

Arts and Recreation Committee
Ethnic Minorities Committee
Staff Committee
Finance & General Purposes Committee
Report (20.9.84) by
Director of Recreation and the Arts
Principal Race Relations Adviser

Item	
2	AR 1772
MAINSTREAM ARTS AND THEIR CHALLENGE TO RACISM	

RECOMMENDATIONS

For Arts and Recreation Committee

- (1) That all major arts institutions as identified in paragraph 6 of this report funded by the GLC submit written statements of Equal Opportunity and Anti-Racist policies.
- (2) That all major arts institutions produce detailed proposals for the implementation of these policies within the next ~~three~~ ^{six} months.
- (3) That GLC grants officers when monitoring, assessing and evaluating applications from mainstream arts bodies, do so in accordance with the criteria set out in report 'Anti-Racist Initiatives in the Independent Voluntary Sector' (EM 611), and incorporate all relevant information in reports to Committee for consideration.
- (4) That officers be instructed to make further enquiries with a view to establishing a professional training scheme as outlined in paragraphs 17-20, and to report back within two months.

For Ethnic Minority Committee

That the report be received.

331/S96

MAINSTREAM ARTS AND THEIR CHALLENGE TO RACISM

This report sets out proposals for identifying and eradicating racism in mainstream arts institutions in London by initiatives aimed at providing race equality in the Arts. Another separate but complimentary report has been prepared on positive action proposals for providing race equality in the Department for Recreation and the Arts so that the Council can be seen as not imposing any more onerous requirements on the independent arts bodies than upon itself.

1. Background

The emergent Independent Black Arts sector is important for new contemporary innovation as well as for traditional aspects of black arts. Alongside this the mainstream arts institutions also have a vital role to play in challenging racism and racist practices.

2. In order to evaluate critically the policies and practices of mainstream arts institutions towards anti-racism and equal opportunities it is necessary to develop an understanding of the historical roots of cultural racism. The cultural racism prevalent in British society today has its roots in imperialism and colonialism, when two-thirds of the world was dominated by a minority of white nations. Cultural domination was exercised through the neglect of non-Western traditions in the arts. Western culture has come to dominate the world culture in political, economic, technological, industrial and cultural spheres and in its effect on what is now acceptable as 'real knowledge'. Terms such as 'International Arts' are synonymous with Western art. There is today an ideology of eurocentricism, which perceives the West as the highest level of human civilisation and the rest of the world as primitive and backward. It manifests itself in the way black arts and artists are treated and the importance given to their cultural traditions. The institutional, individual and cultural racism of British society has denied black artists access and exposure, except, perhaps, as decorative additions to festivals or exotic entertainment. Western classical traditions in music, theatre, dance, literature still predominate and it is through them that all other traditions in the arts are judged.

3. The policies of major artistic institutions in London must be challenged by any anti-racist ideology. The cultural superiority that helped to justify British colonialism and imperialism still exists today. Existing programmes confirm the British and Euro-centric emphasis, suggesting that Britain is still an all white society. The artistic and cultural expressions of non-European communities in Britain is only to be seen occasionally and then usually presented as some form of exotica for the entertainment and gratification of white people and others who have lost their traditional cultural heritage. This is further reinforced in the staffing and management structure of major art bodies where with the exceptions of the canteen workers and occasional token employees, black people are not to be found in these institutions.

4. Art has effect of celebrating, and reinforcing existing social relationships. The mainstream arts institutions are the ambassadors of British Culture but their programmes serve to perpetuate racism. Conscious efforts must be made to challenge and change these distortions. The intention must be to begin to transform radically the mainstream institutions to reflect the cultures of today and not only the cultures of yesterday. This means world cultures. It is ironic that at a time when the British public accepts black people representing this country at national and international sports events, black people are not yet accepted as part of the mainstream arts.

