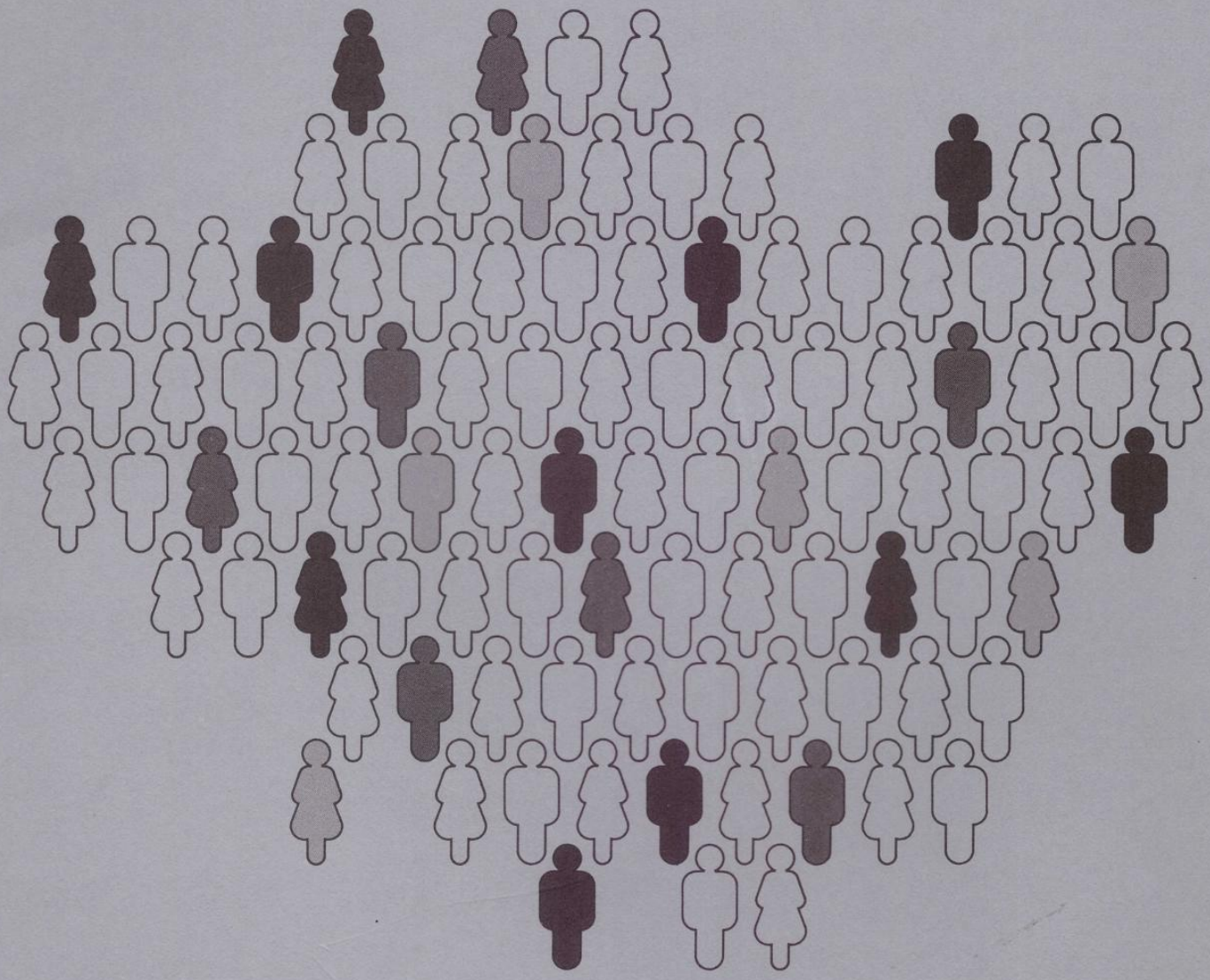
Consultation with Ethnic Minority Organisations

October-December 1982



Ethnic Minorities in London

Parminder Vir OBE BLACK & ETHNIC ARTS ARCHIVE
GLC
1981-1986
Working for London
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First Published in Great Britain by The Greater London Council,
County Hall, London SE1 7PB

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ISBN 0 7168 1307 6

Designed and produced by the GLC Public Relations Branch
Printed by Yale Press 3/1161/3m/3.83

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A report summarising the various consultation meetings held to guide the Committee grant-aid strategy and priorities for 1983/84 and to determine both future on-going consultation arrangements and also new initiatives which the Committee should be supporting in line with the Council's declared intention to combat racism and racial disadvantage. The meetings were arranged through the GLC's Ethnic Minorities Unit.

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A Consultation with the Jewish Community 7 October 1982

1 This was the first meeting held in the series of consultation meetings and was convened from start to finish in a three week period. It was chosen as the first for no other reason than it proved to be the easiest to organise. In retrospect it proved to be the most difficult and the self-imposed time constraints was an important contributory factor.

2 The consultations were all set up through discussion with relevant interest groups and community organisations without identifying with any one organisation which claimed representativeness. Although this has been an advantage and has proved successful in the case of the other consultation meetings, the consultative meeting with the Jewish Community proved to be the sole exception.

3 The majority of people attending claimed that it was an unrepresentative gathering. Although a leading member of the Jewish Community had agreed to chair the meeting, he declined at the last moment for reasons which only became obvious later. Because the consultation meeting was arranged independently by the Ethnic Minorities Unit (EMU) and not directly through the Board of Jewish Deputies the meeting was 'rejected' as invalid.

4 Those who participated in the discussion made it quite clear that they were very suspicious of this GLC initiative and felt that consultations could only succeed with the full involvement and blessing of the Board.

5 The following issues were raised:

(i) It was felt that the GLC was trying to 'set-up' the Jewish community by deliberately creating a rushed and inadequately organised meeting.

(ii) This meeting could be seen as an insult to a community which was particularly well organised and capable of looking after itself.

(iii) It would be better for local borough councils to organise such consultations.

(iv) The London CRC's should have been used to set up the meetings and for inviting Jewish groups.

(v) Criticism was made of the GLC leadership because of its 'anti-semitic' pronouncements about Israel and these could not be reconciled with the sudden desire to consult with the Jewish community.

(vi) There were no special needs towards which the Jewish community could be assisted by the GLC.

(vii) Any future consultations could only be conducted through the auspices of the Board of Deputies and AJEX.

6 Subsequent liaison and a meeting with the Board of Deputies have resulted in the Board indicating that they now had no objection to EMU conducting future consultations, but the Board would not want to be involved in the organisation of these because they were suspicious of the motives of the GLC's political leadership.

Consultation with Orthodox Community 7 December 1982

1 Following a request from representatives of London's orthodox community, a consultation was arranged in December. The Ethnic Minorities Unit responded to this request as, it was claimed, that the orthodox community is always left out of such meetings and had to withdraw from participating in the previous meeting because it was held in a reform synagogue.

2 The following issues were raised at this meeting:

(i) The special nature of the orthodox community determined its need to live together in order to ensure compliance with its traditions and religion.

(ii) Over 16% of the London Borough of Hackney are Jewish, but yet the community does not receive its proportionate share of resources or attention.

(iii) The orthodox community felt particularly agrieved because of the way the educational authorities have responded to their needs. The following were stressed:

(a) ILEA and Haringey LEA must provide adequate grant-aid and support for independent Jewish schools as state schools are unable and unwilling to provide the specialist facilities and training needed by orthodox Jews.

(b) Present schools are inadequately housed and the GLC should explore whether it is possible to provide more suitable premises for these schools.

(c) An urgent meeting with ILEA members and officers should be convened to meet the orthodox community and explore these grievances. EMU should convey the feeling of the meeting on this matter to ILEA.

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B Consultation on Health Issues and Senior Citiziens 9 October 1982

(iv) Because of the need to live as a closely knit community, orthodox Jews obtain less than 1% of housing units and so housing needs are now acute.

(v) The low socio-economic status of the orthodox community results in it being unable to benefit from state provisions such as home improvement grants, adult education, sheltered housing for the elderly and handicapped, etc.

(vi) The GLC should consider convening a London-wide meeting of the orthodox community as well as the employment of specialist officers from the community to liaise between the GLC and the orthodox community.

(vii) Unanimous opposition was expressed to the Ethnic Minority Unit's commitment to submit all application from Jewish community groups to the Board of Deputies of British Jews for comments and guidance. However, it was suggested tht the hosts of the meeting should seek to meet with the Board together with EMU in an attempt to resolve all outstanding difficulties.

