

Arts and Recreation Committee
 Ethnic Arts Sub-Committee
 Ethnic Minorities Committee
 Anti-Racist Programme Sub-Committee
 Community Arts Sub-Committee

C/AR Sub-Committee	AR 1421
LONDON AGAINST RACISM IN MAINSTREAM ARTS POLICIES AND PROGRAMMING	

Report (12.3.84) by
 Director of Recreation and the Arts,
 and the Principal Race Relations Adviser

RECOMMENDATIONS

Arts and Recreation Committee

1. That the Committee receive this report and note its contents.
2. That the Director of Recreation and the Arts report back to the appropriate Committees on a departmental action programme incorporating a series of equality targets designed to redress the clear racial imbalance identified in the recent ethnic survey of staff in DORA.
3. That the programming, employment and management policies in relation to ethnic minorities of all projects grant-aided by the Arts and Recreation Committee should be monitored by officers of the Department for Recreation and the Arts.
4. That recipients of grant-aid from the Arts and Recreation Committee be required to demonstrate that they are equal opportunity employers and details of this should appear in all future reports recommending grant-aid.
5. That the Director of Recreation and the Arts submit early reports on how the major arts institutions funded by the Council such as Sadlers Wells, Riverside, Royal Festival Hall, ICA, GLAA are complying with the Council's Equal Opportunity requirements as specified in report EM 474 approved by all grant-aiding Committees of the Council.

Community Arts Sub-Committee

1. That the Sub-Committee receive this report and note its contents.
2. The Sub-Committee report back to the main Arts and Recreation Committee on its contribution to Anti-Racist Year by the end of April 1984.

Ethnic Minorities Committee

Ethnic Arts Sub-Committee

Anti-Racist Programme Sub-Committee

To receive for information.

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ARTS AND RECREATION COMMITTEE	

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LONDON AGAINST RACISM IN MAINSTREAM ARTS POLICIES & PROGRAMMING

Background

1 Britain has had a long historical connection with black people arising out of its mercantile policy which resulted in the plunder and exploitation of other countries. Domination was maintained through the enforcement of normative values and an aesthetic that was rooted in a Euro-centric milieu. Thus this has taken the form of the expropriation of traditional black art being anaesthetised in the basements of museums or the amputation of creative energies from their roots so that they themselves become exotica, museum pieces and relics. As the black presence in this country became more prominent, the flowering of the traditional arts began but the institutional, individual, and cultural racism of the society denied them access and exposure, except, perhaps as decorative additions to 'community festivals', or as educational tools for multi-cultural teaching.

2 The artistic expression of the black community thus has been marginalised and kept out of mainstream art arenas or debates. Black arts have come to be seen as harmless entertainment, as exotica to be attached to the end of an arts programme. The emphasis is always on the ethnic and never on the art. Black arts are promoted, but never as an integral part of the mainstream programme.

3 The concerns of contemporary black artists are to identify, redefine and consolidate as black people living in Britain. This involves new concepts and new traditions being forged which embrace both the Afro-Caribbean, Asian and other origins of the black experience and its present reality in 20th century Britain. In short, this means developing a new aesthetic which is not traditional, ethnic, folk, exotica but which is appropriate for what needs to be expressed here and now. This is also one form of black art's challenge to racism.

Re-definition of "ethnic arts"

4 The debate on the nature of racism in the arts, the role of the black artists and the measures necessary to eradicate both racism and vestiges of the imperial/colonial relationship must be seen from the perspectives below. They represent some of the major positions taken by practising artists from the various ethnic minority communities and any policy must come to terms with some of the ideas expressed and therefore any programme planned must seek to reflect these ideas:

'Art and culture are confused and the British fascination with exotica has led to undue emphasis being placed on traditional art forms, thus restricting a confrontation of contemporary reality.' Errol Lloyd (MAAS).

'British imperialism is still so deeply rooted in the whole structure of British society that it is impossible for outside cultures to have any positive effect.' George Eugeniou (Theatro Technis).

'It helps us little if we simply limit our actions to our studio production and the criticism of those who deliberately misunderstand us and exploit us from a position of power ... visual art education must work to eradicate the interiorisation of the western evaluation of our contemporary art.' Gavin Jantjes.

'The very definition of "ethnic" and "minority" arts legitimises a cultural ghettoisation which feeds on an imperial past. It is only with an understanding of the historical pre-conditions that produce certain forms and styles that Third World cultural practice will not continue to be reduced to liberal multi-cultural exotica.' Kwesi Oqwu (African Dawn).

