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UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON

FACULTY OF BUSINESS, LAW AND ART

WINCHESTER SCHOOL OF ART

**Beyond The ‘Campaign for a Popular Culture’
Community Art, Activism and Cultural Democracy in 1980s London**

Hazel A. Atashroo

Thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

June 2017

ABSTRACT

FACULTY OF BUSINESS, LAW AND ART

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**BEYOND THE ‘CAMPAIGN FOR A POPULAR CULTURE’: COMMUNITY ART,
ACTIVISM AND CULTURAL DEMOCRACY IN 1980S LONDON**

Hazel A. Atashroo

This thesis offers a new cultural history of State sponsored cultural production in London under the Labour led Greater London Council during the 1980s, bringing the GLC’s cultural policy interventions to the attention of historians of art and culture. The Greater London Council’s Arts and Recreation Committee, and in particular its new ‘Community Arts’ and ‘Ethnic Arts’ Sub-Committees, sought to challenge the Arts Council’s dominant model of cultural sponsorship which aimed to broaden public access to ‘the arts’. The GLC attempted instead to foster a participative ‘cultural democracy’ in London, often centred upon particular political themes and identities. Alongside existing accounts which focus exclusively upon the GLC’s cultural policy discourse, this new cultural history attends to the other side of the sponsorship equation, namely, what cultural forms were prioritised by the various committees, how such policies were perceived by the recipient cultural producers, what cultural texts were produced as a result of GLC sponsorship and how these cultural forms were received more broadly. It explores how the GLC impacted upon cultural production in London, looking to the interrelationship between particular GLC sponsored cultural outputs, whether artworks, murals, posters or films, and wider political and social themes pertinent to that historical moment. In particular, this thesis interrogates cultural forms funded under the auspices of two city-wide campaigns, ‘GLC Peace Year’ (1983) and ‘London Against Racism’ (1984), in order to consider the relationship between GLC cultural sponsorship, cultural production, new social movement activism and democratic participation. Cultural forms of nuclear criticism were funded during ‘Peace Year’ to raise awareness about the GLC’s Nuclear-Free Zone, contradicting central government’s nuclear stance in 1983. These included artist-commissioned poster campaigns and banners, peace murals, pop concerts, community theatre, photography exhibitions and documentary films, including some related to peace activism by women. This case study traces Peace Year’s cultural output to consider the effects of this appeal to London’s nuclear anxieties. The second case study offers a re-reading of the GLC’s new ‘Ethnic Arts’ Sub-Committee’ and its attempts to instigate an anti-racist cultural policy, as part of a broader campaign that sought to address the issue of discrimination in London and across all areas of Council work. It begins by recording a number of the GLC’s initiatives in this area, including its sponsorship of various forms of black cultural production and in particular, the controversial ‘Anti-Racist Mural Project’. Through an examination of contemporaneous and subsequent critical accounts of the GLC’s experiments alongside Council minutes and papers, this account adds nuance to existing narratives by identifying the climate of coexisting and competing discourses at the GLC relating to the state sponsorship of culture and diversity. Ultimately, ‘Beyond The ‘Campaign For A Popular Culture’: Community Art, Activism And Cultural Democracy In 1980s London’ presents a history of the practices and policies of the GLC that is pointedly cultural in focus and attempts to open this field of study to researchers interested in visual culture, art history, community art, identity politics, activism and urban history, alongside those with an interest in cultural policy making at a local government level.

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DECLARATION OF AUTHORSHIP

I,..... [please print name]

declare that this thesis and the work presented in it are my own and has been generated by me as the result of my own original research.

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I confirm that:

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Acknowledgements

I wish to thank my supervisors Professor Jonathan Harris, Dr August Jordan Davis, Dr Sunil Manghani and Professor Jonathan Faiers at Winchester School of Art for their invaluable advice and encouragement. Thank you to Lindsey Fryer, Francesco Manacorda and the staff at Tate Liverpool for the invaluable experience of working on the exhibition *Keywords: Art, Culture and Society in 1980s Britain* in 2013, it directed my research in unexpected ways. I wish to thank the AHRC for making this doctoral research possible, and the CDA/CDP consortium for invaluable training.