1 Considerations of the issues under discussion was sharpened by the presentation of a typical case history which contained the central features of the issues in health and senior citizens. This case history (B1) provided the stimulus for further discussions.

2 The following issues were raised during these discussions:
(i) There is evidence of a growing problem among black women of early and sometimes continuous pregnancies. It was felt that urgent action is needed to halt this trend and the following were suggested:

(a) The community itself must face up to the nature of the problem.

(b) Proper health and community education at all contact points for young people.

(c) Adequate induction of GPs, dieticians and others on the differing needs of ethnic minorities.

(d) A more influential and effective role for parents and family.

(e) An investigation of the issues and needs by the health authorities.

(ii) There was a serious and widespread misconceived view amongst young people that the only way to obtain council housing was to get pregnant.

(iii) Blame for the current state of affairs was attributed to both social services and the law. Cultural differences were not considered when providing assistance. In the upheaval from their homelands ethnic minority communities have found that their family links are broken and worsened by the discrimination and general animosity which they encounter. Ethnic minorities no longer feel part of a community or a sense of belonging. It was proposed that borough community centres where minorities feel they can communicate with others suffering from the same problems should be set up.

(iv) Ethnic minority women were regarded as neglected and placed low on the list of priorities. Haringey had recently set up a Women's Health Group in the borough and would like to see this taking place elsewhere. The role of the child-minder and fostering was also questioned.

(v) Concern was expressed about the ability of EMU to circumvent County Hall's bureaucracy and to ensure

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speedy action on suggestions and recommendations made.

(vi) Five main causes of mortality among ethnic minorities were posited: hypertension, TB, heart diseases, poor environment and chronic unemployment. Failure to combat any of these is due to institutional racism and this mainfest itself in the inadequate provisions — preventative or curative, minimal research and a willingness to place the blame on inherited conditions or inherent aspects of the black community.

(vii) GLC should examine whether it should play a more vital role in educating the community and the profession through regular publications as well as using its status as an influential institution to initiate change and promote good practices.

(viii) Popular opposition should be mounted against central government's attempts to privatise the NHS.

(xi) Disturbing examples of racism in the health service were outlined and attention was focused on the racist nature of the NHS charges for overseas visitors.

3 It was felt that there was an important need for consultative conferences but that more specialists should be invited who can give specific advice and information. The emphasis should be on self-help organisations and on the difficulties arising out of the presence of many non-English speakers.

4 It was stressed that statutory authorities should be made accountable to the public. Until these bodies are made accountable there would be little use in presenting proposals. Thus the EM Unit can be made accountable through these type of meetings with groups putting pressure on the Unit through monitoring the responses to community demands.

5 It was also stated that it was ironic that one of the reasons for the calling of these meetings was to determine priorities for the Ethnic Minorities Committee's budget for the 1983/84 period and yet it seemed that hardly any of the organisations with agreed grants had seen any money yet. Also, as there were so many different areas which were of concern to ethnic minorities, how do these meetings rate in order of priority? What is the point of these meetings when they basically consist of a mass of voices clammering for assistance on just as numerous problems with little hope of anything substantial being accomplished? Every borough had various community relations groups, each being funded by different if not the same bodies. Local and central government policies were accused of causing disunity. Specialist full-time resources were needed in the Ethnic Minorities Unit to ensure adequate follow-up and to ensure effective planning of future relevant programmes for health issues as well as meeting the special needs of the ethnic minorities elderly citizens.

B1 **Case History**

Consider an adolescent woman born in one of the many degrading and demoralising inner city areas of the UK. One, or both of her parents were born overseas — in Africa, the Caribbean or the Indian sub-continent. She has left school at an early age without academic qualifications — not that they are worth the paper or indeed relevant to today's spiraling unemployment. She desperately wants to leave home for a variety of reasons including different cultural values between herself and parents. She feels her parents, especially her father, do not 'love' much less understand her. She has no grandparents to turn to — they may well be overseas or, if here, she has no contact with them. The only person who understands, cares and loves her is her boyfriend — and he has problems of his own.

Before long, either deliberate or not, she is pregnant. She can now find council accommodation and her boyfriend can move in with her. To have a child, her own flat and her man living with her is a dream fulfilled. For the 'boy', he has proved his manhood, his masculinity — his parents and espcially his friends must now look up to him.

But, at the very time the young woman is growing and may well be iron anaemic, as many black women at that age are, she has to divert essential resources to the developing foetus. Those resources may be scarce because she is on a poor or inadequate diet and may well have had a poor diet during her developing childhood. So, growth for her ceases and she takes on board a new set of anxiety related problems and responsbilities. On top of all that, and for reasons too numerous to mention here, she may not seek crucial medical advice or attend an anti-natal clinic.

The baby is born. But far from a smooth delivery it is by ceasarian section. The baby may be —

(a) Premature with low birth weight and may never achieve 'maximum' height and weight.

(b) Owing to poor maternal nutrition during pregnancy and even long before, the baby may have nutrition related diseases and may well suffer deficient brain growth and development.

(c) It may be breast fed, for a prolonged period, or not

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C Consultation with Gay Blacks 13 October 1982

breast fed at all, then weaned on to highly starchy foods, thus decreasing its chances of survival or competitiveness in this highly competitive and aggressive world.

(d) While still in adolescence, if it is a girl, it may well repeat the mistake its mother made while she was young or adolescent.

The mother, in the meantime, may well have had repeated pregnancies while still in her teens, further draining her physical and mental resources. While the mother is still a young woman she may well find herself a victim of one or other of what one may loosely describe diseases of modern living: obesity, coronary heart disease, high blood pressure, varicose veins, dental cavies (bad teeth), diabetes and cancer of the stomach, colon, uterus or some other part of the body, and if she survives all that, there is still the hurdle of surviving one of the many increasing number of mental institutions — a guinea pig for some psychologist, psycho-analyst, psychotherapist or downright legalised racist.

If, however, that woman miraculously reaches pensionable age, there remains a vast number of hurdles to straddle. What is to be her standard of living and state of health? Who is to look after her and where is she to be cared for when she can no longer fend for herself? Would she, could she, go out and enjoy or relax, in peace, in the sunshine on the two or three days during the year when we see (much less feel) it in this country? And would this limited exposure be enough to top-up her stores of Vitamin D for example? And, what about her food — would she be able to purchase what she is accustomed to — eddoes, sweet potatoes, dasheen, plantains, etc., on an ordinary or, more likely, a reduced pension bearing in mind that these foods are five or six times more expensive than their English vegetable equivalents?

What I have attempted is a sketch, a map, if you wish, of a black woman in this country from the time she conceives her first child till retirement. At each stage, I have tried to indicate some of the problems she may encounter regarding her state of health and good living. These are some of the questions which directly or indirectly concern me; and, I hope, some of the questions this conference would address itself to during the course of the day.

1 The meeting was arranged in association with the Gay Black Group (GBG) who presented a document which stressed the need for GBG to acquire premises of their own for (i) counselling activities; (ii) special activities; and (iii) a resource centre.

(i) **Counselling**

GBG need small rooms suitable for counselling individuals on either a one-to-one basis or in small groups. They would also like to develop a telephone advice service for black gays outside London who cannot get to the London meetings.

(ii) **Social activities**

GBG need a large room suitable for running as both a coffee bar/drop-in centre and for discos. It would be open five nights a week plus all day Sunday. GBG stressed that the commercial (white) gay scene does not cater for black gays and double discrimination (race and sexual orientation) was prevalent.

(iii) **Resource centre**

This would have a records/information section relevant to black gays and this information would be made available to other groups and a newsletter produced.

GBG requested the GLC to provide premises at low rent/rates or a grant to cover the costs plus salary for a co-ordinator.

2 Attempts were made during the lengthy discussions to focus the groups needs more widely and not just on the need for a centre, but on housing, employment, policing, health, social services, education, etc.

3 GBG representatives nevertheless felt that the need for a centre was paramount and if achieved then it would be a base from which to develop other responses in respect of other needs. They stressed that there were no counsellors available for black gay people, no black gay venues, nothing available in other languages, and that they were subjected to racist sexual stereotypes in the white gay scene (e.g., 'the black queen' or 'the macho stud'). The weekly GBG meeting at the 'Gays The Word' bookshop is the only place where black gays can meet each other.

4 One possibility to be explored is that of a collective or co-operative for the centre and to seek GLC support to fund the salary of the co-ordinator.

