

NFTS Women's Group

OPEN MEETING Monday March 10th 1986 7.30pm

to be held at The Women's Place, Victoria Embankment.

A G E N D A

The meeting will be introduced by JEAN STEWART,
NF&TS Women's Group Steering Committee Member.

1. Future Organisation short statement
2. EXPERIENCES AND NEEDS OF BLACK/ETHNIC MINORITY WOMEN IN FILM TRAINING

Jean Stewart will introduce the Chairwoman:

PARMINDER VIR

Head of the GLC
Race Equality Unit

Part 1 Personal Experiences: exploration of the problems.

Speakers:

~~Yvonne Brewster~~
Bonnie Crawley
Mira ~~Sayle~~
Ingrid Lewis

Director

Writer/journalist

TV scriptwriter

Ass. Producer,

BBC Pebble Mill

Technician Limehouse Stud

NFTS candidate

Judith Headman

Speakers will each be asked to talk for approximately 5 minutes, the discussion will then be opened to the floor.

INTERVAL

(During the interval the structure of the second half will be confirmed)

Part 2 Needs : Ways forward

Speakers:

Jocelyn Baro

BBC Governor

~~Gayle Hall~~

ACTT Committee on Equalit

~~Madine~~

Speakers from the floor:

Hilary Coote

National Short Course

Training Programme

Inner London Careers

Office

West Surrey College of Ar

Claire Mussell

Head of Script, NFTS

Cherry Potter Gandy

(other speakers from the floor will be added when their attendance is confirmed)

General Discussion

Final summing up by Chair.

Parminder,

Notes for Chair and Speakers:

Minutes will be taken, the intention is to circulate a report on the meeting to all relevant educational bodies.

Minute takers: Ann Piluso, Hilary Coote, Cherry Potter.

Each speaker will be asked to talk for approximately 5 minutes. Speakers in Part 1 are, especially, asked to call on their own experiences.

Please could we all meet at the Women's Place on Monday 10th March between 7.00 and 7.15pm to finalise plans for the meeting and to get to know one another.



Dudette Headma

- pre interviews
- not submit script marked
- Linehouse Studio — write better; interview
 - inst. Story - B'm.
 - research / set on to job

NFTS — generous place

Perspectives

- " Use all routes & training "
- " mistakes & carbon water "

Training Routes

- Inhouse Route
- Linehouse Studio

NFTS

Creative Freedom

Economic Constraints

invol.

Routes
- Tq. School
- Apply inf

Instal Change - Invol
- Reg. - Board of Governors

Apprenticeship

- use of visual images
- use of 2 networks / Male 2. network
- use of black press

Concours Adviser

Seesig / Advising Service

assist with formulation of proposals.

• Application - for

small

creative suggestions

Financial Support

understand economic reality of black & single parents

Assisted with debt, grants / mainly special case

Informing ppl of services such as scholarship

Interview Technique

change panel structure - black rep.

~~Panel~~ Recognise effect process of ethnicity

Criteria of Selection

Appet of Old Staff in NPTS

• network, they info ed mainly support
even other

Have meetings of this kind

Advertising

main SA/College

White mainline press

Soe Ethnic Press

Working of Adverts

Classifications

Applicant should

Origin of Nationality required / NFFTS could change of
Citizenship.

Ideology / why want to work for

Change value system / institutional structure.

Fixed & Flexible ideology

Top politics through mechanism led by Capitalist

Individual racism / sexism.

Get Skills

Get skills / Change system & structure.

Contradictions - Thesis

- Activism is one part of story
- Process of survival stories.
- Black Power for Black People.
- Organisation of Black people with institutions

Success dictates what kind of ppl accepted. Concord
not being met

V. 4 B 4

- Subjects black ppl with shot

→
Staff

- lack of black teachers.

- ~~change in~~ student body & there are hang ups
Change is the mood of students.

~~Black~~

No. 8 Black Q is student

Black Q last agly:

~~lack of~~ lack of male / confidant

Careers Advisers

Informal / Network / Sharing of skills & exp.

OFFTS - study advisory service / resources

BBC - Fresh Office

BBC - section of the industry

Campaign to get Q in the media.