I also wish to thank a number of researchers in various fields whose inspiring work also helped shape aspects of this thesis, namely Professor Franco Bianchini, Professor Stephen J. Brooke, Dr Daisy Payling, and Dr Jonathan Hogg. My gratitude is also due to the Modern British Studies department at the University of Birmingham, and the 'Black Artists and Modernism Project' for several highly influential conferences.

I wish to thank the archivists at the London Metropolitan Archives, Tate Britain, V&A Blythe House, Imperial War Museum, British Film Institute, Lambeth Archives, inIVA and the Chelsea School of Art, whose expertise I relied upon. While primarily an archival study, my thanks is also due to the many individuals who assisted me in the course of this research project, participating in formal and informal discussions: Frankie Armstrong, Professor Joram Ten Brink, Professor Sean Cubitt, Dr Tony Dowmunt, John Dugger, Peter Kennard, Dr. Loraine Leeson, Helen Petts, Lis Rhodes, Sylvia Stevens, Mark Saunders, Tamar Swade, Deborah Grayson and Natasha Nkonde. My apologies to those whose accounts I could but touch upon herein for reasons of brevity and focus, each was invaluable to the development of this thesis and will form part of future research.

My deepest gratitude is due to the late Dr Alan Tomkins, former GLC Officer and arts advisor to Tony Banks, for the generosity and passion with which he shared his many vivid recollections.

I dedicate this thesis to Alan.

Definitions and Abbreviations

| | |
|------|---|
| ABSA | Association for Business Sponsorship of Arts |
| ACTT | Association of Cinematographers Television and Allied Technicians |
| AHRC | Arts and Humanities Research Council |
| ACA | Association for Community Artists |
| ANC | African National Congress |
| ARC | GLC Arts and Recreation Committee |
| BFI | British Film Institute |
| CAS | GLC Community Arts Sub-Committee |
| CEMA | Council for the Encouragement of Music and Arts |
| CRE | Commission for Racial Equality |
| CND | Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament |
| DCMS | Department of Culture, Media and Sport |
| EAS | GLC Ethnic Arts Sub-Committee |
| EMU | GLC Ethnic Minorities Unit |
| FoE | Friends of the Earth |
| GLAA | Greater London Arts Association |
| GLC | Greater London Council |
| GLEB | Greater London Enterprise Board |
| GLF | Gay Liberation Front |
| ICA | Institute of Contemporary Arts |
| ILEA | Inner London Education Authority |
| IWM | Imperial War Museum |
| LBA | London Boroughs Association |
| LMA | London Metropolitan Archive |
| MAAS | Minority Arts Advisory Service |
| MCCs | Metropolitan County Councils |
| MSC | Manpower Services Commission |
| NF | National Front |
| NFT | National Film Theatre |
| NVDA | Non-Violent Direct Action |
| OU | Open University |
| RAR | Rock Against Racism |
| RAA | Regional Arts Association |
| RFH | Royal Festival Hall |
| SDP | Social Democratic Party |
| TUC | Trades Union Congress |
| V&A | Victoria and Albert Museum |
| VSC | Vietnam Solidarity Campaign |
| WEA | Workers Education Association |

Chapter One: Introduction



Figure 1: Cover photograph of a crowd gathered for the 'Jobs for a Change' festival, County Hall, June 1984. Greater London Council, *Campaign for a Popular Culture* (London: GLC, 1986).

In the Greater London Council's final weeks, Arts and Recreation department staff hurriedly compiled a publication to record its work, which was destined to be cut short by the Council's impending abolition on 1st April, 1986.¹ Dr Alan Tomkins, GLC Officer and arts policy advisor to Tony Banks, Chair of the Arts and Recreations Committee, recalled that the idea for the last-minute publication, *Campaign for a Popular Culture: A Record of Struggle and Achievement: The G.L.C.'s Community Arts Programme 1981-86*, came from none other than Professor Stuart Hall, a former colleague at the Open University, where Tomkins had taught on what was to become the discipline-defining 'U203 Popular Culture' course.² [Figure 1]