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D Prison Welfare Consultation 14 October 1982

5 It was agreed that future consultations would be dictated by the Group's needs and how they wish to proceed. These could be small meetings, meetings with the GBG committee or major consultative meetings, which could be widely publicised by the Group themselves.

6 Subsequent meetings were held with representatives of the GBG. It was agreed to formulate concrete proposals for a Black Gay Centre that would seek to offer facilities for both black homosexuals and lesbians as well as any other members of the black communities willing to abide by the Centre's rules and aims.

7 A concrete proposal has now being submitted for consideration in 1983/84.

1 The following points were raised by the representatives of ethnic minority organisations:

(i) Has the EMU/GLC any statistics/information on this area in relation to ethnic minorities? It was evident that some kind of research/survey was needed.

(ii) The GLC should fund or subsidise existing projects in this area.

(iii) There was some evidence that the CRE had undertaken work in this field.

(iv) The Unit should provide information on how ethnic minorities in particular came to be in penal institutions and the type of crimes they were alleged to have committed.

(v) EMU should examine Home Office regulations governing visiting by outside groups, especially performing artists.

(vi) The GLC should fund organisations wanting to research and assist in after-prison support schemes.

(vii) The GLC and ILEA could influence the nature and scope of education in prisons.

(viii) The GLC should consider taking on or initiating investigations into racist activities in prisons (e.g., the avilability of ethnic courses, menus and literature).

(ix) The GLC, perhaps through EMU, should consider dealing with cases involving deportation, immigration issues and their campaigns.

(x) Resources should be made available for the GLC to employ researches themselves to undertake this work or the officers of the Unit could do it themselves.

2 It was emphasised that the initiatives for these proposals must come from the community and that if there was a commitment from outside the GLC then this would carry more weight.

3 EMU agreed to attempt collection of all available information and statistics on blacks in penal institutions (with a specific emphasis on black women) and disseminate to all participants.

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E Community Education Consultation 17 October 1982

1 Platform speakers outlined their analyses on several areas of educational provisions in London, emphasising from both Afro-Caribbean and Asian perspectives attitudes to mother-tongue teaching, supplementary/second chance education, adult literacy and the teaching profession.

2 One issue common to all speakers was the widespread dissatisfaction felt by the ethnic minority communities about the education system and its failure to guarantee equality of access to a good education. A central concern in this dissatisfaction was the racism evident in every aspect of the education system.

3 Having accepted this, the following issues were raised:

(i) Could the GLC initiate some kind of policy for the funding of teachers for supplementary schools? Work is constantly affected by teachers leaving due to financial difficulties.

(ii) Pressure should be on authorities to provide a multi-ethnic curriculum in schools. Why is it left to the community to supply such an important need? Even when it is provided it is usually of a poor standard.

(iii) There is a resistance among state schools to supplementary schools. Supplementary schools should take on an advisory role in the channels for change.

(iv) Youths reject the values of society because they are increasingly frustrated by the racism inherent in such values.

(v) 'Unity' should be extended to include all Asian, African and Afro-Caribbean groups instead of each going their separate ways towards separate goals.

(vi) Some emphasis must be placed on a consideration of the needs of other minority groups, i.e., Irish, Cypriots, Travellers, etc., as well as minorities within individual communities, i.e., Sikhs.

(vii) The Turkish Education Group objected to the nature of this meeting, the agenda (which was not issued until the day) and the emphasis on Asians/Afro-Caribbeans as if they were the only ones with problems. They further stressed that ILEA had produced pages and pages on how they are going to deal with racism in itself, but has done little. They would like to see the sacking of racist teachers, not just the establishment of new systems which will only be obstructed.

(viii) It is also important to notice that although EMU keep emphasising that they have no statutory powers (through GLC) over ILEA; ILEA consists of GLC councillors and yet none were present at the meeting. It was therefore concluded that there was very little which can be achieved. Proposed that GLC and ILEA get together to discuss these issues before holding any future education meetings.

(ix) 1981 Education Act comes into force in 1983 and places no special emphasis on mother-tongue teaching. It is important that the needs of the ethnic community be considered in relation to the Act.

(x) How many schools are sympathetic to black projects? Can a list be obtained?

(xi) There is a need for an ILEA Committee to look into the recruitment, promotion and grivance procedures of ethnic teachers.

(xii) Need for an education news publication to keep groups informed and communication lines established.

(xiii) GLC should commission a small group to research and report back on issues raised above which require additional work.

Future Consultations

(a) Topics for discussion were too broad. Future meetings should seek to examine more specific and relevant issues.

(b) More consideration for different community groups and their special needs/concerns.

(c) Meetings should be held at a more local level on specific issues.

(d) Specified programmes/agendas to be circulated in advance.

(e) Telegram/letter/petitions to Minister of Education protesting at closure of North London Polytechnic.

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F Housing Consultation Meeting 18 October 1982

1 The following issues were raised:

(i) The GLC does not fund individuals, only organisations. Can this be reviewed in view of the fact that many groups which apply for funding are in their formative stages, are in desperate need, and are only run by around 2/3 people.

(ii) It was considered a high priority that a survey be conducted to discover and quantify the needs of the ethnic minority elderly. Those present felt that there was a need to develop some kind of policy towards the housing of this group which might include the provision of clustered accommodation or purchasing schemes.

It was felt that the GLC should assist housing associations, especially those concerned with the needs of the elderly. The GLC should try to legitimise housing associations to enable them to buy up/build on land to rehouse those living in accommodation which is either too large or inadequate to their needs. GLC should also provide some kind of advisory service to assist those trying to take on this work.

(iii) GLC should propose that local authorities provide sheltered housing accommodation that would assist in the communal traditions of ethnic communities. It should monitor the problems of the single/elderly homeless in relation to this. GLC should fund organisations which provide accommodation which develops the community aspect as a high priority. It should also influence changes in local policies so that they cater for housing needs at all levels (from the elderly to the young single homeless).

(iv) As the GLC has responsibilities for London, can it now work out proposals in the area of hostels for young people so that these initiatives can be taken up elsewhere? It should assist hostels to get together to form housing associations. There should be more monitoring in relation to housing allocations and ethnic minorities. The 'Race and Housing' booklet provided some information on this and the National Federation of Housing Associations should be contacted for further assistance. Also housing associations should be monitored for discriminatory policies.

(v) It was felt that there were implications (through changes in social services policies) that a number of youngsters are being left to their own devices to gain accommodation. The social services departments provide no assistance for the young homeless. Very little in the way of provision especially due to the escalation of problems such as unemployment, etc. It is becoming increasingly difficult to house homeless young people. The emphasis is placed on temporary short-term accommodation and the GLC should be making a more positive step and providing more permanent accommodation. Empty, hard-to-let properties could be made available to groups of young people to take over/renovate. It was felt that this was an area in which the GLC could take a positive lead.

Should also provide emergency shelter schemes and co-operatives. It should also look carefully at the staffing levels/ratio first. It was also proposed that the GLC should dispose of the surplus buildings to be used by housing groups.

Due to lack of time, the meeting adjourned with the following two concrete proposals:

(i) That as housing covers such a broad spectrum it should be discussed in greater detail over a longer period.

(ii) That UJIMA and ACKEE (Hackney), with GLC assistance, hold another such meeting and consult the Unit on programme details, invitations, etc., all focussing on special needs housing (extended families, youngsters, single persons and the elderly) which the GLC would assist with.

Housing Consultation Follow-Up Meeting Thursday, 25 Novmeber 1982

The meeting began with a brief outline of the proposals raised and issues discussed at the first housing consultation held on 18 October 1982. This was mainly for the benefit of those participating today who were not present at the first meeting.

Issues Raised/Proposals

(i) Policies: Was there any way in which the GLC can become more directly involved in the housing policies of local boroughs in view of control now being with the local authorities? The answer was emphatically no.

(ii) The standard of housing nominated through the GLC is very low and the waiting lists very long due to the fact that each borough has different systems in operation. Could the GLC provide some form of criteria to local boroughs to determine the length of stay on waiting lists? Many felt that there should not even be a residential qualification in existence. It was proposed that either the residential qualification be removed or that the present system be extended.

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(iii) Many also felt a need for changes in the Single Homeless Act leading to a re-shaping or modernisation in relation to the needs of modern society. It was felt that the black community were continually considered as low priority and eventually placed in the worst areas.

