

Director
Lord Birkett

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Telephone 01-633-2611
Please reply to Rm 673
My reference RA/REU/BB
Your reference
Date 11th November 1985

Dear Junior

I have at last completed the evaluation report on Paul Robeson Exhibition. This also includes a financial evaluation and as you can see we made a net saving of £4,836.58.

As you can see I am suggesting that the savings be used towards making a second copy of the exhibition. Can we please arrange to meet to discuss this before the report is taken to Committee. Can you call Brigitte to set up a date and I could come to your offices.

Many thanks

Best wishes



Ms Parminder Vir
Head of Race Equality unit

Handwritten notes:
Call Junior to meet
Sue
Doris
16/11/85

PAUL ROBESON EXHIBITION:- EVALUATION REPORT

1. The Paul Robeson Exhibition was staged at the Royal Festival Hall from 23 April to 16 May. The exhibition was opened by the Right Hon. Neil Kinnock, in attendance was Paul Robeson, Jr who travelled from America for the opening of the exhibition.
2. A Paul Robeson film tribute and a Paul Robeson Memorial Concert, took place on 4 and 5 May.
3. This report concentrates mainly with the actual exhibition, but first a few words on the film tribute and the Memorial Concert.
4. Three of Paul Robeson's best loved films were shown, they were THE PROUD VALLEY, SONG OF FREEDOM and JERICO. The event was the first public film tribute to Robeson in Britain for over thirty years. Like the other related events, the film tribute attracted people from all over London and beyond including Holland and quite a few people saw Paul Robeson's films for the first time.
5. The Paul Robeson Memorial Concert took place on 6 May at the Queen Elizabeth Hall. Those taking part included individuals like Dame Peggy Ashcroft and Elizabeth Welsh, who had worked with Paul Robeson, and knew him, and latter day artistes like Joe Marcel and J.D.D. Douglas. Robeson's link with Wales - and especially the Welsh mining community - were eloquently evoked by the Welsh choir (or Meibion Morlais) from the Rhodda Valley. The contribution of Martha Edwards proved to be the most moving event of the evening. Martha Edwards had sung to Paul Robeson as a five year old and some fifty-five years later repeated the honour at the Memorial Concert. The evening was drawn together by Paul Robeson Junior's tribute, which sketched the span of his father's cultural and political significance. In his speech he frequently emphasised his father's commitment to liberation, socialism and Black pride.
6. The Jamaican Opera Singer Willard White was left with the unenviable task of standing in Robeson's shoes and performing a selection of his material ranging from Negro Spirituals through "Jock Hill" to Robeson's best known song "Ol' Man River". The concert did bring together a cross section of artistes, of different races, ages, skills and attracted a very diverse and satisfied audience.

THE PAUL ROBESON EXHIBITION AT THE ROYAL FESTIVAL HALL

7. The exhibition was started by the late Ken Goodlands from Bristol over forty years ago, in the form of magazine cuttings and the recordings of Paul Robeson. He had tried for years to interest public hall managers to display his small but rare collection without success. A chance meeting with Martha Edwards in 1982, (who had been a devotee of Paul Robeson) resulted in the first public showing of the exhibition in 1982 at the Cardiff Central Library. At that time the collection lacked many of the prominent features that should make it appeal to a wide audience. It also lacked a black radical dimension. Junior Douglas was instrumental in first bringing the exhibition to London and secondly expanding and researching all aspects of Paul Robeson's life.

8. In April of 1985, a budget of £31,449 (net £21,027) was approved for

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|------------------------------|---------|
| (a) An exhibition programme. | £17,400 |
| (b) A film tribute. | £ 5,192 |
| (c) A memorial concert. | £ 8,855 |

For the first time the exhibition was presented in a truly professional way, one third of the exhibition comprising of material hitherto unseen in the collection. For instance, most of the film section and the video "Tribute to an Artist" were GLC initiatives.

