



ANTI RACIST FILM PROGRAMME CINEMA CIRCUIT MARCH/APRIL '85



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Introduction

As a follow up to Third Eye: London's Festival of Third World Cinema, The Arts and Recreation Committee of The GLC has sponsored a major Anti-Racist Film Programme as one of the Anti-Racist Year initiatives. The programme which includes screenings in Schools, Community Venues and Community Cinemas is part of an overall policy to help establish the independent black film sector.

Over the last two years the Ethnic Arts sub-committee through direct grant aid has helped to establish a number of black film and video workshops based in the community. The committee has also provided funding for specific productions, a number of which have been included in Independent Film Festivals and screened on Channel 4.

The next few years will see the development of the black independent film sector and an increased number of films being produced by the sector. For these films to have value and significance they must be seen widely by both black and white communities. The role of distributors and existing exhibition houses is very important in enabling the films to be seen.

This first Anti-Racist Cinema Programme is an attempt to form a film circuit which is a combination of both community venues and the established arts cinema venues. We welcome this collaboration with the cinemas and sincerely hope that this sort of programme is adopted by the cinemas and develop.

We consider it is vitally important that all cinemas not only continue to present black and Third World films as part of their general programming, but collaborate with each other to further organise special film programmes aimed at building an audience.

Over the whole month of March over 35 films will be screened and will include features, shorts, documentaries. A number of film makers from here and abroad are invited to participate in discussions at some of the screenings. The invited film makers include:

From Abroad

Ayoka Chenzira, Meerata Meeta, Tapan Bose, Debra Robinson, Rigoberto Lopez, Tomas Alea

From U.K.

H. O. Nazareth, Sankofa, Black Audio Film Collective, Retake Film & Video, Kelvin Richard, Imruh Caesar, Menelik Shabazz, Salmaan Peerzada

Parminder Vir (Policy Adviser Race Equality Unit)
GLC.

Films Foreword

Racism and the Media

The issue of racism and the media has in recent years become a major focus of anti-racist attention and concern. This pre occupation can be broadly seen to have taken two forms. On the one hand there has been an engagement with the means by which racist imagery, values and assumptions remain the standard repertoire of media interest in Black and Third World people. On the other hand attempts have been made to understand what external and internal factors structure and sustain both the form and content of racist material in the media.

In this way questions of how British newspapers sensationalise events involving Black and Third World people; the lack of 'balance' or diversity on television; the pitifully few British films which concern themselves with Black life in this country, are the subjects touched on in several contexts.

Film and Anti-Racism

This film programme specifically wants to build upon the tradition of resistance to racism in film. A tradition which has taken individual and collective forms, has adopted defensive as well as prescriptive strategies.

When the notoriously racist film "Birth of a Nation" was released in the 1920's the National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People (NAACP) tried for two decades to get the film banned in America. This strategy of campaigning against

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specific films was always important for civil rights movements in America.

The American actor/singer Paul Robeson refused to endorse or applaud a British film he had appeared in (*Sanders of the River*: 1935) on the grounds that it was propaganda for Colonial rule in Africa.

A recent showing in London of a mammoth travelogue on American Life ("American Pictures") was halted by Black women for its racist and sexist portrayal of black life.

This programme acknowledges these episodes and their importance. We especially acknowledge them because they are a component of a larger tradition of cultural assertion in countries where the presence and legacy of colonialism, invested race relations with a strategic political importance. In this arena Britain is almost certainly a central political actor and catalyst. Film is quite profoundly implicated in this racial geography of surveillance, exclusion and domination.

In this sense there is a perfectly intended double meaning in the term 'anti-racist film programme'. The films are supposed to bring their themes and concerns to bear in areas where they might facilitate anti-racist work: and they are offered as examples of diverse traditions of film-making which exist in a relation of resistance to racism and cultural domination.

Third World Film Making and Cultural Domination

The tradition of campaigning against cultural domination, specifically in relation to racism and cinema, is equally a long and honourable one.

This is a point which must be stressed for a number of reasons, not least of which is the fact that a large number of films in this anti-racist programme are from cultures and contexts sustained by such legacies of resistance.

The motivations and contexts of productions of many of the films from Africa, Latin America and Asia in this programme cannot be divorced from the negative portrayal of these continental cultures in dominant European cinemas.

Struggles for alternatives

Included in the programme are packages of film produced out of histories of specific attempts to establish positive, critical, convincing Black and Third World identities. We have also included films which attempt to establish representative models in alternative cinemas. It is partly on this basis that they become relevant for an anti-racist film programme. Others establish their validity in other ways; we include them primarily because they are films produced as part of a general political and economic need to establish truly national film cultures after decades of colonial and imperialist domination. Others are simply and yet strategically informed by the spirit of a basic moral and political dictum: in order to move beyond distorted images of ourselves we have to create legitimate and rewarding alternatives. It is a resolve fostered by a quiet and lingering anger:

"No Cuban", wrote the film Critic Mitra Aguire in 1951, "will ever forget the United Artist picture 'Violence', shown in Havana in 1947 in which the

island's capital is presented as a brothel and an unsanitary port of bars and people in tatters".

A number of films from the Third World are included because they attempt to create alternative cinematic models and formulas from a specific viewpoint, namely that of seizing a cultural apparatus which has been used by Imperialist and metropolitan powers for cultural domination: cinema as a social, political machinery of "ideological propaganda and cultural depersonalization" (Jorge Rebelo: "The life of Cinema as an Instrument of Domination" In A Martin (ed) African Cinema: B.F.I. Dossier No 6). Of these films the majority were produced in societies still "objectively undergoing an experience of domination exerted on a number of levels-political, economic and cultural. In a very general sense those films can therefore be seen as attempts to reformulate what the Algiers Charter of African Cinema called the "internal problematic of development" – the logic of cultural domination.

CHARTER Adopted at the Second Congress of F.E.P.A.C.I. – Federation Pan Africaine des Cineastes) Algiers 1975.

New priorities for Anti-Racism

The relationship between this film programme and a number of films in the catalogue require different sets of justification. For example the Turkish and Indian films in the programme have not been included for any specifically anti-racist content but rather for the questions they pose for an anti-racist agenda. Questions concerning the contribution of Black and Third World women to anti-racist/anti-imperialist struggles;

questions of exploitation of Black and Third World women; questions concerning economic and political structures in the Third World which now exist in a neo-colonial relation to metropolitan power.