'The concept of separate "ethnic arts" can only serve one purpose, imposing a specific cultural role upon the black community the result of which limits its ability to express its reality in the contemporary context. Rather than challenging the status quo the term ethnic arts has merely perpetuated the relationship of black people and white dominated society.' Rasheed Araeen (Black Phoenix).

5 The rationale for this form of art content cannot be developed without challenging the institutions which exhibit, stage, screen, publish arts in general. It is these arts institutions that have ignored, exoticised and marginalised black arts. It is the practices of these arts institutions which the GLC must challenge and change.

6 In this perspective, racism is clearly not a problem for blacks alone to solve. Racism in the arts, as in other areas is a white problem as it is they who control the arts institutions, the resources and the power. This gives a special role not only to the GLC but also white artists to challenge racism in their art and through their art.

7 The anti-racism programme must not be one that merely entertains but one which addresses itself to the issues of marginalisation, access, content, form, employment, training, representation of 'black' people in administration, management and decision making processes. It must also be one in which white artists take up the issue of racism and become the agents for change. This has a number of implications for the GLC's Arts and Recreation Committee and its programme:-

- (i) the GLC must use its position as a strategic body to influence the major arts institutions which it supports or runs directly, so that an anti-racist perspective can be incorporated in their administration, management, employment and programming;
- (ii) the GLC grants awarding powers should be directed specifically to those groups or bodies whose objectives are consistent with the policy directions outlined above. This means that groups which have clearly defined anti-racist perspectives which include: employing black people in non-specialist positions, reflecting their anti-racist awareness throughout their programming and designing programmes which are of interest to and relevance for London's multi-racial society should be considered highest priority for supporting;
- (iii) the Arts and Entertainment Programme sponsored by the GLC will have to reflect the race dimension. London is populated by a multi-racial society, and this must be reflected in the arts programme. To an increasing extent this is happening now - but not as yet on a sufficiently acceptable scale.

Ethnic Arts Sub-Committee

8 The Council's decision to set up a separate Ethnic Arts Sub-Committee with its own budget was largely the result of demands made by black artists present at the Arts Funding Conference held at the National Film Theatre and Ethnic Arts Conference held at County Hall in April 1982. The demands made by the black artists were for resources in the form of rehearsal facilities, space, transport, materials, funding and training programmes in administrative, technical and performing skills.

9 The Ethnic Arts Sub-Committee is made up of 17 non-voting advisers from the black arts world and was set up with the objective of advising the GLC on grants and on policies and programmes aimed at securing a race dimension in the overall work of the Arts and Recreation Committee.

10 While acknowledging some of the disadvantages of creating a separate Sub-Committee with its own budget, most notably the ghettoisation of black arts, this arrangement has nevertheless ensured that the resources are committed to ethnic arts. The Sub-Committee has also enabled black people to re-define the notion of ethnic arts; direct funds and art forms which to date have been under-funded and under-represented; encouraged new groups and art form to emerge and most important of all to make decisions without being policed by 'community arts' and 'artists'.

11 The Ethnic Arts Sub-Committee has challenged and rejected the notion of 'exotica funding'. Instead it has established a pattern of criteria which encourages training, long term establishment of organisations as opposed to 'one-off' events, creation of strategic resources; acquisition of technical skills; and the development of under-represented art forms such as film and video, visual arts and literature and publication.

12 An important aspect of the work of the Sub-Committee has been to challenge and redefine the notion of 'ethnic arts' both ideologically and through its policies of funding. Ethnic arts to date have been defined by the funding bodies such as ACGB, GLAA and others who had fostered Indian Classical music, dance, and folk traditions. This is further reflected in what the major arts institutions choose and promote in their programmes where it is either domestic exotica originating from Britain in the form of cultural evenings and external exotica imported from abroad. The emphasis has been on looking at the traditional and cultural whilst ignoring what is being produced here and now.

13 The Sub-Committee has sought to challenge that notion by giving support to those art forms that depend for their survival and development on encouragement and support from the communities living in Britain; in effect Black artists and art forms which are being developed or developing here in Britain.

14 The decision to establish a separate Ethnic Arts Sub-Committee rather than funding within the existing framework was taken despite the possibility of marginalising the black arts.

In reality, the singular focus of the Ethnic Arts Sub-Committee has made it possible for assistance to be given to many black arts groups and facilitate the the overall development of black arts as well as being in the forefront seeking to secure proper representation of black arts interests both

within the GLC and the voluntary arts bodies funded. For instance the Sub-Committee has:

- (a) taken up the lack of black representation on Community Arts and Sports Sub Committee;
- (b) resisted increasing numbers of application for grants from mainly white managed arts projects seeking funding for an 'ethnic' dimension of their programme.
- (c) urged the Arts and Recreation Committee to challenge the major arts institutions about their employment, administrative, management and programming policies with regards to black arts and artists getting a fair share of resources and opportunities.