(iv) Housing Action Areas: The majority of these were said to be a waste of time, especially as very little funding was put into these areas. This therefore resulted in very little improvement. There was a need to strengthen and improve housing conditions of the communities in these areas therefore leading ultimately to increased well-being, education, etc., among this group. it was also proposed that certain districts with a high population of 'blacks' or ethnics should become designated areas where the GLC should strive to increase the well-being of this population. This project would also take into account the specific and cultural needs of these communities.

(v) The major problem of the 16-18 year old age group. These are many vulnerable young people roaming the streets without permanent accommodation.

(vi) Housing Associations: There were very few nominations from the black community to the local authorities. Lack of ethnic record keeping also made the situation difficult to monitor. It was proposed that the GLC/EMU perhaps call for a head count to determine needs and priorities. However, some were against this as they felt ethnic monitoring had negative as well as positive effects. It was also recommended that the internal structure of Housing Associations be investigated and also lettings policies. It was pointed out that the GLC would need concrete information and facts before it could initiate some form of positive discrimination. Would also be willing to look at campaign/research funding in this area.

(vii) Racial harassment on estates: In view of the racialism in existence many felt that there was a greater need for the GLC to increase funding of anti-racist projects. Criteria should also be set up whereby those actively involved in rascist practices can be transferred — at present it is usually the victim who is rehoused. It was proposed as a high priority that the GLC fund or assist in other ways community groups working in this area.

(viii) Hostels: These do not usually cater adequately for those residing in them. Rooms are restrictive and are used permanently instead of as a short-term solution. Many felt that there should be less emphasis on 'hostels' and more on 'communal' homes which cater not only for youths but for other needy groups such as senior citizens. Proposal also for after-hostel care.

(ix) Black Women and Single Parents: Single mothers were invariably placed into short-life properties and face extreme prejudice whilst trying to find accommodation. There was also the issue of single women and/or lesbians wanting to live together with their children.

It was recommended that these and proposals for ancillary facilities and refuges be referred through EMU to the GLC Women's Committee which is more suitable with dealing with the problems of this section of this community.

(x) House purchase: Has many political problems. Some felt that the Labour Party and Councils were against proposals for tenants to purchase their homes. The black community increasingly wanted to purchase but face financial difficulties. The GLC should assist financially or initiate the setting up of co-operatives.

(xi) Disposal of GLC property: Many felt that a higher quota should be made available to the black community.

Summary of main proposals

More GLC involvement in housing policies.

Improved standards of housing nominations.

Changes in criteria for waiting lists.

Setting up of designated areas of districts with a higher proportion of ethnic communities.

Removal of the residential qualification or an extension of the present one.

Consideration for the vulnerable 16-18 year olds group.

Provisions specifically for black women.

Ethnic monitoring to determine needs and priorities.

An investigation of the internal structure of housing associations.

'Communal' homes rather than 'hostels'.

To set up a Committee to monitor and take on the recommendations of these housing consultations which could liaise with the GLC through EMU.

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G Travellers/Gypsies Consultation 19 October 1982

1 The travellers main need, to which they returned repeatedly throughout the meeting, is for sites. They need sites free from harassment and with basic facilities. There are insufficient official sites in London and so travellers are forced to seek out other stopping places. On these temporary sites they lack basic facilities. What they seek are water, toilet facilities and dustbin/rubbish collection. Portaloos would be ideal. Many borough councils refuse to provide any sort of rubbish collection service and then seek to evict travellers because of the resultant rubbish on the site. The travellers constantly made the point that local authorities should talk to the travellers on a site and ascertain their needs; also to enter into a diaglogue on what the land may be being held for by the local authority, alternative sites, and the need to keep sites clean. Usually the only contact from a local authority is a court order seeking eviction. Much council-owned land lies derelict yet local councils will not allow travellers to camp on it.

2 Irish travellers find it difficult to be allocated places on a few official sites which do exist. The point was made that borough councils frequently give places on official sites to English travellers and that the Irish travellers in London suffer severe discrimination. Irish travellers have often lived in a particular borough on various sites for many years yet, it was said, find themselves refused places on the borough's site in favour of English families who are living outside Greater London. Only 10% of Irish travellers in London are on official sites yet they form the majority of travellers in London.

3 Official sites were described as lacking in facilities and poorly managed in many cases. A family from Latimer Road, the official Hammersmith and Fulham site, described the poor state of the site, unsafe electric wires, the use of land adjacent to the site as a rubbish tip, and the lead pollution; all of which forced the families on the site to seek action through the courts against Hammersmith and Fulham Council.

4 There were demands for the GLC and boroughs to provide transit sites as well as more permanent sites.

5 The travellers reported harassment from the police, whether they resided on official or unofficial sites. The police are said to evict travellers from land even where the landowner has not sought a court order. Also to tow caravans away in the middle of the night, even with women and children inside. Several travellers reported being taken into custody by local police, held for a few hours and then released without being charged. This sort of harassment was assumed to be intended to force them into leaving the area. It was agreed that the travellers should collect their evidence of police harassment and present it to the Police Committee's racial harassment inquiry. The travellers also sought details of what their legal rights are.

6 Travellers' children cannot be properly educated when they are continually being evicted from sites and moved on. The travellers clearly valued education for their children and there was great praise for the work of the ILEA Teachers for Travellers Unit, although it was said that the ILEA should provide the Unit with more teachers. There was discussion on the idea of busing children to local schools, as happens in Cork and on whether it is better to teach travellers' children in separate classes/schools or whether it is better for the children to mix with non-travellers' children in normal classes.

7 Health care is another problem when families cannot spend any length of time on the same site and suffer constant evictions.

8 Public houses sometimes display signs saying 'no gypsies or travellers'. It was suggested that the travellers compile details of such pubs so that their licences can be challenged.

9 Representatives of the travellers evicted recently by Ealing Council from what, till then, had been the borough site explained what happened. They described how the caravans had been towed away by the council to a council depot where the caravans had been damaged and property stolen. The families themselves are now in grossly overcrowded dwellings provided by Ealing's homeless persons unit.

10 It was agreed that the Caravan Site Act requirement for each borough to provide 15 pitches for caravans is totally inadequate. It was agreed that what is needed is much larger permanent sites *and* the provision of transit sites. Each borough, the meeting agreed, should provide one permanent site and one transit site. 60 pitches per borough was suggested as a realistic figure. There was praise for a transit site in Peterborough with 45-50 pitches. Sites should also be built to special specifications agreed with the travellers — unbreakable glass, stainless steel toilet and washroom facilities, etc., so that children could not vandalise them. Children who have spent all of their lives on the road with no facilities cannot be expected

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H Rastafari Consultation Meeting 20 October 1982

to adapt easily to well-provided sites and not misuse the facilities.

11 The travellers demanded a policy of non-harassment by the GLC. If the GLC did not initiate court action against travellers on its land this would slow down the speed of evictions and allow travellers a more settled existence on the site.

12 It was also suggested that the GLC take a lead in co-ordinating policy, especially with the more sympathetic boroughs. It was said that if the GLC allowed travellers to stay on its land then a borough might be persuaded to provide rubbish collection and basic water/toilet facilities.

13 The GLC was asked to provide an independent legal advice service to travellers threatened with eviction. It was explained that the Council is not able to provide legal advice itself, but is funding law centres who may be able to. The travellers said that the Council should put pressure on law centres, community relations councils and boroughs to provide some sort of legal service.

14 The travellers also sought a full-time GLC official to deal with the problems they face, to co-ordinate the activities of other bodies and to argue the travellers' case with other agencies. The travellers wished to have a GLC telephone number which they could contact 24 hours/day when they are threatened with sudden evictions or police action.

15 The GLC was asked to take action to grant aid travellers organisations so that they can develop self-help initiatives.

16 It was agreed that a report of the meeting be presented to the next meeting of the Ethnic Minorities Committee.

1 GLC was thanked for convening the meeting as Rastafari have been and still are viewed with suspicion, because of their very nature and cultural differences. They have felt discimination by society, but people are now beginning to accept that their beliefs cannot be ignored.

2 One of the main points stressed was the desire for repatriation to Ethiopia (Africa) as this was the corner stone of the movement's development.

It was suggested that a trust fund should be set up for the purpose or repatriation, and research should be undertaken into the feasibility of repatriation. It was also suggested that GLC could organise exchange visits to Ethiopia to see life in Africa and undertake research. Repatriation was regarded seriously although it was realised that there would be difficulties particularly with financing such an operation.

3 Rastas complained about the overt discrimination they experience in housing allocation policies of local boroughs. A plea was made for GLC to do something as well as seek to promote a greater understanding and sympathetic awareness of Rastafari.