¹ The London Government Act 1963 (an Act of UK Parliament) instigated a new structure of local government for the capital, to serve the London metropolitan area conurbation, 'Greater London'. It created a two-tier system, with a lower tier consisting of 32 elected 'London borough' local authorities (12 'inner London' and 20 'outer London' boroughs). The Act increased the power of the upper tier of local government, (formerly London County Council), forming the new Greater London Council (GLC) in 1965. See Tony Travers, *The Politics of London: Governing an Ungovernable City* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), pp. 28-29. The Local Government Act of 1985 was passed to abolish the GLC, but also the Metropolitan County Councils (MCCs). Following abolition, the GLC's functions were handed to the London Residuary Body and eventually devolved to the London boroughs and Central Government.

² Greater London Council, *Campaign for a Popular Culture: A Record of Struggle and Achievement: The G.L.C.'s Community Arts Programme 1981-86*, (London, GLC, 1986). Alan Tomkins, interview with the author, January 2015. For more on the Open University popular culture course, see chapter two of this thesis.

As Jonathan Harris has argued,

Popular, in contrast [with ‘mass culture’], retains - perhaps uneasily - the earlier political sense of being progressive: an alliance of groups and interests forming an overall democratic majority, and opposed to the prejudices, privileges and power of a narrow elite.³

This definition fits precisely to the concept of ‘popular culture’ that came to inform local government cultural policy at the GLC between 1981 and 1986, and represented a significant departure from previous State cultural strategies, which had largely favoured that ‘narrow elite’. Moving beyond the GLC’s self-historicising publication, *Campaign for a Popular Culture*, the central aim of this research project has been to bring the GLC Arts and Recreation Committee’s cultural policies between 1981-1986 to the attention of historians of art and culture, and to advocate for the value of their archive as an untapped resource for accounts of politicised community arts, new social movement activism and cultural democracy in 1980s London.

This study is the product of an AHRC supported Collaborative Doctoral Award (CDA) held by Winchester School of Art, University of Southampton and Tate Liverpool, entitled ‘Creative Communities in Art and Design since the 1960s’. This portion of the project will address particular ‘creative communities’ active during the 1980s in London. In the first year of the project, I assisted curators with the exhibition *Keywords: Art, Culture and Society in 1980s Britain* at Tate Liverpool (2014).⁴ The exhibition sought to apply the discursive principles of Raymond Williams’s lexicon of shifting meanings, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*, (1976), to help think through a selection of art works from 1980s Britain, many of which touched upon socio-political themes pertinent to their moment.⁵ Williams’s *Keywords* approach has also proved useful for the deeper exploration of themes relevant to both the AHRC’s research directive and the overarching themes of this research project.⁶ This line of enquiry was prompted by and developed from aspects of Tate’s *Keywords* exhibition. The exhibition’s video selection which included Despite TV’s documentary on the Wapping Dispute, *Despite the Sun*, and the inclusion of work by artists such as Sutupa Biswas, Sunil Gupta, Lubaina Himid, Donald Rodney, Peter Kennard and others inspired a further investigation of the relationship between cultural producers, activism and local politics in this period.⁷ This interest directed the research focus towards the cultural policies of the Greater London Council’s Arts and Recreation Committees between 1981 and 1986, a unique moment of uneasy alignment between London’s local government, new social movements, cultural producers and their audiences, ordinary Londoners who were to encounter or participate in this publically funded work.⁸

³ Jonathan Harris, *Art History: The Key Concepts* (London: Routledge, 2006), p.241.

⁴ Tate Liverpool, *Keywords: Art, Culture and Society in 1980s Britain* (28 February – 11 May 2014).

⁵ Raymond Williams, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*, (London: Fontana, 1983, [1976]).

⁶ See Chapter 2, a ‘literature review’ enacted through an investigation of key terms for this thesis. For instance, the term ‘community’ features heavily in the AHRC directive and warrants further exploration.

⁷ *Keywords* was curated by Gavin Delahunty and Grant Watson, video selection curated by Catherine Wood, Karen Alexander and The Otolith Collective. See: Tate Liverpool Press Release, 30 April 2014.