5. The mainstream arts institutions are important because they have the bulk of the resources allocated to them; they have considerable amount of influence as arbiters of what is unacceptable or acceptable as culturally 'normal'; they have the responsibility to pick up and develop new trends, which invariably happen outside the mainstream arts institutions. Therefore in any attempt to challenge racism as it manifests itself in mainstream arts, it is necessary for the mainstream arts institutions to adopt a positive stand in the fight against racism. In order to do this these institutions have to conduct a serious examination of their own functions and practices. This means more than just a pious declaration of intent or policy commitments. The essential components of an anti-racist approach is a thorough examination of the accepted 'norms' and assumptions that govern the programming and employment practices of the arts institutions. Today these invariably result in the exclusion of black people except in marginal or peripheral ways.

Proposals

6. Although all of the issues raised and solutions suggested in this report are equally applicable to all arts organisations supported by the GLC, this report is directed at the three major arts institutions which receive £2.75m of the Arts and Recreation Committee's grants budget. These are:-

London Festival Ballet
National Theatre
English National Opera

In addition to the above three major arts bodies, the following arts organisations also have an important role to play in the challenge against racism. These are Riverside Studios, ICA, Hayward Gallery, Albany, GLAA, Battersea Arts Centre, Combination Theatre Company and Sadlers Wells.

7. The arts institutions set out in paragraph 6 are important for ensuring that equal opportunities policies are actively pursued and carried out because:-

- (a) They employ large numbers of people and therefore have the scope for change.
- (b) They receive the bulk of Arts and Recreation Committee funding and therefore control vast resources.
- (c) They are perceived as representative of 'accepted' British culture the world over and as prestigious arts bodies.

8. The new anti-racist requirements are grounded in the concerns expressed by the Ethnic Arts Sub-Committee, 'to secure representation of ethnic minorities in the artistic programme, employment policies and practices, administration and management structures of the major arts institutions, particularly those funded by the GLC'.

9. Employment

The issue of the employment of black people in all cultural industries has been a major concern and has been expressed at a number of consultative meetings held by the Council. Black people are to be found in insignificant numbers in the more specialised and technical jobs such as lighting, sound engineering, set designing and production management as well as among office staff, producers, directors, administrators and promoters. Access to technical and administrative jobs is limited due to racial disadvantage and also to the closed nature of employment in the arts.

10. The present advertising, recruitment, interviewing and appointment practices of the major arts institutions need to be thoroughly examined and positive steps taken to redress the racial imbalance. All of these bodies are required as a condition of grant from this Council to have an Equal Opportunity policy. This should be pursued and implemented actively. The institutions should provide a written long-term strategy of how they propose to recruit more black people into the positions identified above. In addition there are a number of initiatives which the institutions can take immediately in this direction.

- (a) All existing staff should be given anti-racist training. The main purpose of such a training programme should be to get those presently running and managing these institutions to examine their cultural attitudes. Issues such as Cultural Imperialism and how it operates today; Notions of ethnic/black arts (whose definitions?) The Role of Black Arts and Artists in mainstream arts; What is 20th century British culture? Racism and Art, Art and Apartheid, are just a few examples of the range of topics which need to be debated. Such a dialogue should take place with black artists. The EMU can assist with arrangements for such training workshops.

- (b) The ideological debate while important, is meaningless unless translated into policy. Hand-in-hand with the ideological debate, must come a thorough examination of the existing attitudes programming policies and employment practices of those who run and manage these institutions. Recruitment, short-listing and interviewing are all areas where people's subjective judgements play an important role. Many of the people working in these institutions in key personnel positions need detrainning of their racist assumptions and stereotypes of black people.
- (c) All institutions should examine their advertising policies: where they advertise, the wording of the adverts, and the use of black images in advertisements. All jobs as a matter of course should be advertised in the black/ethnic press and the text of adverts should be such that it attracts black people to apply. Whenever justifiable, jobs should also be advertised in the different languages.
- (d) Formal qualifications should not be the sole determining criteria for short-listing, interviewing or appointment. Interest, experience and aptitude should also be considered as an equally important criteria for employment.
- (e) To assist in the broad areas of programming, training and employment, all institutions should seriously consider the appointment of specialist workers to advise on the implementation of equal opportunity policies with regards to black people.