Organise -

Mail out - School

- careers service

catching young

use of visual images.

Tracy Barrow

Struggle to get Equity Office
Members in Red 3

Reasons for not applying

- * Financial Support
- * NPTS making - Staff
- Personal Dept
- * Adversity

Content

Adversity

Ready Staff
Ethnic Minority

Financial Support

- Role of NPTS is only children of LA = grants
- Grants discretionary. Depends on ind. LA.
- School's assistance for NPTS / help with appeal
Economic reality.

Problems of Black/♀.

Double oppression.

Interviews / Questioning

Applied in practice.

All male / white interview panel.

Psychological gaps. Intimidating

Obscure questions

Process of identity - collective

NPTS cannot repeat
process. Interview up

working culture

interview

~~Collectively~~ NPTS - liberal profiles

Other by Inst. - require ^{some} ~~educat~~ qualifications
word Survey College - possible

Tokenism

Criteria

of Paraguer

Smoki
Cottrell

Ascert by
black & not apply
to WFTS

1. Wake - initial take by WFTS of o - needed context of Black
- positive action
- Specific demands of WFTS
- Policy (to BSA only) needed FLA video work
as Exhibit - did you / Anti Racist Fil Proj
Third world Q Fil Proj in India, India the
as Proj - Black Q
Interview - CTV, BTV (d) Film Script Cont.
Yvonne Brewster: Theatre Direct - Lead, Black Q Theatre Direct
- Founder of Talon
- Black Jacobin.
Fil Direct - Consider: How they are
as Did you try Lit direct in Britain
as Break into mainstream towards
Problems - racism / Sexism

Bonnie Crowley - Journalist (with for BBC) break in
- CH4 Direct, could * problems of short cover

Mira Sayle - versatile actors
- wrote for Television Black Silk

Ingrid Lewis -

Rob - Socialist debate
- Identify issues / problem
- concrete suggestion / demands

Here as promised
the minutes of the last
with compliments

Open Meeting. Address lists
have arrived, very useful,
thanks.

Barbara

NFTS

The National Film and Television School,
Beaconsfield Studios, Station Road,
Beaconsfield, Bucks, HP9 1LG 04946 71234

Record of Women's Meeting, January 9 1986 at the
Clarence Pub, Whitehall, London SW1.

'WHY AREN'T MORE WOMEN APPLYING TO THE
NATIONAL FILM & TELEVISION SCHOOL ?'

Attendance was estimated at around 80 women, including a number of students and graduates of the NFTS. The meeting was chaired by Sally Anderson (student NFTS), who asked each woman present to identify herself and the organisation - if any - that she represented.

AGENDA:

1. Assessment of Applicants

Speaker: Amanda Richardson, student NFTS

The discussion centred around the basic and urgent need for change in the procedure by which women get into training establishments, which would subsequently reflect the ways in which women can work in the industry. A number of specific points were raised:

Specialisation

Does the move towards specialisation at the NFTS work for or against women? It seems that the move towards specialisation reflects a general move towards mainstream filmmaking in attitude and content. It also works against women applying to the NFTS whose experience is based on the cross-grading practices of the independent sector (through workshops and collectives).

There was further discussion by women at the NFTS about the benefits and the negative aspects of specialist training.

Selection Process

This raised a number of factors:

- The lack of women on interviewing panels. It was generally agreed that it was important to have at least 2 women, if not equal numbers of women and men on interviewing panels. Anne Rawcliffe King (Training Officer, ACTT) stated that parity on all panels should be a working policy of all training establishments, and that she as an officer of the ACTT would be able to put pressure on all ACTT recognised training establishments to enforce this. It was generally felt that changing the number of women on interviewing panels would have a significant effect on the number of women at the NFTS and in the industry.
- The need for more women teachers at the NFTS: there are currently only 2 women on the permanent teaching staff, and few brought in on a temporary basis. It was agreed that there are plenty of qualified women for these jobs (who could be located through WFTVN's 'Directory of Women working in film, television and video'). It would also demonstrate the NFTS's confidence in its women graduates if they were employed to teach at the school.
- The need for a much wider advertising and recruitment campaign.