<<http://www.tate.org.uk/about/press-office/press-releases/keywords>>, [accessed 01.01.2017].

⁸ Participant audiences should not be neglected in this narrative, those who will have encountered the cultural products of this alignment funded by their taxes, on city walls, billboards, at public festivals, on Channel 4, or in the tabloids.

In order to begin to understand the cultural production of this moment, cultural policy and its role in the GLC's alternative model for 1980s London, this research calls for an interdisciplinary approach akin to what Raymond Williams termed an 'historical sociology of culture', described by Jonathan Harris,

[..] an expansive, inter-related analysis of cultural institutions, means of production, visual and notional forms, processes of interpretation and social formations [...] Williams's work is an attempt to confound disciplinary orthodoxy, to explore the division between the analysis of cultural forms, models of consumption, and their interpretation ("traditional art history") and the analysis of the material and social conditions and relations of cultural production, within the whole gamut of activities and relations which constitute "society".⁹

This thesis's multi-disciplinary approach will seek to negotiate a number of different literatures. While analyses of cultural texts will be of some importance, this topic also demands an approach open to ideas and cultural practices which relate to concepts of 'cultural democracy', an expansive understanding of how cultural producers and cultural institutions ought to relate to society more broadly, beyond traditional distinctions between 'high' or 'low' culture or exclusive value judgements relating to 'quality'.¹⁰ Discussion of popular participative arts practices frequently excluded from traditional art historical analysis such as 'community arts' will form part of the focus of this thesis. Following Williams, the analysis of the material and social conditions within which these emerge will also require an approach open to literatures from modern British political and cultural history more broadly, in particular, those relating to cultural policy, local government, the Labour left, new social movements and the politics of identity during the 1980s.

To date, accounts that touch upon the GLC's cultural sponsorship have discussed it as a point in the development of contemporary cultural policy, or discuss it only in passing as a factor in the discrediting of the Labour Left's 'municipal socialism' during the 1980s, or examined how it responded to narrowly defined groups of cultural producers only. These existing accounts, bound within particular disciplinary and ideological parameters, cannot attend in any detail to the other side of the sponsorship equation, the question of what work such sponsorship supported cultural organisations to do and what this work might convey about particular communities of cultural producers active in 1980s London, their relationship to politics, and to their audiences. This thesis offers the beginnings of a revisionist account of the Greater London Council's radical cultural policy experiment of 1981-1986, looking to the interrelation between contemporaneous progressive social movements and the Council's efforts to sponsor cultural production

⁹ Jonathan Harris, 'Raymond Williams, Art History and Social Critique', *Block*, 15, 1989, p.27. Harris continues, 'Williams's analysis requires the empirical study of the historical relationships between cultural producers and their social structures of production. His terms were chosen deliberately – 'Cultural Producer' rather than 'artist', which he called a 'pre-sociological' category, because its meanings had changed radically over the last seven hundred years. 'Production' because it emphasized the use and working of actual physical materials and the construction of material objects.' *Ibid.* p.30. Williams himself writes, 'The sociology of culture [...] has then to take account of both historical and contemporary diversity. It is important to retain the full range of provisional classifications of institutions and types of relations, as the means to specific analysis, rather than to work with the (pre-sociological) formulas of 'the artist' and 'his public', or 'the cultural superstructure' and 'the economic base'. Indeed it is at once the changed social history and the complex sociology of the changing institutions and relations which take us beyond these formulas to the possibility of more precise analysis.' Raymond Williams, *Culture* (London: Fontana, 1981), p.50.

¹⁰ A discussion of 'cultural democracy' will follow below.

by and for newly recognised constituencies in London.¹¹ In particular, it will attempt to re-read the GLC's period of radical cultural policy experiments through the social and cultural outputs of its sponsored cultural organisations, rather than solely through its own policy statements. This thesis will therefore distance itself from more traditional top-down accounts of cultural policy as enacted by State bodies and advocate something of a 'bottom-up' social history of cultural policy in action.¹²