The films on Ireland as well as the ones on anti-semitism have been included as a means of touching upon the common experience of immigration; of common colonial encounters with British xenophobia, common stories of political marginality.

A number of the films in the programme were produced and directed by Black and Third World women. Some of those uncover rarely documented contributions women have made to what now constitutes the bulk of anti-racist/imperialist struggles; others bring new visions and priorities to the area. We have included films which attempt to say something on race identity and sexuality; on sex, class and neo-colonialism; on sex, race, and imperialism. These are films which bring new visions and priorities to contemporary anti-racist film work. Our principal objective for including such films was to prioritise the question of gender in anti-racist film strategies.

The idea here was not simply the record "differences" but to hint at some of the diverse and critical points at which a film programme will have to tackle questions of anti-racism.

1. ANGRY STILL

Kelvin Richard/5mins/16mm/1983/Britain

On this very lively animation the film-maker has said:

“We are living in a time where Black people are readily associated with the unemployed, crime, and generally the non-contributors to the society in which we live. Angry Still was born out of the frustration the film-maker feels exists within the Black community; just too many barriers.”

The ‘barriers’ in question in this animation are the racist attacks on Black people by racist and fascists organisations like the National Front.

Angry Still is the latest in the series of Visual Dub Films – a combination of animation and instrumental Reggae (Dub) music made by Kelvin Richard and is stridently ‘political’ project. The soundtrack uses Jamaican singer Keith Hudson singing “Angry! I said you make us angry. Angry people thats who we are”.

The image starts with a series of assaults on Black youths by skinheads. But these do not last very long and defence is soon underway.

The film has been described as a “powerful demonstration of the power of animated film-making”.

2. AN INDIAN STORY

Tapan Bose/58 mins/16mm/1981/India

An Indian Story is an enquiry into the suppression of civil and democratic rights in the world's largest democracy. It reveals the reality of Indian poverty, corruption and socio-economic exploitation in a caste divided society. Recurrent acts of political and administrative terrorism against the people are exposed.

This uneven but absorbing documentary is not cinema in the traditional sense. It is a celluloid documentation of a deprived peoples' search for human dignity in a society controlled by an upper caste oligarchy which believes in its innate superiority. Though several people present divergent points of view, official records, press reports and comments of the judiciary establish that such acts of deliberate violation as the famous Bhagalpur blindings can no longer be treated as mere aberrations. These have in fact become the norm.

A revolting as well as moving story.

3. ARDH SATYA

Govind Nihalani/Colour/130 mins

Anant Velankar is a newly appointed police officer. His story opens on a New Year's eve, when he

Anti-Racist Cinema **GLC**

1981-1986

Working for London

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responds to a "summons" from a local gambling den proprietor, Rama Shetty. Shetty handles the suspicious young officer with ease. Clearly, Velankar is not impressed.

Later, Shetty is named in the dying statement of an intended murder victim. Velankar goes to arrest him, but Shetty has friends in high places and he humiliates Velankar.

There are two stabilizing influences, however, which control the downward spiral of Velankar's life. One is his domineering, authoritarian father, a police officer himself. The other is the attractive, but hesitantly friendly college lecturer.

Briefly, then, it seems as if his life is on the upswing. The skill with which he brings a dacoit to justice seems certain to earn him a medal and a promotion. He is full of optimism and enthusiasm once more, but not for long: a rival CID officer is awarded the honours for the dacoit's arrest and Velankar's name is nowhere on the list. Frustrated and full of violence, he approaches a scrawny under trial with the intention of questioning him, but instead, beats him to death.

This is obviously the end of the road for the young officer. A sympathetic, but more practical colleague advises him to meet Shetty, who can save him. Velankar goes to meet him, prepared to strike a deal for a compromise. As the nature of Shetty's price for saving his career becomes clear, the torrent of rage is released again.

4. 'THE CAUSE OF IRELAND'

16mm Colour/104 minutes/Platform Films 1983

Platform Films would like to announce that a new film on the situation in the North of Ireland, called 'The Cause of Ireland', is now available.

The primary concern of the film is to examine the divisions within the working class in the North of Ireland, the causes and effects of these divisions, and to evaluate the various solutions being put forward for the healing of these divisions.

THE CAUSE OF IRELAND looks at these issues by telling the history of the last fifteen, troubled years in the North of Ireland, through the eyes and voices of those who have lived through them. No section of the community is excluded, from Irish Republicans to the Northern Ireland representative of the Confederation of British Industry; from Loyalist paramilitaries to former workers at the De Lorean car factory. Their opinions are often stated bluntly, but they are reported without censorship.

THE CAUSE OF IRELAND dismisses the notion that what is happening in the North of Ireland is a problem of 'law and order', a religious war, or that rival 'Godfathers' are manipulating their respective communities. Instead, the reality which **THE CAUSE OF IRELAND** presents argues that the issue in the North of Ireland is an unmistakeably political one, which centres on the British presence in the six north-eastern counties of Ireland.

The film asks questions about that British presence, which are rarely posed in British-made films about Ireland: Have attempts by British Governments to outlaw discrimination, proved successful? Have British Governments adopted a neutral role between the Catholic and Protestant communities? Are the British troops peace-makers, or themselves part of the problem? **THE CAUSE OF IRELAND** also asks: What do 'loyalism' and 'Irish republicanism' really stand for?

In exploring all these themes, **THE CAUSE OF IRELAND** makes use of film archive material, contemporary interviews, songs, a commentary and the contrasting scenes of the squalor and, for some, the splendour of modern-day life in the North of Ireland. It is not a film without hope, but it does not allow the reality it presents to be compromised by romanticism or over-optimism.

THE CAUSE OF IRELAND was made with the financial assistance of Channel Four Television. Before it could be shown on Channel Four, it had to be viewed by the Independent Broadcasting Authority. After lengthy consideration, they demanded that the following four sections of the film be removed:

1. A sequence of shots inside the country house of a Master of the Hunt in County Down, Northern Ireland, followed by a fox-hunting scene.
2. Two sections of an interview with a representative of the Confederation of British Industry in Belfast.