- The presentation and wording of the NFTS prospectus, eg. the phrase 'superior creative capacity' was pointed out as an intimidating requirement. It was generally agreed that the question of 'confidence' was one that deterred a number of women from applying. It would be reassuring if there was known to be women on each interviewing panel.

There were many questions asked about how to prepare an application to the NFTS, which raised some specific points:

- Women's different economic circumstances, particularly the problems of working mothers. There is a vital need for creche facilities.
- The difficulty of choosing a specialisation for 3 years training if your experience has been as a 'filmmaker'.
- How do you get specialised training before applying?
- Was there prejudice against a 'feminist' content of an application? It was pointed out that panels change yearly and the female representation on the panel was often feminist, but only a small percentage on the panel was female.

Some discussion followed concerning the percentage of female applicants in relation to the number of women accepted as students.

It was asked whether women who were/had been at the NFTS felt that the training had been worth it.

Advice was given by Cherry Potter (Head of Script, NFTS) on what the substance of an application to the NFTS should be.

2. TEACHING AT THE NFTS

Speaker: Cherry Potter, Head of Script NFTS

Cherry Potter stressed that it was important to have more women teachers, but suggested that there was a vicious circle operating in that the few women there are in the industry are either very under or very over-employed: this made it difficult to bring them in to the school, either in terms of their time or their related work experience.

Women teachers could obviously address the special interests of women in film, but it was difficult to find ways of dealing with these demands plus the regular teaching programme.

Cherry pointed out specifically that assertiveness training was not available at the school to build women's confidence, and that there were certain problems of psychological behaviour related to working in a man's world, eg. women in key jobs in the filmmaking process need to learn how to deal with predominantly male crews. All these problems need addressing at the training level.

3. EXPERIENCE IN THE INDUSTRY

The particular problems women face in the industry having had training were discussed, prompted by the experiences of NFTS graduates. They pointed out particularly that:

- Survival of women in a male dominated industry involved a range of difficulties, from day to day attitudes of prejudice

and sexism to the problems women have in raising resources for their film projects.

- Women graduates in technical grades have to compete with in-house training schemes which support an essentially younger white male technician.
In spite of this, it seemed that it was easier for women in technical grades to get work than it was for women directors.

It was suggested that the NFTS should help students formulate a strategy for entering 'the industry' while still at the school, particularly for women students.

4. TRAINING WITHIN THE INDUSTRY AND INDEPENDENT SECTOR

Speaker: Anne Rawcliffe King, Training Officer ACTT

Anne Rawcliffe King said that it had become obvious that the provision of training facilities within the industry was patchy/non-existent/ and occasionally very good, and that appointing a training officer was seen as a tool for advancing the position of women. She felt that the ACTT's Women's Conference had had a great deal of influence over her appointment. The Job Fit Scheme had recently been introduced in an effort to break the nepotistic attitude that existed in the industry. She pointed out that the National Short Course Training Programme (based at the NFTS) has held courses specifically for women and ethnic minorities, but due to current changes in the financing of these courses, it is likely that fewer women and ethnic minorities would be able to make use of them.

There was further discussion about the benefits for women of training withing the industry/independent sector as opposed to training within an educational establishment.

RACE

It was felt that black women not only had to deal with sexism but also with racism. The issue for black women was felt to be so important that it was agreed that it should be addressed at the next meeting (see below).

It was noted that there were no asian or black women students or teachers at the NFTS.

FUTURE MEETINGS

Many women were enthusiastic to have regular open meetings to discuss the subjects raised here, and there was overwhelming support for having 2 monthly meetings organised by the Women's Group at the NFTS. However, it was pointed out that this would be difficult to channel through the NFTS as women in the school are not a fixed group. It was suggested that it would be more practical to organise through existing organisations (eg. WFTVN, ACTT, Women Challenge Film and Video Education, Women's Media Resource Project); once the networks were established, priority areas for action could be addressed.

It was generally felt that the need for action was urgent, particularly given the large enthusiastic response and lively exchange of this meeting. Women looked forward to finding ways of confronting these questions together.

The next Open Meeting is on Monday March 10 7.30pm, venue to be confirmed.

Women's Steering Committee
January 1986