4 The importance of grants, especially in the cases of self-help projects — co-op's, education, arts and crafts were stressed. Generally Rastafarians are given the worst places in the boroughs, i.e., under railway arches, in back street alley ways to carry out their community work and social projects.

5 Help is particularly sought for training schemes for unemployed young people; not the YOPS schemes that offer no future at all.

6 Health aspects were discussed; the importance of diets, reasons for high blood pressure, that are not normally found in Africa or the Caribbean. The importance of the right type of food especially for children and during pregnancy. GLC should contribute to the development of such health education projects.

7 A cultural centre for the Rastafari community in London was discussed at some length. They would like somewhere to meet together and run their projects. This is one of the major projects which is being firmed up collectively by all the groups and a future approach to GLC will be made for support.

8 Another major problem that did concern the Rastafari community was the problems encountered with the police. There were general allegations of

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police harassment because of their appearance and life style.

9 The groups felt generally that the GLC would devote, through the Ethnic Minorities Unit, more time for responding to the special needs of Rastafarians in London.

I Black Lesbians Consultation 21 October 1982

The following issues were raised:

1 'A Woman's Place' and 'Outwrite' magazine were recommended for future notification of a meeting but *not* 'gay's the Word' bookshop or other 'Gay' bodies. However, all agreed that it was a good idea to hold such meetings to consult this part of the community as it made other lesbians aware that such a concern did exist — even though few attended. This was seen as a vital initial step in increasing confidence among the group. Homosexuality is a taboo subject — even more so among black people and is therefore very difficult to bring out into the open.

2 There is also a need for a meeting place where lesbians can go and feel free to mix with their own kind without fear of harassment. (At present the Black Lesbians Group meets fortnightly at the Black Women's Centre in Stockwell, but are often faced with hostility from heterosexual males and females.) 'Safe' facilities are therefore seen as a high priority need.

3 One of those present had also attended the Gay Black Group consultation meeting of the previous week and said that it was noticeable that there were few women members — emphasising the gays hostility to women and want of separation. However, she would like to see the setting up of a black Gays and Lesbian Centre similar to the London Gay's and Lesbian's Centre which is being set up. Concerning the issue of 'bringing out' more black lesbians it was felt that the increase in attention from bodies such as 'Time Out' and 'City Limits' magazines was serving to do this somewhat, but that there was still a need for greater and wider promotion so that black lesbians can learn about each other and their problems and communicate together.

4 An outline was given of the growth of the Black Lesbian Group, springing up out of the hostility black lesbians had felt at the National Women's Conference for 1981. The Group are feeling very disorientated at present because of unstable meeting arrangements (they have no permanent premises), lack of education among the community about their needs/circumstances, and agression from feminists. Staffing levels therefore vary as does membership. The Group's priority areas of discussion include: racism within the women's movement, harassment from black men and cultural differences among members. The group was satisfied with its title as it was easily identifiable. There was also a need for informal black women's events through which lesbian and *all* women can meet freely. There were reservations as to whether gays and lesbians would work together and whether this would affect attendances at joint meetings, etc.

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J Carnival Consultation 23 October 1982

5 It was recommended that the Group approach the Women's Committee through the Lesbian Working Group and use it as a weapon to voice their needs. The GLC could also make available facilities to maintain the group's existence.

Proposals

(i) To use the GLC's Lesbians Working Group to pressurise for their own policies.

This would perhaps involve the setting up of a separate group specifically for black lesbians. This would be much more effective than working independently as it would help establish communication channels.

(ii) The group needs immediate advice so that they can formulate their proposals and present them to the Women's Committee. Group's also in a 'Catch — 22' situation at present — need aid to start up in the first place — most information is passed verbally at present.

(iii) Those present wanted to see it recorded in the notes of the meeting that attendance was poor in view of problems raised above, but that through the voices of those attending there was a definite need for the above proposals to lead to more participation, unity and equality of provision.

(iv) It was recommended that those present should attend the Women's Committee's Co-ordinating meeting on 2 November, 7 pm to communicate their needs to the GLC and should liaise with the black gays to add more weight to their needs.

(v) To produce a paper on the proceedings of today's meeting on behalf of the black lesbians to be circulated through the Women's Committee mailing. This would serve to invite black lesbians to 2 November meeting which would then lead to another black lesbians meeting, with hopefully a larger attendance. Date agreed — Thursday, 18 November 1982 at County Hall beginning at 6.30 pm.

1 The four major funding agencies — Arts Council, CRE, GLC and GLAA — presented their criteria for funding with specific reference to carnival.

2 A general discussion followed during which the following points were raised:

(i) Many expressed the view that criteria selected by funding bodies to fund carnival were not correct, felt arguments about whether carnival was festival or arts activities were unfounded since carnival is all of these things. Funding bodies should just give money and not interfere in the judgment of the artistic content.

(ii) There was unanimous support for the need for funding to be made available before the event and not after. Money was needed to buy materials before the carnival.

(iii) Discussion focused on the location of carnival. Carnival is a street event and people have fought hard to keep it on the streets. There was resistance to suggestions that carnival may be organised in a public park. However, people felt a bigger venue was needed for selection of the King and Queen of Carnival as the Commonwealth Institute was too small.

(iv) There was much discussion on the organisation and structure of carnival. A suggestion was made that a Central Co-ordinating Committee was needed. A number of suggestions on the composition and function of this Committee were also made. Some felt it should be made up of representatives from all the existing Carnival Committees as well as bands. The purpose of the Committee would be to put pressure on funding bodies to release more funding for carnival. The idea that such a committee should dessiminate funds received a mixed response. Some felt it should have the powers to give money while others strongly opposed this notion. Another suggestion was that we already have a Committee with a track record for organising carnival namely CAC and that people should be co-opted onto this Committee. There was some opposition to this suggestion.

(v) Much of the afternoon discussion focused on the issue of organisation and structure.

(vi) The meeting ended in a very inconclusive manner with some animosity. It was agreed that a further meeting was needed and CAC volunteered to call such a meeting.

3 It is understood that several meetings have been called and that several groupings have resulted. To date, no proposals have been submitted to the EMU for its consideration.

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K Irish Community Consultation 27 October 1982

1 The point was continuously made during the meeting that this was the first time so many different Irish groups had come together in London and that the GLC was to be congratulated for calling the meeting.

2 The main point made was that the Irish suffer discrimination because of their nationality but, because they are a white ethnic group, such racism is usually overlooked or ignored. There was a very strong feeling about 'Irish jokes' and the effect of these on the Irish in London. This developed into a wider discussion on the stereotyping of Irish people in the media and the lack of access to the media. The meeting unanimously agreed to ask the Council to make a public statement that it regards 'Irish jokes' and media stereotyping of the Irish as offensive, racist and harmful to community relations.

3 There was equally strong opposition to the Prevention of Terrorism Act, which was seen as major piece of discriminatory legislation. The police's operation of the Act was criticised and it was reported that people are frequently held for several days by the police with no charges being brought. It was claimed that detainees are often ill-treated by the police and that they are liable to lose their jobs on release from custody. The meeting requested the Council to campaign for repeal of the Act and/or some mitigation on its effects on the Irish community in London. It was also suggested that the Council support a major lobby against the Act to be held in London on 16 February next year.

4 The recently floated suggestion from some politicians that the right to vote in British elections be removed from the Irish was condemned as discriminatory and it was proposed that the Council itself pass a motion opposing such a move. It was said that some borough councils, including Brent, have already passed such motions.

5 Repeated references were made about the cultural needs of the community. The Irish felt excluded from the media with no real representation of Irish culture on radio and television. There was also a need for magazine programmes on radio and television to cover the wider concerns of the Irish in Britain. Apart from pubs and dance halls there is nowhere for Irish people to meet together and many people present at the meeting saw a need for a cultural centre. This would include rooms for meetings, a library and space for the sale of Irish books, records and newspapers. Another view was that instead of one major centre there should be several more local smaller ones.

6 The education authorities tend to ignore Irish history and culture in their courses and curricula. Second and third generation Irish youth in London grow up with no knowledge of their heritage and can end up alienated. Their special needs are not considered by local authorities in the provision of facilities for youth.

7 Housing problems, homelessness and unemployment were referred to us among the major concerns of the Irish in London. There was a call too for local authorities to do more to assist vagrants and 'down and outs' in the city, many of whom are of Irish origin. It was stated that Irish education and professional qualifications are not accepted by many employers in London, including, it was said, the GLC/ILEA. It was also stressed that as part of its equal opportunities policy the GLC should advertise jobs in the London Irish papers in order to attract candidates from the Irish community.