3. The section of commentary:

"For, while the firepower of Republicanism is usually aimed at the security forces or public representatives of the British state, Loyalist violence has been directed indiscriminately at the Catholic community."

and 4. The section of commentary:

"Those Protestants who have been trained in the Ulster Defence Regiment, or the R.U.C. would remain a real treat to Catholics in the North of Ireland" (in the event of a British withdrawal).

THE CAUSE OF IRELAND was shown at the 1983 Tyneside Film Festival in October, and was awarded the major prize – the **Tyne Award**. It was described by a member of the panel of judges as *"a non-partisan film, showing from a new viewpoint, both sides wanting to work to find a solution together in a highly intelligent way."*

5. CHOKH

***Utpalendu Chakraborty/98 mins/35mm/1982/
Colour/Indian***

Jadunath had never been a supporter of the politics of assassination, but the workers, mad with rage, had gone beyond his control that night. And Jadunath had been made responsible for the killing.

Dr. Mukherjee, entrusted with the operation for cornea grafting on Jethia's son, tries to trace the

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papers recording the eyes-donation, but they are not available. He tells the superintendent that he must see the papers before he operates. The superintendent tells him that there are instructions from the highest quarters that the eyes should go to Jethia's son. The Doctor is adamant and prepared to face the consequences.

Jethia, learning whose eyes they are, instructs the superintendent to smuggle the eyes out from the Eye Bank and destroy them. The superintendent hesitates at first, but the pressures are too strong. Jethia cannot bear the idea of the eyes surviving for the eyes embody the fighting spirit of the workers and the passion for revolution.

Meanwhile, the workers – led by Ghanashyam and Jadunath's widow – stage a demonstration. They are obstructed by the police armed with shields and batons. Jadunath's widow turns around and looks at the workers. For a few tense moments, no one moves. She holds the blind Chhedilal's hand and takes the first step forward. The workers follow slowly. Their faces fill the screen.

The Film

In 1975, the country is in a State of Emergency, with all the political parties in the Opposition under a ban. In December of that year, Jadunath Sahu, a labour leader, is hanged. Before his execution, he leaves instructions that his eyes should be given to a worker who has never seen the world. He dies with the hope that his eyes will see the future that he has dreamt of through his struggling life.

Meanwhile, Jethia, a powerful business magnate of Calcutta, wants to get the eyes for his son, who has lost his sight in a bomb encounter between hostile groups within the ruling party.

But the hospital driver and some local workers meet Dr. Mukherjee, a popular ophthalmologist at the hospital, with the demand that Jadunath's last instructions be carried out. They propose the name of Chhedilal, a blind worker, whose name is first on the list of those waiting for eyes.

Ghanashyam, once Jethia's driver, tells the Doctor of the circumstances that led to Jadunath's execution. In 1974 there had been a long strike stretching over two months at the Xavier Jute Mill owned by Jethia, over the retrenchment of 45 workers. Jadunath had been one of the leaders of the movement. Jethia had organized an attack on the striking workers, leaving several wounded and dead. The workers had retaliated by killing Jethia's brother and the manager.

6. COLOUR

Warrington Hudlin/16mm/1982/USA/

Warrington Hudlin's 'Colour' will be remembered for a number of endearing features: for its frank appraisal of a subject shrouded in guilt, anxiety and foreboding; for its tearing sense of caution and irony; for its celebration of the right to pose painful questions.

Its the 70's. Two successful and independent black women talk about their past. At school; the civil rights movement; at the hairdressers. It is a history marked by signposts of painfully repressed memories. It is a past haunted by the spectre of colour prejudice.

Shot in the form of an intimate interview two black women – one dark-skinned the other light – dispassionately unravel a series of events in which a bigotry bared on skin tone fundamentally shaped their lives.

In 'Colour' these issues are not treated as mere appendages to a more 'real' history of black consciousness.

The manifold complexities of colour consciousness are explored within the context of black, sex and class relations. It explores the means by which centuries of meaning attributed to skin shade has intervened at strategic points in black politics. In a series of flashbacks the film looks at personal instances in which these 'values' provided, and continue to, the overriding logic in black relations.

'Colour' looks at one apt instance in which 'the tradition of all the dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brain of the living'.

7. DEATH OF A PROPHET

Woodie King Jnr/60 mins/16mm/USA

Death of a Prophet is a docu-drama that follows Malcolm X on his last day, Sunday February 21, 1965. The film uses documentary footage from the period. The day is dramatically recreated with actors performing the roles of the people who came in contact with him. In form, the film is docu-drama because it mixes the documentary footage with the new dramatic footage.

The film uses on-camera interviews with leaders who knew Malcolm X and whose lives were affected by his death, et., Ossie Davis, and Amiri Baraka (a famous Black American poet) among others.

8. FIRAR

Serif Goren/100 mins/1984/Turkey

Goren is one of the two filmmakers in Turkey at present who is making films dealing with social realism and continuing to create polemical debate : the other is Zeki Okten.

FIRAR is Goren's favourite film of recent years. The film stars Hulya Kocyigit whose career seems to have taken on a new direction from a 'starlet' to a character actress.

FIRAR raises pertinent issues of women in prison and was very well received at the Anatolya Film festival and will also be shown in Berlin.

9. FROM THESE ROOTS

William Greaves/28 $\frac{3}{8}$ mins/16mm/USA

From these Roots is a documentary review of the "Harlem Renaissance" – a period of intense and significant cultural flowering in the former "black capital of America". A period of Black consciousness and "creativity" which produced outstanding artists and leaders as diverse as Duke Ellington, Langston Hughes, Paul Robeson, Zora Neale Hurston and Marcus Garvey.

This 'serious yet entertaining' film vividly recreates the Harlem Renaissance in the words, photos, music and poetry of talented Black Americans and demonstrates their participation in the pivotal artistic, social and political events of that time.

We are introduced to well-known figures and musicians who are now familiar names in Britain (Cab Calloway, W.E.B. Dubois and Bessie Smith) and ones not quite so familiar (Authur Schomburg, Josephine Baker and Florence Mills).

From these Roots is an attempt to discover the hidden roots of an important but neglected, aspect of American heritage. A heritage which in many ways provided a source of inspiration for the later civil and political movements of Black America.

10. **FUNDI: THE ELLA BAKER STORY**

Joanne Grant/63 mins/16mm/1980/USA

'Fundi' is a documentary about the life and work of Ella Baker, veteran American Civil Rights campaigner; a militant political activist who became best known for her championing of the non-violent method of civil disobedience.