EFFECTS OF THE EXHIBITION ON THE GENERAL PUBLIC

9. The original reason for staging the exhibition was to honour the memory of Paul Robeson and to introduce his name and myriad achievements to a new generation who perhaps were unaware of who Paul Robeson was, and what he stood for. It must be stated that the exhibition went far beyond its original intent. First it restored a truly great artiste to his rightful place of honour, something that was denied to Paul Robeson by the American Government because of his political views. Paul Robeson was a true freedom fighter, who fought for the liberation of all oppressed people, and that came out strongly in the exhibition. The exhibition, because of its numerous sections and exhaustive approach, restored black achievement in an unparalleled way. For instance it was not only the achievements of Robeson but other black individuals associated with him as well, which thrilled so many black people who came to the exhibition.
10. The exhibition had a very informative and educational approach. For instance, although many people knew that C.L.R. James wrote the book, The Black Jacobins, it was not common knowledge that he had written a play on the theme of the Haitian revolution in 1936, and that Robeson played the titled role of Toussaint. For the first time people were able to read the reviews of the play and discover a wealth of information.
11. The exhibition was also seen by many as a forceful lesson in Black history. It must be said also that the pure joy of those who listened to Robeson's voice on the video and the cassette recorder, in its own way helped in making the exhibition the great success that it was. The Royal Festival Hall has received numerous letters from members of the public saying how they enjoyed the exhibition and would like to see it again. Over ten London Boroughs have asked for the exhibition to be displayed in their locality. Councils in the Midlands and Scotland have also asked for the exhibition.
12. As a result of the great demand for the exhibition it is felt that a second copy of the exhibition is required. (The original exhibition has returned to Wales.) The Paul Robeson Exhibition (London copy) will have all the features and categories of the original plus added sections to reflect Robeson's life in London and particularly his connection with Brixton. Also in the London copy will be a section on Robeson and India.

BREAKDOWN OF EXPENDITURE

	£
Film stills	250.00
Books	150.00
Newspapers/magazine articles	200.00
Record sleeves/photographing	350.00
Photographs	200.00
Carrying case	400.00
Transport/travel	200.00
Correspondence	100.00
Lamination	2,500.00
Consultancy fee	<u>1,000.00</u>
	<u>5,350.00</u>

13. The financial assessment of the Exhibition and related events is attached in Appendix A and show a net saving of £4,836.58. It is proposed that the sum be used to make a London Copy of the Exhibition and towards the establishment of a Paul Robeson Trust based in London. The Trust would be responsible for the overall management of the Exhibition, its upkeep and wider distribution. The exhibition can immediately be programmed and presented as part of the Black Experience Arts Programme which is to be presented in London between January - March 1986.
14. Finally, it can be said without doubt that the Exhibition, concert and film programme on Paul Robeson was a tremendous success. The Exhibition is presently enjoying a tour of Wales where the idea was originally discussed. There have been demands from Europe, America and India for the Exhibition. We sincerely feel this is one of the legacies of the GLC which will be long remembered.

S U M M A R YPAUL ROBESON - EXHIBITION, CONCERT & FILMS AT RFH & QEHAPRIL/MAY 1985- With reference to the report- Budget expenditure

Exhibition	£17,400
Concert	£ 8,855
Film	£ 5,192
	<u>£31,447</u>

Estimated Income

Catalogue	£2,500
Concert	£3,920
Films	£4,000

£10,420

Total Deficit £21,027

- According to the Computer Printout -- Expenditure

Exhibition	£10,010.44
Concert	£ 5,015.21
Film	<u>£ 4,855.77</u>
	<u>£19,881.42</u>

- Income

QEH	-	Paul Robeson Memorial Concert	£2,495.00
QEH	-	Paul Robeson - Films	<u>£1,196.00</u>

£3,691.00

APPENDIX A2

S U M M A R Y

<u>Estimated expenditure</u>	<u>Actual expenditure</u>	<u>Variance</u>
£31,447.00	£19,881.42	£11,565.58

<u>Estimated expenditure</u>	<u>Actual expenditure</u>	<u>Variance</u>
£10,420.00	£ 3,691.00	(6,729.00)

The amount of Grant Due

£11,565.58	-	£6,729.00
	=	£4,836.58