15 The Sub-Committee has also referred to the main Arts and Recreation Committee for the funding of traditional art forms such as Indian classical dance, music, theatre. The 'ethnic arts' budget has been earmarked specifically for the funding of black arts; training programme in the performing, technical and administrative skills; new initiatives for the development of black arts and new art forms.

16 Therefore the work and role of the Ethnic Arts Sub-Committee have been considerably influential in progressing the overall development of black arts in London. However, the policies and practices of the major arts institutions with regards to the employment of black people in the administrative management and programming structures of these institutions have been left relatively unchallenged over the same period. The Arts and Recreation Committee are now being directed to address its energies to this issue in order to secure the proper representation of black people in mainstream arts.

Department of Recreation and Arts

17 The recent ethnic survey of the work force has shown the Council to have a low overall percentage (8%) of ethnic minorities in employment and the Department for Recreation and the Arts has fewer (5%) than most departments.

It would be seen to be invidious for the Arts and Recreation Committee to call upon external groups and organisations which it funds to provide evidence that they are equal opportunity employers whilst this situation prevails.

18 It is very important that the department is and is seen to be developing a positive action programme to redress this imbalance and should initially develop the necessary procedures aimed at achieving the following:

- (i) increasing the flow and entry of suitable qualified ethnic minority candidates to all forthcoming vacancies;
- (ii) applying equality targets to vacant posts originated from those work areas noted for its underrepresentation or to the absence of ethnic minority employees;
- (iii) This would provide time-related desired levels of entry which can be monitored by senior management, establish appropriate positive action trainee scheme designed to offer appropriate training and career development opportunities leading to career structures in precisely those areas which are currently characterized by an absence or severe under representation of ethnic minority staff.

The rapid development of such a programme of positive action would, in itself, represent a major contribution to Anti-Racism and the Director of Recreation and the Arts intends to report back to Committee explicitly on how this can be done.

19 The role of the GLC as a Strategic Body

One of the most significant ways in which the Arts and Recreation Committee can ensure that the objectives of the Anti-Racist Year are realised is through its grant giving policies. The Arts and Recreation Committee is responsible for funding the major arts institutions such as Greater London Arts Association, Sadlers Wells, Royal Festival Hall, British Film Institute, Riverside, and assorted Art Galleries and Museums. It is a fact that very few, if any of these organisations, employ black people as workers. Black people are further marginalised when their art forms are presented as special programmes, viewed as exotica.

20 The GLC, through its grants policy and through its position as a strategic body can play a major role in redressing this imbalance. It can do this in a number of ways:-

- (a) making representation to central Government on the question of funding for black arts and representation of black artists on major art bodies such as the Arts Council for Great Britain, Royal Festival Ballet;
- (b) cultural bodies receiving grant aid should demonstrate that they are equal opportunity employers. All supported organisations should have to meet anti-racism as a condition of grant aid and compliance should be monitored.
- (c) the Arts and Recreation Committee application forms should insert a question asking the organisation whether they are an equal opportunities employer and indicating precisely what applicants were doing to promote anti-racism and involving black people in all activities.

21 In addition to the above, every aspect of the workings of such institutions must be used as a practical means of demonstrating their anti-racist commitments and on the basis of their anti-racist achievements support would be given by the Committee.

Employment/Training

22 One of the most frequent reasons given for the absence of black people in the technical field as stage managers, lighting designers, sound technicians, set designers, set builders, theatre administrators, managers, directors, publicity officers is that they do not have the necessary training or qualifications. In order to remedy this, the larger theatres and institutions should offer comprehensive training leading to the permanent employment of these people by the institutions.

Programming

23 The programming of these institutions should actively push forward the Anti-Racism objectives in their choice of themes, casting and presentation. Black arts should be presented as an integral part of the mainstream programme and not as an after thought. Programmes presented should be ones which bring the experience of black people to the fore and not just exploit it for the sale of 'entertainment'.

Decision-making

24 Black people should be represented in all decision-making bodies within the management and at executive levels of all the cultural bodies receiving grant aid from the GLC. In seeking this representation, tokenism must be avoided so that the black people do not merely occupy the odd position but play a major role in determining policy.

25 Furthermore all bodies receiving grant aid from the GLC should, as a condition, demonstrate that they are an equal opportunities employer by offering jobs to qualified black people. Black people should not be employed only in menial grades or below their level of qualification or experience. All jobs should be advertised in the black press.