Ella Baker is now usually seen as the major architect of the Student National Co-ordinating Committee: the woman who tirelessly encouraged 60's Black students to seize the time to develop their own political priorities. She is remembered as the solitary Black voice who recognised the strategic significance of what later became the Black Power explosion. 'Fundi' is about this story. It is a documentary concerned with establishing a context for appraising the significance of Ella Baker's contribution to Black American struggles.

Using archive footage and personal reminiscences from diverse sources, the film develops a backdrop for the political development of Ella Baker, the Fundi – Swahili word for person of profound insight and wisdom.

In this way the film is also about the growing organisation of Black groups in the Southern States of America for civil rights. It charts the political current which ushered forth characters like Martin Luther King and 'Fundi'.

Ella Baker herself is interviewed throughout the film in the company of friends; talking to members of her extended family; listening to recounted tales of former collaborators. We get a picture of a Black woman whose sense of purpose met with petty sexist jealousies from Black men around her. Baker survived these to become a formidable spokesperson on a very admirable range of political causes. The film looks at these in some detail.

What is useful about this film is that it overturns the dominant logic of documents on Black American protest. It uncovers the usually hidden contributions made by Black women in these struggles. It avoids portraying 'martyrs' or 'victims' and instead concentrates on a living 'herstory'; a process of struggle in constant development.

Fundi is the portrait of a black woman now in her 70's whose whole life has been dedicated to the causes of civil rights and anti-racism.

11. GET OUT OF THAT GARDEN

*Anna Liebschner/U-Matic/V.H.S./40 Mins and
London Armagh Co-ordinating Committee*

The position of Republican women; politics in Belfast; Republican struggles ... These are the preoccupations of 'Get Out Of That Garden'.

The video takes the form of a talk by Mary Nellis, a

Republican from Creggan, in which she describes her political life of campaigning around issues thrown up by specific problems. A political life informed by a general commitment to and support of Republicanism.

Very few products specifically concern themselves with the lives of Republican women and 'Get Out...' is a unique product in this respect. But 'Get Out...' importance lies in the light it throws on a unique life. With a selection of newsreel footage the video points to a number of historical events described by Mary Nellis. These are events in which Mary Nellis was involved in a broad range of specific and general struggles – housing issues to the hunger strikes, campaigns against army occupation to anti-detention campaigns. All described with an implacable spirit of loyalty, commitment and disarming humour. In the end what we are left with is not a glossy picture of 'struggle' but a very invigorating restatement of the validity of republicanism.

More importantly we are left with an understanding of the crucial role played by Irish women in the struggle against British occupation.

12. GOTTA MAKE THIS JOURNEY

Michelle Parkerson/60 mins/Video/USA

Gotta Make This Journey is a video profile of acapella* activists, Sweet Honey in the Rock.

Sweet Honey's music serves the cause of social activism by relentlessly voicing the depths of Black struggle. Eighteen Black women have shared creativity and commitment over the nine-year history of Sweet Honey in the Rock. The documentary presents the diversity of the five current members, profiling their daily activities. Highlights of the videotape concert are appearances by Angela Davis, Alice Walker and others, are included.

The film features a dynamic blend of Sweet Honey in the Rock's vocal textures, their social concerns, and unprecedented outreach to the deaf community. It illustrates that their politics are life.

*Unaccompanied harmonising part-singing.

with the urgency of its subject matter the film is also about commitment and motivation.

'Grey Area' investigates what a commitment to 'Truth' involves in journalism and how that can be variously tempered by a desire for security.

1.4. HAIRPIECE

Ayoka Chenzira/10 mins/16mm/1983/USA

The film is concerned with self-image and internalizing racism to the point where generations of Black People have grown up thinking they are not beautiful because they live in a society that does not accept them as such. Consequently many Black people alter themselves according to a European aesthetic in order to be viewed as acceptable.

Hairpiece is an animated satire on Black consciousness from the standpoint of the straightening comb and other hair care devices. The film uses collage and cell animation, line drawings, still photographs and humorous text that explore the situation of those of us with woolly-textured hair living in a society where beautiful hair is viewed as hair that blows in the wind and lets you be free.

15. I BEEN DONE BEEN WAS IS

Debra J. Robinson/ 16mm/1984

Synopsis

I Be Done Been Was Is examines the careers of the black comedienne in the entertainment industry past and present. Four contemporary black comediennes are profiled in this documentary (Alice Arthur, Rhonda Hansome, Jane Galvin Lewis, Marsha Warfield) and through their commentary the obstacles faced by black women in comedy are revealed. Interwoven throughout these performances are interviews by these women filmed in clubs where they regularly perform in New York and Los Angeles.

The film opens with each artist giving her reason for choosing comedy as a career and how they actually started in the business. These women candidly discuss the many aspects of comedy such as: material choice – the use of ethnic stereotypes in their bits, the question of “blue material”, and the double standard that exists for women as to *what is* and *what is not* palatable to audiences. Also discussed is the issue of career paths for black comediennes and how they differ compared to those of white men and women, as well as black men. Other sensitive issues discussed are agents and the difficulty getting bookings for local comedy clubs that may or may not pay, in order to get exposure. Support systems play a tremendous role in the lives of these four women, and provides a key source of strength and courage throughout their careers. The problem of

developing and maintaining relationships is also mentioned, and the fact that men feel threatened by women of quick wit.

Throughout, the film gives a historical outline of the black women who paved the way for contemporary black comediennes. Vintage photographs, audio recordings and videotape shed light on black comediennes of days gone by.

16. ILLUSIONS

Director: Julie Dash/USA 1982/34mins

1942. One year after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour. Three illusions are in conflict with reality in the fictitious Hollywood motion picture studio.

The first illusion concerns the protagonist, Mignon, a Black woman who appears to be White, and who faces the danger of losing her ambition of becoming a producer if her true identity is revealed. The second concerns Ester, a Black woman who is the singing voice for a White Hollywood movie star. Mignon watches Ester, alive on a dark stage, while also watching the technicians who are mesmerised by the image and 'voice' of the actress on the screen. As they are drawn into the fantasy of the film, Mignon is drawn to Ester. Mignon fights to have Ester paid at union rates, which are higher than non-union rates, even though Ester is not a member of the union. People around are puzzled both by Mignon's action,

and by her cold exterior, adopted to keep her secret safe. However, Lt. Bedford, who has long been attracted to her, discovers her identity when he comes across a photo of Mignon's husband who is away fighting the war with his mates in a segregated unit. Bedford threatens to expose her.