8 The Irish community in London was estimated at 1-1½ million by one person present. It was agreed that much more statistical information is needed on the Irish in London in order to provide a clearer picture of the community and provide evidence of their needs now being ignored by the authorities. The GLC was asked to produce this information.

9 Haringey was said to employ a community officer to deal solely with the needs of the borough's Irish population and it was strongly suggested that the GLC appoint a full-time officer to liaise with the Irish community, continue consultations with them, and develop programmes to ensure that their needs are known and being catered for.

10 As part of the need to continue the dialogue opened with the GLC, there was lengthy discussion of the best way of doing this. Rather than basing future consultations on any existing group, it was agreed that a new forum should be developed to represent all Irish groups in London. A steering committee was appointed to organise a conference to be open to all Irish organisations in London. This body will attempt to produce a programme to discuss with the Council. The GLC officers present agreed that the Council would assist the organising of such a conference in any way it could. The proposals for this new body to bring together all Irish groups in London had the unanimous support of the meeting.

11 The Steering Group met and had made arrangements for a London-wide conference for Irish organisations in January 1983.

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L Consultation on Sports 28 October 1982

1 Speakers from three sporting events presented their views as follows:

Athletics — This is an expanding sport with both central and local government providing aid. Many more people are participating in athletics. However, this is not the case for black children because of the following:

(i) Lack of encouragement at schools. Inner city schools are full of black children who are not getting support and encouragement from their teachers;

(ii) Lack of sponsorship — inadequate sponsorship available for black athletes with potential;

(iii) There is a lack of black people as administrators, recreation managers, and coaches, and there is a need to see blacks in position of authority and decision-making. The GLC could look towards setting up training courses in administration and coaching;

(iv) Lack of suitable facilities at local level. Some of the worst facilities are to be found in the inner cities and that is where black people are mainly concentrated.

Netball — A very popular sport among black girls/women. They experience a number of problems:

(i) Lack of media coverage of the sport. 'Arrows' broke the world record for marathon netball, but got no media coverage.

(ii) Hire of facilities too expensive for clubs who have many unemployed members.

(iii) Need to get more black women trained as coaches and umpires.

(iv) Sponsorship needed to enable the purchase of equipment, hire venues, meet travelling expenses, etc.

Cricket — Several black cricket teams exist. But all have the problems of lack of facilities, equipment, etc. Desperate need for club houses where teams can reciprocate hospitality to other visiting teams.

2 Following the discussion, the following issues were raised:

(a) Need to discuss philiosophy of sports in a political, social and economic context.

(b) Be aware of sports being used as public relations exercise.

(c) Problems with access to local facilities both leisure centres and schools. Need to develop skills on how to liaise with caretakers.

(d) Proposal to form a black sports federation.

(e) Discussion on the Sports Council's initiate to take sports to the community in 'Action Sport'. Some dissatisfaction was expressed at the way 'Action Sport' had been organised.

(f) Facilities — need for more facilities at local and regional level.

(g) Racism in local, regional and national leagues. This results in black sportsmen/women being kept out of team selections, etc., at local and national levels.

(h) Community sponsors — need to look at black community for sports sponsorship.

(i) Coaching — set up coaching courses using existing recognised black coaches.

(j) More and better facilities for women to participate in sports are needed.

(k) Lack of continuity from school to club sports.

(l) Need to compile a directory of black sports men and women and organisations in London.

(m) Access to less known and least accessible sports (e.g., squash, golf, basketball, canoeing) should be made possible for black people.

(n) Sport should not be used by authorities as a means of occupying the attention of the unemployed youths.

(o) Maximise use of facilities such as schools, swimming pools, large buildings, etc.

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M **Media Consultation**
30 October 1982

1 Three major areas — print, radio and film/video — were examined by invited speakers, followed by general discussion and a special workshop.

Print: The following issues were highlighted:

(a) There are over 312 ethnic publications in Britain of which 60 or 50 are published regularly. Many are in English though a substantial number are printed in foreign languages including Hindi, Urdu, Punjabi, Gujerati and Bengali.

(b) The language press are important for first generation Asian immigrants since they carried news of 'home'.

(c) An analysis of the sixty publications indicates that most of the copy is lifted, presentation is poor, staff untrained, wages and working conditions poor; publications are distributed through unconventional channels and survival depends on goodwill advertising.

(d) The ethnic press fills a vacuum that is not being catered for by the mainstream press. Gives black community a sense of belonging; access to information. This despite lack of facilities, funds or trained staff.

(e) Black presence only acknowledged following the uprisings.

(f) Focused on Cable TV as an important phenomenon for ethnic minorities and highlighted its development in Southall.

(g) The ethnic press needs help with improving its resources; it needs funds to learn and adopt new technology;

— training to acquire the communication skills including advertising;

— training in journalism, printing, graphics, arts, etc;

— facilities for central news pool.

The contribution was followed by general discussion which focused on distribution and advertising. The main recommendation to emerge was the need to set up an alternate distribution agency. On the question of advertising it was felt that more black people could advertise in the ethnic press. GLC should also advertise in the ethnic press as well as putting pressure on local authorities to place adverts in the ethnic press.

Unity within the ethnic press was called for by several speakers.

The Workshop focused on the following issues/concerns as affecting the ethnic press —

(1) *Need for resources* — advertising revenue from the mainstream British industries, national government and local authorities.

(2) *Special information needs of the ethnic minorities* — cater for the needs of the consumers: it was felt there was a need to improve on information given by ethnic press.

(3) *Need for a Central News Pool* — such agency would provide news clippling service and news coverage to ethnic press.

(4) *Need for alternative distribution network*

(5) *Need for a community printing press and typesetting service* — a few ethnic publishers own their own printing press and typesetting but there is still a need for access to a communal service.

(6) *Need for professional training of journalists and mechanical staff* — there is need to develop special courses to cater for the specialised need of the ethnic press.

(7) *Need for improving the wages and working conditions of the workers in ethnic press.*

It was suggested that an Association of Publishers of the Ethnic Press be set up in conjunction with Black Media Workers Association.

The workshop set up a steering committee which will be meeting to discuss the above issues in more detail.

Radio: Attention was focused on the following main points:

(a) Black people only given coverage by mainstream media when they are seen as problems by British society. At present there are only 8 hours per week of ethnic programming out of a possible 315 broadcast hours. These programmes lack status and proper funding within the station. The Asian Community most poorly served.

(b) Need to launch a two pronged attack on the medium of radio —

(i) To demand changes in mainstream radio;

(ii) To create our *own* alternatives.

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(i) The change we must demand needs to cover the areas of:

Access: Demand that the IBA puts conditions onto the awarding or renewal of franchises for local stations, to give black people in the community real access.

Employment: Most blacks employed in broadcasting at present seem to be there as cleaners or servers in the canteen. Needs more black reporters. There is need to set up special training courses — the GLC could sponsor such courses.

(ii) Campaign for the setting up of alternative structures and the creation of a black model of broadcasting.

Two possible structures — A black radio workshop and a black radio station.

The workshop focused on the following issues —

(1) Black radio workshop should be based on a commitment to the black community; should have permanent workers who link up with youth clubs and community groups teaching people how to record and edit.

(2) Workshop to be fully equipped with up-to-date facilities. The programmes produced would be broadcast on local stations as well as circulating recorded cassettes through black bookshops and other outlets.

(3) Workshop would provide a firm basis for any black radio station to be set up. There is need to work out a black model of broadcasting and to just copy established mainstream radio.

(4) The points to emerge from the discussion focused on training; pressure on existing media bodies especially IBA; programming and setting up radio workshops.

(5) The workshop on radio came out with the following suggestions:

(a) The need for a black radio station.

(b) Established a Steering Committee to discuss this further.

(c) Conduct feasibility study on a black radio station.

Film/Video

Focused on two main areas. One was the need to attack and challenge the racist practices in the media both in employment and representation of black people. The GLC had a crucial role to play in such a campaign. Secondly the need to put pressure on media unions, especially ACTT, to enable more black people to obtain union tickets.

The following emerged as the main points in the workshop —

(a) The GLC to put pressure on IBA, BBC, LWT, and Thames TV to ensure that equality of opportunity is enforced.

(b) Explore the possibility of setting up a film and video workshop.

(c) GLC to initiate dialogue with London television companies focusing specifically on recruitment, programming and training.