While accounts also exist of the highly influential, if under resourced, *cultural industries* policy research undertaken by the GLC's Industry and Employment Branch,¹³ this thesis will instead focus on the less well researched, more controversial arts sponsorship policies undertaken by the GLC's Arts and Recreations department. The department's central decision-making Arts and Recreations Committee, and its newly formed 'Community Arts Sub-Committee' and 'Ethnic Arts Sub-Committee', were simultaneously pursuing a rather different course of action than that of the Industry and Employment Branch, enacting a particular argument in support of state intervention in arts and culture towards a concept of *cultural democracy*.¹⁴ As Kevin Mulcahy explains,

"The objective of cultural democracy [...] is to provide for a more participatory or populist approach in the definition and provision of cultural opportunities. In essence there is a shift from a top-down to a bottom up policy: that is, the government's responsibility to provide equal opportunities for citizens to be culturally active on their own terms. This shift involves a broad interpretation of cultural activities that comprises popular entertainment, folk festivals, amateur sports [...] As an alternative, or complement, to a strategy of fine-arts dissemination, cultural democracy provides a stronger legitimization of the principle of state subsidy with the concept of culture as a "process in which we are all participatory". The programmatic emphases recognize the diversity of cultural differences among regions, between the capital and the provinces, between urban and rural areas, among social groups. Emphasizing a strategy of cultural decentralization, cultural democracy substitutes a pluralistic for a monocultural concept."¹⁵

It is the aim of this thesis to begin the work of questioning and recasting long-held assumptions about the GLC's arts sponsorship practices, which are the legacy of both contemporaneous vilifications by the New Right and the media, as well as subsequent disavowal by the Labour Party, as David Hesmondhalgh et.al. have commented of the GLC's legacy in this regard,

¹¹ The work of the GLC's Arts and Recreation Department, its central decision-making Arts and Recreation Committee (ARC), and its newly formed 'Community Arts' and 'Ethnic Arts' Sub-Committees (CAS and EAS, 1982-1986), will form the central aspect of this investigation of the GLC's cultural policy.

¹² This account is also predicated upon questions of the agency or determination of cultural producers working under State sponsorship. Agency also becomes an issue in the history of 'social movements' as their personnel, ideas and campaign repertoires begin to be incorporated into the workings of the State, as occurred at the GLC in the early 1980s. Raymond Williams defines 'determinism' not as 'an external cause which totally predicts or prefigures' but 'a notion of determination as setting limits, exerting pressures.' Raymond Williams, 'Base and Superstructure in Marxist Cultural Theory' [1973] in *Culture and Materialism: Selected Essays* (London: Verso, 2005), p.32.

¹³ See: GLC, *The State of the Art or the Art of the State? Strategies for the Cultural Industries in London* (London: GLC Industry and Employment Branch, 1985).

¹⁴ 'Cultural Democracy' will be discussed further in chapter 2.

¹⁵ Kevin V. Mulcahy 'Cultural Policy: Definitions and Theoretical Approaches', *The Journal of Arts Management, Law and Society*, 35:4, (2006), p.324.

New Labour represented a significant shift towards a much more serious engagement with culture, but on grounds that abandoned any ‘cultural democracy’ elements present in the Jennie Lee ‘moment’ of the 1960s or the ‘municipal socialist’ interventions of the 1980s.¹⁶

In spite of this apparent political abandonment, an emphasis on ideas of cultural democracy is making a significant return in recent discourses surrounding the social role and public impact of publicly funded cultural institutions.¹⁷ It is therefore timely to recover the GLC’s contribution to these discourses during the 1980s, though important to recognise that the GLC’s vision of ‘cultural democracy’ was not the kind of apolitical proposal with which today’s public cultural institutions would be entirely comfortable. Many of the arts organisations sponsored by the GLC were selected for their commitment to what was then politically controversial new social movement activism, such as the anti-nuclear peace movement, as well as for their more generalised pledges towards equality of cultural opportunities.¹⁸

This relationship between GLC cultural policy and sponsored cultural producers who engaged in the communication of ideas drawn from new social movement activism will provide the focus for two long chapters in this thesis. Case studies have been selected to examine the GLC’s sponsorship of cultural work relating to the peace movement, and its attempts to support anti-racist work in the cultural sector. These examples of GLC cultural policy were chosen because they clearly corresponded to two of the GLC’s heavily promoted public awareness campaigns which related to new social movement interests, namely GLC Peace Year (1983) and London Against Racism (1984).¹⁹ Within both of these examples, a cross-pollination of ideas drawn from other areas of social movement activism including the Women’s and Gay Liberation movements provide an important background for the kinds of changes that the 1981-1986 GLC administration sought to bring to bear upon its practices, including its cultural policy.