Illusions is about two Black women and how they must transcend the false images and misconceptions that are part of their lives.

17. 'IMAGES OF NATIONALITY' (Black Audio Film Collective, GB, 1984)

25mins slide/tape

A slide/tape text on Nation/Race and the Colonial Encounter. An audio-visual engagement with the mythologies around which Presence(s) is/are secured; the conglomerate of signs which structure the narratives of National Identity. An investigation of monumental symbolic order – Geo-Political Indiscretions – which organises contemporary subjectivities.

A poem on remembrance.

18. KHARIJZ

A child labourer dies in Calcutta whilst working for middle class bosses. Instead of an investigation an elaborate cover-up campaign involving lawyers, bureaucrats, petty officials is soon in operation. A cover-up operation which almost effectively ensures that the circumstances of the child's death never comes to light. Or does it?

In 'Kharij' the cover-up is a key signifier of corruption in India, especially amongst the middle classes. Corruption as an instance of class control and domination. In Kharij corruption is rooted in definite social relations and not a mysterious or spectacular project of the 'Eastern' mind.

In looking at 'corruption' in this manner Kharij begins to unravel and explore questions of child labour and exploitation. In child labour the middle classes – liberal, leftist and conservative alike – find a cheap source of labour at 'reasonable' prices. And yet again the relations in question are not particularly 'despotic'; not uniquely 'Eastern' nor remotely 'barbaric' (the traditional racist stereotypes of 'other' economics or modes of conduct) but rather definite relations based on a specifically exploitative class relation. In 'Kharij' one finds another India. We find a film dealing with real problems without racist cliches.

19. THE LAST SUPPER

Tomai Alea

It is Havana at the end of the eighteenth century. On Don Manuel's estate a new system for refining sugar is being developed. The system requires labourers to cut cane and Don Manuel has slaves on his estate to perform this task. The arrangement is not amicable but is the only available means of making profit out of such a venture. On his estate the Don employs a number of foremen to ensure a smooth operation and organisation; foreman whose authority rests on their ability to exercise punishment and cruelty on the slaves. There is a resident priest) preaching sermons of humility and subserviance, piety and modesty to the slaves. The only problem appears to be the slaves – constantly threatening revolt, asking for days off on the Sabbath. Ocassionally some even make the run for it.

In the midst of this Don Manuel decides to demonstrate christian charity during Holy Week by organising a supper for twelve slaves at his table. The night in question becomes the central focus of the film – the essential backdrop for exploring all the nuances of the master slave dyad: the 'duplicity'; the mock civility; the deceptive servile mentality; the almost magical grasp of diplomacy; the boorish display of authority and hypocrisy; the fatal exhibition of unlimited power. As always the slaves grasp of these relations effortlessly surpasses those of the master. At the supper argument, storytelling and alcohol flow in equal liberal

proportions and battle lines are unconsciously drawn. In the meantime things will not be the same again.

The Last Supper is a detailed psychological portrait of colonial relations; an investigation into the cultural and economic fabric of master-slave relations. It looks at the brutality of these relations but places these firmly within an economic context which do not 'explain' away but provide a logic and rationale.

It touches on many of the fatal flaws in these relations by looking at the multiple investments essential for its operations. A penetrating study of social and moral decay.

20. MAILA

Salmaan Peerzada/1982/16mm

A political drama telling of the oppression of his people, their fears and frustrations. The action of the film takes place during Maila fiesta, traditionally dedicated to the Sufi Slaves who are supposed to stand against authority when it usurps the Rights of the people. Just such a situation is revealed here as Peerzada shows the dark and corrupt aspect behind the surface gaiety of the customary circus with governmental power.

Maila is essentially a critique of the excesses of military rule. A political thriller which investigates bureaucratisation, corruption and fundamentalism in contemporary Pakistan.

Through an interesting fusion of drama and documentary material "Maila" is about a "search" – for an alternative Pakistan; a different Pakistan with a tolerant spirit rooted in popular traditions.

Banned in Pakistan the film was completed in Britain.

21. MAJDHAR

*Retake Film and Video Collective Ltd/16mm/
76mins/1984/Britain*

Majdhar (Midstream) is a drama documentary about Fauzia, a young Asian woman who is abandoned by her husband soon after her arrival in London from Pakistan. It is her separation from her husband which frees her from the traditional responsibilities of an Asian woman and the domination of men. Although she is economically secure, Fauzia has to struggle for a sense of emotional independence. The film documents the relationships she forms across cultural, social and religious barriers and the events and experiences which shape her personality. Through her, the film shows the lives and experiences of Asians who are not normally depicted in British films and Television. By simple decisions such as deliberately avoiding the use of accents or speech to stress the 'otherness' of Asians in British society, the film challenges the stereo-typed images of Black people in the British media.

The film mainly deals with the experiences of young

Asians in London and touches on subjects such as the independence of women, sexual relationships between Asians and White people, abortion and young people's attitudes towards their parents. The film has been shown at the Tyneside and London Film festivals. The screenings have been followed by much discussions. Particularly interesting is the use of colour and music as an integral part of the film.

22. **NOW**

Santiago Alvarez/1964/6mins

A lively dramatic documentary which uses newsreel material to describe the struggle against racial discrimination in the United States in the '60s. Much of the material concentrates on the brutality used by the establishment in its attempt to stamp out the civil rights movement for the American negro. No narration, Just Lena Horne's voice singing the title song 'Now'.

23. OUR COLOURFUL LIVES (Hamari Rangilly Zindagi)

*Laxmi Jamdagni and Amina Patel/25mins/Tape
slide/1979*

This tape slide show is based on two years research with 13-16 year Asian girls in an industrial city in the Midlands. Their back-grounds were varied: some were Sikhs from India or East Africa and others were Moslems from Cashmere, Pakistan, India, Bangladesh or the North West Frontier Province.