11. Training

The issue of employment is intrinsically related to training opportunities and is one of the direct ways in which these imbalances can be rectified. If the institutions are to make real efforts to encourage the greater participation of black people in their management and programming, then they must devise methods of attracting black applicants. Training is very important and one which the institutions should pursue vigorously if the notion of equal opportunity is to become a reality. The institutions must make provision for comprehensive training programmes which lead to the permanent employment of trainees. In addition to the general anti-racist training programmes aimed at existing staff, each institution should identify areas of under-representation of black people within the organisation and devise training programmes with a view to redressing imbalances. The costs of such training schemes should be included in the overall budget of each organisation and should be a condition of any grant aid being given by the GLC. All such training schemes, while set up to meet the needs of specific organisations should cover the broad areas of arts administration, management, technical areas and performance skills. Thus, for instance, it would be quite justifiable to ask the London Festival Ballet, presently employing up to 120 people, all of whom are white to provide a training scheme aimed at training black dancers to join the company or at least making arrangements with the schools of Classical Dancing to take on black trainee dancers.

12. Black Representation in Decision-Making

This is implicit if a real change in redistribution and reallocation of resources, as well as a greater participation of black people in the existing institutions, is to take place. Representation of black people in existing management structures and in decision-making bodies of mainstream arts institutions is presently abysmal. The present situation of no black representation on the boards of the English National Opera, London Festival Ballet, Sadlers Wells, National Theatre is clearly unacceptable. Representation of black people at this level is crucial; it is where policy matters are debated. Until and unless black people are co-opted onto these structures, the institutions will continue to perpetuate outmoded notions of culture. The co-option of black people, however, should not be a token gesture where the single sole black representative is expected to represent the interests and concerns of all black people. Black people once co-opted must be able to participate fully in the formation of overall policy and practice.

13. Programming

This is the most visible sign of the policies and practices of mainstream arts institutions. A brief glance at existing arts programmes, be they in theatre, music, dance, visual arts, or films, shows the lack of reference to black arts. Where black arts are presented they are either seen as exotica or as appendages to festivals. Black arts must be programmed as an integral part of the overall arts programme. The view of culture, held by these institutions is one of white British culture which clearly must change in order to reflect a world view of culture. These institutions have a major role to play in challenging the nature of cultural supremacy.

14. In order to ensure that the major arts institutions which receive considerable support from the Council are complying with the equal opportunity commitments of this Council, the Committee must use its grant-giving powers to enforce the implementation of such policies. A report entitled Anti-Racist Initiatives in the Independent Voluntary Sector (EM 611) which has been approved by all GLC grant-making committees, determined procedures to secure compliance with equal opportunities conditions of grant-aid and implementation of anti-racist objectives. The mainstream arts institutions listed in this report also form part of the independent voluntary sector for purposes of receiving grant-aid and must therefore be taking on board these initiatives.

15. The report identifies the following four ways of helping grant-aided organisations towards achieving equal opportunity objectives:-

- (a) Evaluation of grant-aid applications to determine equal opportunity and anti-racist commitments prior to grant aid approval. The report goes on to suggest a check list of questions which the officers assessing the applicants should ask and the information should be incorporated into the body of the report.
- (b) In addition to the normal conditions of grant-aid, the report goes on to suggest additional conditions which will help in the achievement of anti-racist objectives.

- (c) Monitoring, assessment and evaluation.
- (d) Advice, guidance and support for development of anti-racist perspective.

16 Where organisations do not make any efforts to formulate a programme with targets, then grants to such bodies should be held back until receipt of satisfactory equal opportunities programmes. Where organisations need advice, guidance and assistance with the implementation of their race equality programmes both the Department for Recreation and the Arts and the Ethnic Minorities Unit would be able to provide it. The Arts and Recreation Committee should also be prepared to consider requests for additional resources aimed at implementing the race equality targets set out in this report.