(d) Support independent black film-making.

(e) Set up steering group to discuss the issue raised.

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N Afro-Caribbean Youths Consultation 31 October 1982

1 Following a brief presentation of the main points of the recently published DES review — Experience and Participation — on the Youth Service, the meeting reconvened into working groups.

2 The following issues were raised in these working groups:

Group A: Needs

(i) A resource centre rather than a research unit is required to assist with co-ordination. The training of part-time youth workers should involve the needs of black youths and take into consideration cultural differences.

(ii) The Black Youth and Community Workers Association should be seen as the sponsoring organisation of this centre. (GLC to assist in funding.)

(iii) Needs are continually changing with the changing society and these need to be monitored, resources adequate to them allocated and policies adopted accordingly.

Group B: Women

(i) Abilities apart from those as child bearers are not taken seriously.

(ii) The unwillingness of men to accept the changing role of women and rid themselves of their sexism.

(iii) Inequality of education provided for men and women. The lack of representation of women in the youth service and the poor number of female youth workers/officers.

(iv) The need for nursery facilities (short-term) to enable young mothers to further their education.

(v) Women must be represented as of right on all committees.

(vi) It was also questioned as to whether the problems of black women should come under the wing of the Women's Unit or the EMU.

(vii) Eliminating racist and sexist policies in the Youth Service.

(viii) The need for black women youth workers to come together regularly to discuss issues which concern both them and the black community. It was important to develop a black philosophy in this area.

Group C: Crisis

(i) The black youth service is in crisis particularly in staffing, clientele, political relationships.

(ii) The main priority is getting the community on the road — stable and resourced without having to collaborate with organisations like the police and GLC.

(iii) The GLC should consider piloting a resource centre, would be mainly to give support and advice to the youth workers. (At the moment there are not enough youth workers and resources for the black youth service to get established. The Resource Centre would be funded by the GLC. The main idea is to consolidate a good structure which cannot be reversed or destroyed by future Councils and governments.)

(iv) The main points to be looked at are black peoples' views/perspective of Youth Work. It would be helpful if the GLC could fund a researcher to look into the needs of black youth and the different needs of black youth workers. Black people should have a say about the training and experience of workers working with black youths. The type and needs of black kids should be taken on by black youth workers. The workers should br tained in the needs, culture and aspirations of the black youths. The GLC could make representations of this on behalf of black youth workers.

(v) The Resource Centre should be independent and train black workers to deal with black youths as well as:

(1) Train part-time workers and develop full training capabilities.

(2) Resource base for all relevant data.

(3) Incorporate a research dimension.

(vi) Accommodation is a big problem for projects, play centres, etc.

(vii) A committee could be set up in certain areas, e.g., Lambeth, Hackney, Brent, involving black youth workers, to look into resources available to aid development of black people.

(viii) The position between youth and community workers should be consolidated.

(ix) It was mentioned that many young black people are orientated to short-term needs, e.g., pool tables, sports, recreation facilities, and not the long-term

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needs such as training of workers, education, cultural aspects, development, etc. They need to be educated towards long-term needs. They lack identity.

(x) The relationship between black youths and crucial areas like housing, education, employment and the relationship with state institutions like the police and judiciary must be explored in greater depth.

(xi) There must be positive discrimination to ensure more black workers are appointed.

(xii) Political education must be incorporated into youth and community work, especially when initiatives like the MSC programmes are nothing, but social control devices for rebellious youth.

(xiii) The structures in the youth service at the moment are not suitable for working with young black people — because of the racism that exists, you cannot be detached from political ideology.

(xiv) Young people should be involved in the community; this would eventually lead to political awareness.

(xv) Part-timers are mainly black — full-timers are mainly white; therefore, it is espcially important to train part-time and voluntary workers. It was stressed that more black full-time workers must be recruited and whites need to be trained in needs of black youth until a situation arises when there are enough black full-time workers.

(xvi) Recruitment procedures should be changed. White criteria are used to employ — interview black people for jobs and therefore the question of qualification or the lack of it becomes highly important. The interviews do not consider the experience and contact with the community that many unqualified workers have.

(xvii) The fact that some youth workers, black or white, try to push kids into YOPS schemes and MSC schemes which often in the end do not provide jobs — this should be looked into.

(xviii)The question of management and how to get into it — qualifications should be relative.

3 *The main proposals were:*

(1) Protest should be made about the phasing out of part-timers by ILEA.

(2) The GLC should fund a Resource Centre.

(3) Support should be given to examining the need for a London Youth Forum.

(4) This consultation needs to be recalled as a matter of urgency.

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○ Latin Americans Consultation 3 November 1982

1 The participants welcomed the GLC's initiative in calling the meeting as it was the first time that the various Latin American organisations were brought together to discuss common problems.

Compared to the Afro-Caribbean and the Asian Community, the Latin American Communities in this country are relatively new and fall into two groups:

(1) Political refugees.

(2) Migrant workers.

They estimate their population as totalling approximately 30,000 living in the Greater London area.

2 One of the major problems that affect them is that of language difficulties, and because of this they find it extremely difficult to communicate and get employment. The Latin American people are also male dominated, they leave the home frequently and tend to be ones that get employment quicker, thus picking up the English language skills. The Latin American women felt isolated because of language barriers; a few women's groups have been set up; the community would welcome support from the GLC for their women's projects.

3 Employment was a basic major concern for the community. A large number of them are working in the service industries, or in restaurants, washing up, etc., for very low wages. They felt that their employers recruited them as cheap labour and, because many of them had immigration difficulties or were illegal immigrants, there was very little they could do to improve their working conditions. Employers often subjected them to passport checks. It was felt that before things could improve in the employment field the problems of immigration and illegal immigrants need to be resolved. This is one of the issues on which GLC should help. A suggestion by the Latin American Advisory Committee was for an amnesty to be granted to all illegal immigrants/workers — although it was recognised by the groups that this would be a controversial matter. In a number of European countries this has already been done. It was felt that if anmesty was granted many of the migrant workers and refugees would be able to seek employment using their professional skills and operating legally. This would then hopefully lead to less harassment by the police than currently experienced.

4 Passport checks were still being carried out by the employers and it was alleged that the ILEA and educational authorities were causing problems through passport checks.

5 YOPS courses, it was felt, were not appropriate for the community as a certain knowledge of the English language is a prerequisite which many of the Latin American youth do not have. The GLC can help by campaigning for ESL courses on training schemes.

6 It was claimed that many large employers in fact discriminated against the community especially refugees as they stipulated that you must be a resident, i.e., London Transport, Post Office. This affected the Latin Americans in London to a greater extent than anyone else.

7 Housing and accommodation were presented by the groups as a major issue. Very little housing offered by the boroughs especially for four, five and six bedroom houses. In the private sector Latin Americans were to be found in the most depressed areas of London with very little facilities and overcrowding.

8 Health issues were raised as being of specific concern. The National Health Services' attitude to overseas visitors, who are often required to show their passports before treatment, was given as a primary cause for concern.

9 The groups felt that it was often difficult to classify them, as generally any classification is by the colour of one's skin. It was felt that programmes to combat racism are generally directed to the ethnic minority groups from the Commonwealth countries. The Latin Americans in London wanted to establish links with communities that are now starting to fight for their rights, i.e., black ethnic groups such as Asians and West Indians. The GLC would put them in contact with the other communities.

10 The need for a cultural centre was stressed where all the different groups could meet, groups who are concerned with politics, arts, drama, mother-tongue, health, housing, etc. From this centre they could play a larger role in the community. Latin American women would be able to meet together and have somewhere to take their children. It would also be a way of preserving their own identity and links with their homelands. Proposals were being developed and an application for assistance had been submitted to the GLC.

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P Asian Youths Consultation 6 November 1982

The meeting was hosted by the Southall Youth Management (SYM) and the main concern of the participants was to initiate plans for a broad-based, London-wide consultation with organisations working for and with Asian youths.

A Steering Committee was established and given the brief to plan the proposed London-wide meeting with the following guidelines:

(a) A special effort must be made to include and attract Asian girls or autonomous Asian women's groups.

(b) A central venue, like County Hall, should be booked for this meeting.

(c) Asian press and TV programmes be used to advertise the meeting.

(d) The meeting to be held before 12 March 1983 so that a collective input can be made when the proposed follow-up consultation with all ethnic minority organisations is held.