During the research work with the girls, they were constantly reminded of the major research objectives: what did they want other people to know about their lives which they felt was often misunderstood and misinterpreted. The soundtrack relays in the girls own words their responses to this; how they were proud to be Asian, and wanted their specific needs as Asian to be recognised; how they experienced racism on different levels of their daily lives; how some of their families adhered to their traditional beliefs more strongly than others – eg. in terms of ideas of independence, marriage, employment; and how given the right opportunity they were able to evolve their own brand of youth culture.

The political consciousness of the girls portrayed here can be summed up by the plea made by one girl when she said to the proposed tape slide show, "Don't say all girls hate their parents, their parents don't let them go anywhere or anything, *don't say that*, they always say *that* but it ain't true".

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24. **PATU!**

*New Zealand/1983/110mins/Colour/16mm/
Merta Mita*

"The most controversial, and the most contested, event in recent New Zealand history, was the 1981 South African rugby tour. Half of the country was opposed to the tour, the establishment was determined the tour would go ahead, and the result was a country divided against itself almost to the point of civil war. This incredible documentary shows what happened in New Zealand from the time of the announcement of the tour through the mobilisation to prevent it to the violent confrontation between police and protesters. The actual filming was both dangerous and difficult and completion of the film was delayed through attempts to have the negative confiscated. The driving force behind its making was a Maori woman named Merata Mita. Her achievement is as impressive technically as it is effective emotionally. A major documentary of our time."

Ken Wlaschin

25. PHANIYAMMA

Director: Prema Karanth/India 1982/109mins

Based on a real life story of a child widow, *Phaniyamma* is the first film directed by Prema Karanth. Phaniyamma was born in 1870 and died in 1952, and witnessed a period of rapid change in the material circumstances of her village. Married when she was nine, she thought of it as just another game till she felt the rigours of being treated as a widow when her husband died of a snake bite.

A widow was considered inauspicious traditionally and was ostracised by society. Brahmin convention did not allow re-marriage, till the social reform movements of the nineteenth century began to attack Brahmin heartlessness. Child marriage was banned by law only in this century.

The film shows Phaniyamma not merely triumphing over her own grim fate, but also becoming a catalyst for social change, refusing to accept reactionary traditional practices, encouraging others to do the same, and making her life useful by helping and serving others.

26. QUEI MADA

Gillo Pontecorvo/112mins

The story is set on Queimada, an island in the Caribbean, in the first half of the eighteenth century. It is an island largely populated by descendants of African slaves who work the sugar plantation.

In an effort to break the foreign sugar-trade monopoly the British government sends Sir William Walker, a military and political strategist and a firm believer in English principles of Free Trade – to the island.

Through careful manoeuvring Walker instigates a rebellion amongst the slaves which finally leads to the overthrow of the Portuguese administration.

A new government is formed comprising largely of the island's middle class which concedes to British free trade.

Ten years later Walker is called again to Queimada to put down a slave rebellion. Things have not changed much on the island the tyrannical Portuguese Government has been substituted by British control which although it respects the 'liberty' of the individual, still controls the country's economy. Against this backdrop Walker's task now is to curb the discontent and to destroy the revolutionary movement he cynically instigated years before; especially its leader Jose Delores.

Through acts of calculating savagery Walker manages to quell discontent and to capture the

revolutionary leader. Jose Delores – by now a major political strategist in his own right – wins the moral and political victory in the end. And Sir William Walker loses more on Queimada than he had bargained for.

27. **RUE CASES NEGRES** **(Black Shack Alley)**

Euzhan Palcy/Martinique & France/103mins/1983

Rue Cases Negres is a very rare precedent indeed; it is a film made by a black woman about French colonial presence in the West Indies: it has gathered a host of prizes the world over and has been very popular with a very wide range of audiences. Though entertaining it proposes a political interpretation of the French colonial legacy in ways quite accessible and exhilarating.

Set in Martinique in the 1930s the film is principally about Jose, a young boy whose formidable grandmother guides him away from a ruthless wage serfdom in the cane fields to the very top of the colonial education system. Rather like a log-cabin to president tale the film chronicles the life of an orphan from humble origins who is cautiously steered past all the social and economic obstacles of past-slavery society to a freedom only guaranteed by background or education.

The background to this achievement gained by con-

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siderable sacrifice and hardship is one of misery, underachievement and quite tangible poverty.

The very bright Jose is brought up by his grandmother on Black Shack Alley – a shanty town populated by the black workers who cut the same canefields as their foreparents. Understandably illiteracy is rife: Jose teaches a grown-up friend (Carmen) to write and reads to his grandmother.

But Black Shack Alley is also a community of blacks despised and exploited by mulatto and white alike. It is a resort for people who live from hand to mouth whilst their white bosses live in relative abundance. In Black Shack Alley people avoid the category of 'victim' through a series of profound yearnings: to return to Africa in death, to make a better life for one's children; to demand more money for one's work; to have fun whilst young;

The film portrays Martiniquan Society from below by giving the underprivileged the most significant voices. Voices fundamentally similar in their aspirations. It is this collective experience of Black Shack Alley which structure most of the significant events in the film. In this way the film points a very revealing picture of colonial life in the French West Indies. Whether this is complete or not is another question.

28. **SADGATI DELIVERENCE**

Satyajit Ray/India/1981/50mins

The untouchable, Dikhi, approaches a man of the highest (Brahmin) caste, Ghashiram; could he come to Dikhi's house to find an auspicious date for his daughters wedding? Ghashiram can. But he asks Dikhi to do various bits of work for him first. Dikhi, however, has been sick and while chopping wood, he collapses and dies.

Now the problem is that the corpse lies near the path that the Brahmins use to get to their well, so the body must be disposed of quickly. The untouchables stay away because the death might lead to a police investigation, and Ghashiram is eventually forced to dispose of the corpse himself.

29. **SHADOWS**

John Cassavetes/USA/35mm

An early American independent feature which deals with the questions of role and identity from a very unusual perspective.

Based in New York and structured around a very unusual family, 'Shadows' explores the ambiguities of identity. Three characters wonder aimlessly through the social landscape of New York Club/High life – a

fading comedian; an 'angry' teenager; an alienated socialite, all wondering through a life of uncertainty. The comedian feels his career at an ebb; the socialite wants to write but does not 'feel smart enough'; the teenager simply doesn't know what to do with himself.