17 In addition, it is proposed that the Council set up a training scheme to increase access to training in the Arts for black people. The scheme would initially concentrate on the training of administrative and management skills with a view to increasing the numbers of suitably qualified and employable black people in arts administration posts within the mainstream arts establishment. It would, in time, embrace training in the specific areas of technical and performance skills. This initial concentration on administrative and management opportunities is seen as the best way forward for 2 main reasons:

- (a) Openings for black people in the technical and performance areas depend more on increasing opportunities for practical experience and less on formalised theoretical tuition, and as such will become possible through those changes in attitudes and policies within the mainstream arts organisations which the broad recommendations in this report seek to effect. Professional training in specific technical and performance skills exist at present only as part of longer courses which invariably require academic qualifications for entry and on which competition for places is very high.
- (b) some knowledge and experience of the management and administration of arts organisations is valuable also for the student who ultimately wishes to pursue a career as a performer or skilled technician.

18 Discussions have taken place with The City University who have indicated a willingness and desire to create a Practical Training Scheme with the objective of training black people in arts administration skills. The scheme would be for black people who already possess some relevant experience and would be structured so as to combine periods of academic tuition in University with a broad range of work experience in placements with arts organisations and companies. There would be opportunities for specialisation in areas selected by the trainees, dependent on individual interests and aptitudes and guided by professional academics and administrators in the field on a one-to-one basis. The Scheme would be run in close association with the major GLC grant-aided arts institutions who would be looked to to provide most of the work-experience placements.

19 Further discussions need to take place with the ICU and major arts organisations to finalise details of the proposed Training Scheme but it is clear that the scheme need not be geared to the University year and so could commence as early as January 1985.

20 Costings. Further enquiries are needed to clarify exact costings but an estimate can be given as follows:

Full year (40 weeks) costs assuming optimum trainee intake of 20.

		£
1	Payment to trainees £100 per week	80,000
2	Course fees	6,000
3	Advertising	2,000
	TOTAL	£88,000

ARTS COUNCIL OF GREAT BRITAIN (ACGB)

21 It would be erroneous to write a report on the mainstream arts institutions' challenge to racism without reference to a report published by the ACGB. The ACGB recently published a policy document entitled 'The Glory of the Garden - Strategy for a Decade', the content of which has wide ranging implications for Black arts groups generally. While the main policy objective of the document, of greater investment of resources into the regions is to be welcomed, there are a number of problems with the proposed strategy, which are of particular concern to Black artists.

- (a) In proposing a greater devolution of resources to the Regional Arts Association (RAAs), the ACGB has made an assumption that these RAAs which includes GLAA, are representative of the interests and concerns of Black artists. Indeed, it is a fact that no RAA presently employs Black people in specialist or non-specialist positions. The level of representation of Black people on the various panel structures is abysmal with the exception of the few token Black persons co-opted to speak on the ethnic/black issues. Representation of Black people on the management and executive structures of the RAA is virtually nil. In fact, many RAAs would argue that since they do not have ethnic minorities residing in their region they need not concern themselves with black and ethnic minority arts.
- (b) The report makes continual references to 'Black/Asian arts' and the concerns of ACGB to encourage 'multicultural' arts and yet fails to provide any concrete examples of structures by which they propose to achieve this. It is further disturbing to read the contradictions between the written statements and the practice. The Arts Council is about to devolve most Black clients to local RAAs including Tara Arts Group, Steel N'Skinn, Aklowa and Ekome. All of these groups have played a major role in the development of minorities arts and have a strong case for continued funding from the Arts Council. Others have been cut entirely, notably Temba Theatre Company which has long history of working and touring nationally. Organisations like Minorities Arts Advisory Service and National Association for Asian Youth, both of which play a major national role, are also under threat. This kind of systematic attack on Black arts groups currently being supported by the Arts Council does not leave Black arts groups generally with much hope of receiving funding from the Arts Council. The view that the Arts Council does not recognise 'Black/Asian' arts as having national significance is further confirmed when it proposed to devolve CARNIVAL - an event of national and international significance - to the RAA.