The Steering Committee also discussed some of the major issues affecting Asian youths. This discussion centred around the nature of the present leadership in the Asian community, the need to have a London Youth Forum to provide a platform for co-ordinating youth responses and 'unify cultural resistances', the urgent necessity to influence central government's review of the Youth Service, measures to combat the continuing marginalisation of the Asian youths and women in particular.

Plans are still being formalised for the convening of a London-wide meeting of all organisations concerned about Asian youths. The Steering Committee held its first meeting on 4 December 1982 and further meetings have been arranged to finalise plans for a London-wide meeting of all Asian youths in 1983.

Q Specialist Race Workers 22 November 1982

1 More and more local authorities have responded to the rightful challenges of the black communities in their quest for equality and justice by appointing specialist workers and race relations advisers. An increasing number of these are black and a meeting of many of these workers was convened as an exploratory initiative to examine common areas, patterns of support and effective practice.

2 The following issues were raised in the discussions:

(i) A critical examination must be made of the strategic role and specific tasks of specialist workers. In initiating this, participants observed that:

(a) such workers have two tasks — to increase the community's awareness and to eradicate structural racism;

(b) there must be a recognition of the nature of the exploitative role that is inherent in the appointment of specialist workers;

(c) some workers have to battle to secure an adequate and relevant interpretation of their job and responsibilities;

(d) there is a need for black awareness training for specialist workers as often such workers, in their isolation, fail to develop a confident and assertive style of operation which is a pre-requisite in coping with the power of obstructive senior officers;

(e) extreme caution and vigilance must be exercised to ensure that local authorities do not use black specialist workers as dispensible buffers between them and the black community;

(f) there is a need for all such workers to become familiar and knowledgeable with the political system so that it can be used to the community's advantage;

(g) some black workers are proving embarrasingly ineffective as they either are too removed from the experience of the community or are unable to maintain any sustained form of communication/liaison with their community.

(ii) A great deal of time was spent discussing the possibility of establishing a forum of specialist workers or an association of black professional workers. The following issues were raised in the ensuing discussions:

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(a) demands can only be effected if there is a powerful and unified voice; hence the urgent need for the establishment of a forum;

(b) such a forum would need to address itself to a range of issues, including professional support, developing a united approach to work, effective ways of delivery resources to the community, strategies for eradicating racism, ways of relating to each other, etc.;

(c) an urgent priority for consideration should be a critical examination of the abuse of Section 11 funding and the employment of black workers;

(d) if a London-wide forum is too broad a base, then specialist forums for workers in strategic departments — social services, education, housing, etc. — should be convened with a London-wide forum of all these specialist forums having a strategic overview and co-ordinating role;

(e) a professional association could also be formed to do the above as well as act as a quasi-trade union for all black specialist workers.

(iii) Other broader issues raised were:

(a) such meetings are effective as the convening of this meeting resulted in:

(1) Hackney black workers forming themselves into a group;

(2) specialist workers from the same borough meeting each other for the first time;

(b) a need to challenge established traditions and thinking among white social workers, e.g., the notion that bonding is more important than cultural identification which can have disastrous effects for fostering, adoption and case work;

(c) there is a need for specialist workers to determine how they see themselves and how the community can be convinced that such workers are struggling in its interest;

(d) if black workers were doing their jobs properly for the best interests of the community, then they were literally to be in conflict with their employers;

(e) unions are too often used as scapegoats for not implementing policy. Therefore, workers must narrow the options available to the local authorities by gaining support of the unions and this can be achieved by creating black workers' groups within individual unions.

(iv) Some reservations were expressed about creating any structured format for specialist workers until all the options are examined and so in the interim the EMU should seek to do the following:

(1) keep a central register of all race advisers and specialist workers;

(2) convene future meetings, one of which should be a major conference.

(v) It was proposed and accepted that a steering committee be elected to examine the feasibility of setting up a regular forum for specialist workers or a professional association. In discussing this proposal, the following were raised:

(1) one representative from each local authority present would comprise the committee with EMU co-ordinating;

(2) the committee to examine terms of reference and identify black workers in local authorities;

(3) determine whether to incorporate white specialist workers in the association or forum and on what basis;

(4) a need to set up a working party to produce a handbook for black workers which will incorporate information on strategieis, definitions of concepts and a political overview of the system and good practical guides;

(5) rather than convene a re-call meeting of this group, specialist workers should participate in the London-wide consultation for ethnic minorities in London being organised by EMU on 12 March 1983.

Proposals

The following concrete proposals were accepted for further action:

(1) EMU to circulate GLC's proposals on Section 11 funding.

(2) All participants to find out names and contact addresses for other workers in their boroughs.

(3) Race Relations Advisers should undertake to convene borough-based meetings of all specialist workers.

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R **Scarman Conference 27 November 1982**

1 Following contributions from the platform and the ensuing discussions, the main points that most speakers stressed were —

(a) The Scarman report was basically irrelevant because:

(1) it says nothing new or proposes anything innovative or relevant;

(2) it failed to recognise the insidious and endemic nature of racism in British society;

(3) consequently, there are no concrete proposals to tackle racism — individual, institutional or cultural.

(b) Too much time is being spent on considering Scarman and this is detrimental to the community because Scarman is essentially a diversion.

(c) It is imperative, therefore, that the community should not allow the Scarman report to shape the debate on policing and racism. It is for the black community to set the context and parameters for changes itself.

(d) In any case, one year after Scarman has resulted in no evidence of any fundamental changes or the implementation of Scarman's major recommendations.

2 Following further debate arising out of workshops the following were resolved by popular concensus:

(a) ethnic minority groups should make demands on central government for proportional resource allocations.

(b) present training arrangements to eradicate racism in the Metropolitan Police are inadequate and cosmetic.

(c) police officers must be brought to answer for the dehumanisation process of their actions against black people.

(d) there should be no compromise on amending the disciplinary code to incorporate racial discrimination/harassment a dismissal offence.

(e) ethnic minority communities should work through existing institutions for change and not seek to set up their own political party.

(f) wherever there appears to be a conflict of interest, black politicians should defy the whips in the interest of black people's rights.

(g) ethnic minorities must organise at grass roots level to fight for rights.

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Summary of issues raised

The major issues raised that were common to most meetings were as follows:

(i) An urgent need exists for community centres and meeting places for ethnic minority organisations. Such centres to be of a high standard in facilities offered and adequately resourced to ensure efficiency and long opening hours.

(ii) Recognising the bias in the Unit's work towards the black communities, the Council should make a concerted effort to employ more specialist advisers for servicing the other ethnic minorities and liaison officers to assist with the development of projects and stimulate new initiatives and enterprises.

(iii) The consultations were welcomed as timely and relevant initiatives, but were considered to warrant longer-term planning in future. More meetings must be held but with more detailed planning and wider publicity and with a specific target instead of the broad focus of the first round of meetings.

(iv) These consultations afforded a unique opportunity for several competing groups, interests and ideologies to come together. This must be encouraged and several participants called on the Council to begin to explore ways in which confederations/standing organisations/consortia of these organisations can be developed.

(v) The Council is in a unique position to assist ethnic minority organisations make representations to local authorities and central government about the extent of racial disadvantage and discrimination and to secure the ethnic dimension in policy which would meet their specific and specialist needs.

(vi) The Ethnic Minorities Unit should be a resource unit for ethnic minority organisations by providing them with information and guidance on major issues, research facilities on topical developments and a reference point
for intra- and inter-organisation contact.

(vii) To enable any of the above to happen, it was repeatedly stressed that more resources were needed and the Council should make available to the Ethnic Minorities Committee a much larger budget so that meaningful responses can be made to meet special needs and combat racial disadvantage.

Each group raised other issues that were unique to their own interest and these will form the basis of further consultative/liaison meetings to determine specific priorities and projects.

Attendance at each consultation varied greatly and the following is an analysis of participants attending each meeting:

Jewish	20
Orthodox Jewish	55
Prison Welfare	23
Housing	40
Rastafari	45
Carnival	55
Sports	30
Latin American	35
Afro-Caribbean Youths	60
Specialist Workers	85
Health/Senior Citizens	25
Gay Blacks	28
Community Education	45
Travellers/Gypsies	50
Black Lesbians	7
Irish	45
Media	87
Asian Youths	15
Scarman	217

(At a majority of the meetings the participants were delegates/representatives of organisations.)

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If you want to know more about the GLC's policies and programmes for ethnic minorities, if you have any comments on what has been achieved so far or have ideas on what should be done in the future, then write to: Ethnic Minorities Unit, Greater London Council, County Hall, London, SE1 7PB.

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