The one central fact confronting these lives is the problem of race. In a rambling uneven series of loosely structured episodes 'Shadows' presents novel portraits of confused identities held together by fraying ambitions and loyalties; of lives thwarted by injured and fragile self-perceptions; lives permanently threatened by forces of prejudice. Or so everything seems on the surface because 'Shadows' is also a film of deceptive simplicity, bold and cunning in structure and execution. A mastery of understatement.

Its 'Art-Movie' veneer very carefully conceals a moving engagement with the phenomenon of 'passing' *(The process by which light skinned blacks pass for white.); with mythologies of black sexuality; familiar relations, relations between black women and white men; with European evaluations of colour; with black 'understanding' of racism and European evaluations of colour.

Shadows consciously explores the grey areas of 'race' and in the process asks a number of important questions of its audience. To watch 'Shadows' is to question the process by which value and significance is attributed to colour.

30. **SIGNS OF EMPIRE**

Black Audio Film Collection

Signs of Empire is concerned with investigating the fictions of English 'National' character as it is specifically produced through the excess of Colonial Fantasy.

Through a series of visual/textual strategies elements of the discourses of Empire are interrupted to explore amongst other things – their racial economy; their obsession with a “magnum virum mater” (Mighty mother of man); their concern with prioritising landscapes of stereotypes.'

27mm/Slide/tape

31. **TAKING OFF FROM A DREAM**

Rigoberto Lopez/30mins/VHS & 16mm/Cuba/1983

Made at an important time in Caribbean history, this documentary is a critique of the claims made by the Regan administration against Grenada under Maurice Bishop. More specifically, the film examines the claims made by Reagan about the nature and purposes of the airport which was under construction in Grenada. Point by point each claim is demolished in interviews with Grenadans, US tourists and students on the island and European construction workers at the airport site.

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The film ends prematurely, as events overtake the project and the final scenes from television cameras spell the tragedy of the Caribbean Jewel – the US invasion of the island occurs.

32. TERRITORIES PART I & II

Sankofa/16mm & Video/25mins/1984

Territories. 1 16mm film produced by Sankofa a Black film and video workshop funded by Channel Four TV and the Greater London Council. A collective working around issues of representation of Black peoples and the social context that give rise to a limited range of images.

Territories. A kaleidoscope of sound and image, challenging conventional modes of documentary, both in its structure and in terms of its significance to Black politics.

From 1976 to 1984. From West London to Northern Ireland. Sound Systems Carnival, Colonialism, Surveillance. The film traces not only geographical spaces but also those of Race, Class, and Sexuality. Spaces in which there is a continuous battle for representation – for CONTROL.

The film embodies a critique of traditional ways of looking at Black Cultures. Adding a critical historical dimension to the populist view. Territories forces the spectator to look again, not in recognition of the reggae beat, the steelbands, the riots etc., but beyond

that currency of symbols towards the forces that perpetuate and maintain their misrecognition.

"It was never a question of passing. It was a question of hiding. Behind Black and White perceptions of who we were – who they thought we were."

33. TSIAMELO

*Betty Wolpert/Ellen Kuzwayo/Blanche
Tsimatsina/1984/16mm & Video/55mins*

This film was made in 1983 by Ellen Kuzwayo, Blanche Tsimatsima and Betty Wolpert. It was filmed in London and in Thaba Nchu, a small rural village in South Africa, and in the urban township of Soweto.

The film portrays the experiences endured by a single family and their friends over a period which spans four generations and recounts the history of their ancestors at the turn of the century, when whites and blacks lived and farmed together in peace and harmony. Ellen Kuzwayo tells of a time when there were prosperous black landowners. Among them were men and women with strong values and beliefs and a deep sense of commitment to their community.

In 1913 the Native Land Act was passed. The era of serenity and cooperation came to an end. It was three years after a liberal British government transferred power to the white rulers of the South African Union, who immediately began a process of dispossessing the blacks of their land, their rights and their freedom,

sentencing them to a status of eternal inferiority as servants of their white 'masters'.

Ellen Kuzwayo in London relates the story of Sol T. Plaatje who led a delegation of the South African Native Congress to London in 1914 seeking Britain's intervention in defence of their lost rights, and Plaatje's feelings of injustice and betrayal when the British refused to act.

Through the eyes of 84 year old Blanche Tsimatsima, once a farmer, and her niece, Ellen Kuzwayo, a 70 year old community leader in Soweto, we are able to share their sadness at being robbed of their heritage and turned into foreigners in the land of their birth.

The film follows Aunt Blanche to the farm her family had owned for more than a hundred years and which has since been proclaimed a 'Black Spot' whose inhabitants were banished. Ellen too in 1974 was deprived of her own farm Tsiamelo. Three years later, in Soweto, she was arrested and detained without charge for five months.

Yet there is hope for tomorrow. Those who follow Aunt Blanche and Ellen have vowed to continue the struggle for their rights. Ellen's son Justice and daughter-in-law Vuyi will not permit injustice to defeat them. They pledge to continue their quest for a fair share and a full role in the life of the land that bred them.

34. WHO SHALL LIVE & WHO SHALL DIE

This is the story of the political battle that took place in the United States to prevent the extermination of the Jews during the Second World War. From the Evian Conference of '38, the Jewish question was a prime political topic in America. When news of the exterminations reached Washington in '42, governmental response was the result of political calculations.

Interviews with participants in the fight to save European Jewry are combined with archive footage, previously classified governmental documents and photographs and interviews with concentration camp survivors, to depict America's role in the face of the extermination of an entire people. The film shows that the American government knew of the exterminations while they were taking place and it reveals the efforts that led to a complete reversal of American policy and the establishment of a special agency to rescue the Jews in 1944. The agency's accomplishments are contrasted with the result of the actions of the State and War Departments prior to 1944.

Laurence Jarvik's controversial documentary exposes America's calculated indifference to the plight of European Jewry during the Holocaust.

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23

GLC

1981-1986

Working for London

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Parminder Vir OBE BLACK & ETHNIC ARTS ARCHIVE

The elders, continuing the African tradition of oral

Humanity, dignity, strength of conviction, and love of

Vir OBE DE

to each other more without having to assign a value to another's words based on some previous identification or certification.

The film's successful communication is in its structure: How one idea is linked to another becoming a new idea, and that idea giving rise to another. And into this structure is woven the original music of Sweet Honey In The Rock which serves as an opportunity for reflection, then introduces a new idea to carry the film forward.