- (c) The report also makes references to wide consultations which the Arts Council held in order to arrive at the policy strategy outlined in the report. No Black arts groups or organisations representing the interests of Black arts were consulted. This is a gross omission on the part of an institution which has been charged with the responsibility for the promotion and development of British culture. There is no evidence of the nature of this process of consultation and practical evidence of its findings. In fact what is apparent from the tone of the report is that British culture is still perceived as being solidly white, middle class traditional culture.

22 The implications of the policies outlined in 'The Glory of the Garden' report are particularly grave for the London-based Black arts groups. Black arts with the increased availability of funding and resources from the GLC over the past few years has advanced to a stage where they need continued support. Neither the ACGS nor GLAA have developed a positive policy on how they proposed to distribute the resources and money equally, to Black arts groups. Due to the deep concerns expressed by Black artists and activists about the policies outlined in the report, MAAS has set up a Working Party to study the implication of the report for the future funding of Black arts. The findings of the report will be published shortly.

GREATER LONDON ARTS ASSOCIATION (GLAA)

23 The Ethnic Arts Sub-Committee has been concerned about the policies of GLAA with regards to Black/ethnic minority arts. The main concerns have been in the area of employment of Black people within the overall structure of GLAA; policies and criteria for funding and the representation of Black people on panels and management structures. GLAA has taken a number of initiatives in an attempt to formulate policies for the support of Black arts. These initiatives include:-

- (a) The establishment of an Ethnic Arts Steering Group with Black representation to advise on policy and funding.
- (b) Creation of a specialist Ethnic Arts Development post.
- (c) Black representative on most of the specialist panels.
- (d) Creation of a development budget for new initiatives, particularly training.

24 While all of these initiatives go some way towards meeting the needs of Black arts and the implementation of equal opportunity policies, they do not go far enough.

- (a) The present criteria used to determine which applications receive funding and the specialist nature of the panel structures which works against Black artists and arts activity needs to be examined. GLAA must assess and change its existing panel structure and procedures and ensure they adequately serve the needs of Black art and Black artists.

- (b) Another factor working against Black arts groups succeeding in getting funding, is GLAA's commitment to revenue funded groups. Majority of these groups are white-managed and long established. If GLAA is to really respond to the needs of Black artists, then it must seriously examine its policy of continuous funding to long established clients and divert the resources to Black arts.
- (c) All the specialist panels must as a matter of course co-opt black representatives who participate fully in formulating overall policy.
- (d) GLAA must employ black members of staff, not just in specialist positions, but as ordinary officers and assistant officers within the overall framework of the organisation.
- (e) At present there is no Black representation on GLAA Executive Committee. Steps must be taken to redress this imbalance.

CONCLUSIONS

25 In order to achieve a greater representation and participation of Black people in mainstream arts the major arts institutions must begin to implement actively their declared equal opportunity policies. The Arts and Recreation Committee, through the establishment of a centralized training scheme, can also help and facilitate this process. It is recommended, therefore, that the Arts and Recreation Committee fully support the initiatives outlined in this report.

MAINSTREAM ARTS AND THEIR CHALLENGE TO RACISM

Report (21.9.84) by the Director of Finance.

1. The report makes recommendations for the submission of statements and policy proposals in connection with equal opportunities and anti-racist practices by the major arts bodies in London, and seeks approval for GLC grants officers to include such relevant information as is necessary when processing reports on these bodies to Committee. In addition, approval is sought for officers to make inquiries with regard to the establishment of a training scheme, the details of which are set out paragraphs 17-20 of the main report.
2. The cost of the training scheme, which uses 40 weeks in a full year, is estimated at £88,000 and a breakdown of this cost is given in paragraph 20 of the report. The budget assumes an intake of trainees of 20.
3. Recommendation 4 of the report states that officers report back within two months on the detailed proposals of the scheme, so that the earliest date for commencement would be January 1985. In this event, the cost falling in 1984/85 would be approximately £30,000 for which there is no specific provision, and therefore a funding source would have to be identified.
4. Under financial standing orders, this report requires the approval of the Finance and General Purposes Committee as it involves possible revenue expenditure in excess of £50,000 in a full year.

FN/C3/CR/2259