This account will outline the significant implications GLC cultural policy had for *some* of London’s politically active cultural producers and organisations, many of which would have been perceived as outside the traditional remit of State cultural funding bodies. Of these new formations of cultural producers including visual artists, community artists, documentary film and video makers, photographers,

¹⁶ In the wake of the 1987 general election, the Labour left were blamed by many inside and outside the party for causing defeat by tarnishing its media image. As the Labour leadership under Neil Kinnock (leader from 1983-1992) re-exerted the power of the party’s ‘moderate’ and ‘modernising’ wing, they sought to distance themselves from the GLC’s cultural democratic goals. [...] GLC arts policy represented a serious engagement with cultural democracy, but the negative media coverage of the labour left in general and the defeat of the left within the labour party, meant that the party more than ever abandoned cultural democratic goals at the national level. [...] See David Hesmondhalgh, Kate Oakley, David Lee, and Melissa Nisbett, *Culture, Economy and Politics: The Case of New Labour*, New Directions in Cultural Policy Research (Hounds-mills, Basingstoke Hampshire; New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), pp. 22-23.

¹⁷ Department of Culture Media and Sport, DCMS, *The Culture White Paper*, (March 2016), p.22.; Geoffrey Crossick and Patrycja Kaszynska, *Understanding the value of Arts and Culture: The AHRC Cultural Value Project*, (London: AHRC, 2016); John Holden, *Organism not Mechanism: An Ecological Approach to Cultural Learning*, (London: A.N.D, 2016).

¹⁸ Equal opportunities policies, enacted in the The Race Relations Act (1976), Equal Pay Act (1970) and Sex Discrimination Act (1975), though unremarkable now, were still a new concept and not without controversy in 1980s London. Following Adam Lent, ‘Social Movements’ are here defined as ‘grass-roots mobilisations which were initiated outside of the established structures and values of the existing polity and which formed around the politics of six key issues and/or social groups: gender and women, sexuality and homosexuals, disability and the disabled, race and the ethnic communities, the pursuit of peace, and the defence of the environment.’ Adam Lent, *British Social Movements Since 1945* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2001), p.3. For a further consideration of this term, see Chapter 2.8, ‘New Social Movements’.

¹⁹ The following year was ‘Jobs Year 1985’, acknowledging the high levels of unemployment both in London and nationally. The GLC’s final years were dominated by the GLC’s publicity campaign against its abolition.

theatre producers, writers, many identified themselves first as activists within particular social movements, and as 'artists' second. They asserted either personal identification or solidarity with particular social groups or 'communities of interest', black or white working class, women, lesbians, gay men, or disabled people, the unemployed, or anti-nuclear campaigners. They made statements of commitment to inclusive cultural strategies for raising consciousness and combatting the everyday of forms of discrimination or oppression they experienced or witnessed from individuals and from state institutions in 1980s Britain.

Despite the GLC's historically significant policy innovations across its many different departments, three decades since its abolition in 1986 (and following its complex and lengthy decade of decommissioning) surprisingly little analysis has been done. What secondary analysis exists is scattered across different disciplines, from political history and media studies to social policy, cultural policy and creative industries literatures and often only attracts limited attention as a transitory 'moment'. The memoirs of GLC politicians and officers can provide some insight but few concentrate on cultural policy and its impacts. The GLC's profusion of in-house publishing provides lively and broad sweeping accounts of the aims of its social and cultural policies in London but often do not capture outcomes. A detailed narrative of GLC cultural policies in practice, how they fit into an account of London's social movement activism and cultural fields in the 1980s, and the legacies of GLC policy has yet to be published. I intend for this thesis to make a contribution towards this end.