Like other films made by serious Black filmmakers, *Wilmington 10 – USA 10,000* is not to be entertaining nor is it preaching; rather it is a challenge for dialogue – between the film and the audience and between members of the audience and the greater community of working, struggling people.

36. **YOLL (The Way)**

Serif Goren/ */1982/Turkey*

Directed by Goren, the story on which this film was based, was conceived by Guney. The Idea for Yoll came to Guney from seeing the look in the eyes of his fellow prisoners when they returned from parole periods and particularly from the experience of one man whose family had required him to kill his own sister who had dishonoured the family name. Only in the film, Guney changes the story from a sister to a wife.

The YOLL is more biographical of Guney, dealing with

prison life and following a group of prisoners getting leave to see their families from a jail on an island. The prisoners temporary freedom leads them into another prison more formidable to leave or escape from – this of course is their country. Prison-within-a-prison is very much in evidence in the film as the characters embark on their respective journeys to different parts of Turkey.

All Guney's films, one way or another, expose these social inequalities, primitive social structures that involve such traditions as blood feuds, the oppression and exploitation of women and more implicitly the opposition between authority and the people.

Most of Guney's heroes and heronies accept the most desperate alternative to their degrading roles which society imposes on them.

This film won the Golden Palm Award at Cannes.

DISCUSSION THEMES

In the past a number of Community Venues and Cinemas have programmed Black and Third World Films. We suggest the following discussion themes as an extension of this process; the process by which the relevance of Black and Third World Films is being established. Inevitably, this is also a process by which the issues raised in these films are kept in circulation irrespective of mainstream media neglect.

Everyman Race History & Identity

Four Corners Recent Black Independent (5th March)

Black Women on Film (6th March)

Recent Black Independent

Hounslow Indian Sub-Continent – struggle within (22nd March)

Recent Black Independents or Race & Identity (23rd March)

Anti Apartheid – Solidarity struggles (24th March)

Southall Indian sub-Continent – Struggles Within (23rd March)

Recent Black Independents (28th March)

Jackons Lane Recent Black Independents (2nd April)

Indian Sub-Continent – Struggles Within (9th April)

Cuba (16th April)

Tribute to Guney (23rd March)

Cinema Action Harlem Renaissance (11th March)

Contemporary Irish Representation (13th March)

Cuba (14th March)

Indian Sub-Continent – Struggles Within (15th March)

Battersea Arts Centre Black Women on Film (29th March)

Anti Apartheid – Solidarity Struggles (30th March)

Contemporary Irish Representation (31st March)

Rio Recent Black Independents (18th March)

New Indian Art Cinema (19th March)

Tribute to Guney (20th March)

COMMUNITY CINEMA VENUES IN THE ANTI-RACIST FILM PROGRAMME

Battersea Arts Centre
176 Lavender Hill
London SW11
Tel: 223 6557

Cinema Action
27 Winchester Road
London NW3
Tel: 586 2762

Everyman Cinema
Holly Bush Va
London NW3
Tel: 435 1525

Four Corners Ltd
Cinema Workshop
113 Roman Road
London E2
Tel: 981 4243

Havlock Centre
Havlock Road
Southall
Middx
Tel: 571 2241

Jacksons Lane Community Centre Association
271 Archway Road
London N6
Tel: 341 1884

Montague Hall
Montague Road
Hounslow
Middx
Tel: 570 7728

The Phoenix Cinema
52 High Road
East Finchley
London N2
Tel: 883 2233

Rio Cinema
103 Kingsland High Street
London E8
Tel: 249 2722

St Matthews Meeting Place
Community Centre
Brixton Hill
London SW2
Tel: 733 7528

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

John Akomfrah
Altan Koraltan
Joseph Olubo (Cover Design)
National Film Development Corporation of India
Black Filmmakers Foundation, New York
William Greaves Productions, New York
Myphedduh Films, Washington

	Battersea Centre	Rio	Cinema Action	Everyman	Four Corners	Phoenix	St Matthews	Montague Hall	Jackson's Lane	Havelock Hall
2. An Indian Story			15/3		7/3			22/3	9/4	
3. Aradh Sataye		19/3	12/3			15/3				25/3
4. Cause of Ireland	31/3		13-3							
5. Chokh										27/3
6. Colour		18/3	16/3		5/3		25/3			
7. Death of a Prohpet			11/3				27/3			
9. From these Roots			11/3	27/3			27/3			
10. Fundi: The Ella Baker Story	29/3									
12. Gotta Make This Journey					6/3		27/3			
13. Grey Area		18/3			5/3		25/3			
14. Hairpiece	29/3		16/3				25/3			
15. I Be Done Been Was Is	29/3		16/3	27/3	6/3		25/3			
16. Illusions		18/3			6/3	16/3				
17. Images of Nationality									2/4	28/3
18. Karij										26/3

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	Battersea Centre	Rio	Cinema Action	Everyman	Four Corners	Phoenix	St Matthews	Montague Hall	Jackson's Lane	Havelock Hall
19. The Last Supper			14/3			20/3			16/4	
20. Maila								22/3	9/4	
21. Majdhar					7/3	17/3 & 21/3		23/3		28/3
22. Now			14/3 & 11/3			18/3		24/3	16/4	
24. Patu	30/3							24/3		
25. Phaniyamma						17/3 & 21/3				
26. Queimada						18/3				
27. Rue Cases Negres						19/3				29/3
28. Sadgati			15/3							27/3
29. Shadows				27/3		16/3				
30. Sings of Empire		18/3							2/4	28/3
32. Territories		18/3			5/3		26/3		2/4	
33. Tsiamelo						19/3				
34. Who Shall Live and Who Shall Die						17/3(M)				
36. Yoll		20/3							23/4	

	Battersea Centre	Rio	Cinema Action	Everyman	Four Corners	Phoenix	St Matthews	Montague Hall	Jackson's Lane	Havelock Hall
1. Angry Still	30/3								23/4	29/3
31. Taking Off From A Dream							27/3			
35. Wilmington 10 USA 10,000							26/3			
8. Firar		20/3								
11. Get Out Of That Garden	31/3		13/3							
23. Our Colourful Lives								23/3		

*Please check with Venue for possible programme changes involving these films.

Printed for the GLC Supplies Department (CRS) by Swindon Press (756052)

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