Community Arts

26 The GLC funded community artists and groups who are predominantly white and, working within and among the black communities, should undertake a serious examination of their roles in the light of the principles outlined in this paper. White artists have an important role to play primarily among the white communities in the following manner:-

- (a) challenging the notion of racism as a black problem;
- (b) developing an awareness of racism as a psychological, cultural and political issue for white people and society to deal with;
- (c) developing methods of working performances which have the maximum impact for change.

27 Therefore white artists must take on the role of agents for change to ensure that institutions are in a position to recognise the valuable contribution that black people make artistically and in other aspects of their lives. They must also ensure that the problem is not seen as one of the 'forgiveness' of black people but of racism of British society and the attitudes of individuals in it.

The role of the white artists is therefore exceedingly important in taking the message of the GLC Anti-Racist Year to the people of London. They must be the agents for change. This can be done through the already established contacts in the community and through work in pubs; housing estates; tenants associations, community centres, National Front strongholds, Old Peoples' Homes, prisons and white working class areas.

The Community Arts Sub-Committee should give support to proposals aimed at effecting this key element of the programme.

28 GLC Arts and Entertainment Programme

The GLC Arts and Entertainment Programme is the single most important instrument through which the objectives of the Anti-Racist Year can be achieved. The programme is the most accessible and popular means of reaching the mass of the London population.

29 London's multi-racial society requires that the Arts and Entertainment Programme reflects this fact in its content, presentation and performance. Thus black arts must be presented as an integral part of such a programme and not something that is marginal to it. To fit in with the Anti-Racist Year it is not sufficient merely to feature black art and artists. What is required is for each to have a well defined and elaborated anti-racist theme through out its programming which is given prominence this year and always in the future. This means seeking to put on multi-racial acts and using communications strategies which are directed at all sections of the community and promoting London's diverse range of cultures.

30 Generally the present programme of festivals, concerts, theatre programmes, exhibitions, competition and special events should all incorporate the theme of anti-racism. In addition to the incorporation of Anti Racism as a theme for each event or festival organised by the Recreation and the Arts Department the Council should also sponsor events that would enable black artists and have their own platform. The aim of these initiatives within the Anti Racism Year should be to encourage experimentation and development of artistic forms and content which are rooted in the present experience of black and white people in Britain rather than any attempt to revitalize purely traditional cultural forms from the countries of origin or to import these as exotica for western consumption.

31 Details of the proposed programme of arts and entertainment events and how these can specifically meet the objectives of anti-racist year are the subject of a separate report.

32 Carrying out the policies recommended in this report may well be attended by controversy and difficulty, especially when imposing conditions upon independent organisations funded by the G.L.C. It will be important to make representations to such bodies in terms which define clearly this Council's intentions, whilst avoiding any suggestions of political interference with their artistic policies. The Council has always set its face against such interference and it is essential that no misconstruction of our intentions should arise.

33 Under financial standing orders, this report does not require the concurrence of the Finance and General Purposes Committee.

Greater London Council
Director-General's Department - Legal Branch

Item

13

AR 1421A

CONCURRENT REPORT (14.3.84) by

Head of Legal Branch

LONDON AGAINST RACISM IN MAIN STREAM ARTS POLICIES AND PROGRAMMING

Section 71 of the Race Relations Act 1976 states that without prejudice to their obligation to comply with any other provision of this Act, it shall be the duty of every local authority to make appropriate arrangements with a view to securing that their various functions are carried out with due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful racial discrimination and to promote equality of opportunity and good relations between persons of different racial groups.

Since this report would appear to intend to promote equality between different racial groups, it would appear to accord with the above statutory duty. I would wish to have the opportunity to comment in detail upon specific proposals which are put forward in future reports.

LONDON AGAINST RACISM IN MAINSTREAM ARTS POLICIES AND PROGRAMMING
CONCURRENT REPORT (15.3.84.) BY THE CONTROLLER OF PERSONNEL.

The results of the comprehensive survey of the workforce which were reported to Staff Committee(S685,13.12.83.) was the first detailed breakdown of the race and sex profile of the Council's workforce. This provided the context for starting the full process of equal opportunity monitoring Council-wide and the development of Equality Targets.

The Personnel Department have provided guidance for all Departments on setting Equality Targets within the context of Departmental action plans. Discussions are currently being held on implementation, and advice will continue to be available from the Equal Opportunities Adviser, Race Relations Adviser, (Employment and Training) and specified officers of the Equal Opportunities Unit.

The development and implementation of Equality Targets and related action plans in the Department of Arts and Recreation is to be seen therefore as part of Council-wide initiatives , and will therefore need to be consistent with the requirements and guidance provided.