1.2 Thesis Research Questions

This thesis will respond to the following AHRC ‘Connected Communities’ thematic research questions set for the project, “Creative Communities” in Art & Design since the 1960s: Lessons for Socio-Economic Regeneration in a Globalized World.’ These questions are also pertinent to Raymond Williams’s broad ‘historical sociology of culture’ approach, here applied to so-called ‘creative communities’.

- a) What have been, and are, the relations between the values and aims of specific ‘creative communities’ of practitioners, and other social bodies such as contiguous communities, cultural institutions, and local, regional and national state agencies?
- b) What have been, and are, the key drivers in the creation of new communities of artists and designers? Do these features appear autochthonously, or can their production be planned and supported?
- c) How and in what ways have and do specific art and design practices engage particular publics, audiences and consumers, both within institutions such as galleries, but also in less formal sites in a community?
- d) In what ways have and do specific regional historical and community traditions, geographies and identities inform the working methods, production, interests and values of artists and designers?
- e) What impact do resident artists and designers, and the artefacts they produce – whether or not bought and sold – have on social solidarity and group identities in specific communities? ²⁰

Seeking to address these questions, this thesis will provide an account of the relationship between a unique institution of the local State, its cultural policy, and particular communities of creative practitioners in 1980s London.²¹ It will examine how arts sponsorship was used to support existing communities of cultural producers many of whom would not have been considered for State sponsorship previously. Groups were supported to develop their practices, infrastructures and to impact upon the spaces of the city where people lived and worked, including sites beyond conventional arts institutions. It will consider how the GLC’s sponsorship decisions were divergent from those of dominant State funded cultural policy institutions such as the Arts Council, its Regional Arts Association (RAA) in London, the Greater London Arts Association (GLAA), and from broader Labour Party positions on culture at this time, in that they were *overtly* political.²² This thesis will examine how the GLC sought to affect ‘social solidarity and group identities in specific communities’ through an understanding of culture and cultural policy as a

²⁰ Winchester School of Art and Tate Liverpool, ‘AHRC Collaborative Doctoral Award Extended Programme 2012-2018, Further Particulars: Creative Communities in Art and Design since the 1960s, Lessons for Socio-Economic Regeneration in a Globalized World’ (unpublished document, Winchester School of Art, 2013).

²¹ It is important to acknowledge the GLC’s unique situation, compared to other institutions of the local State across British cities both in terms of its physical proximity to Central Government and its access to funds (London’s ratepayers), during a period in which local councils across the country were experiencing cuts from central government. Carvel states that the GLC were able to fund an expansion in public services following the significant rates increase required to cover the London Transport deficit of £125 million in 1982, which occurred in the wake of the collapse of its cheap fares policy. John Carvel, *Citizen Ken* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1984) pp. 202-205.

²² Other GLC committees, and organisations external to it such as those related to education or training may also be of relevance to this narrative, though will not be covered in detail in this account. For instance, the GLC’s relationship with the ACTT (Association of Cinematograph, Television and allied Technicians), the Manpower Services Commission (MSC), See also: Brendan Evans, *The Politics of the Training Market: From Manpower Services Commission to Training and Enterprise Councils* (London: Routledge 1992). Also, the Inner London Education Authority (ILEA), which was a special committee of the GLC that administered education institutions in the 12 inner London boroughs. This is noted here because this aspect of the 1963 Act denoted the GLC’s shared responsibility for inner London education, which may relate to the GLC’s interest in cultural sponsorship that also had an educational purpose, such as sponsoring educational theatre production for schools.

communication tool, of use in a particular ‘war of position’ being enacted between certain institutions of the Local State and Thatcher’s Central Government during the 1980s, in which ideas drawn from new social movements, and theoretical expansions on concepts of culture and its social and political role, feed into the GLC’s actions. This thesis will consider the GLC’s ‘Community Arts’ and ‘Ethnic Arts’ Sub-Committees in their strategic attempts to foster and make visible a climate of politicised, co-existing differences within the polity.

1.3 Research methods and Resources

This research was conducted through a variety of formal and informal archive resources, including the archives of the Greater London Council at the London Metropolitan Archive, the archive of the Arts Council and Greater London Arts Association (GLAA) held at V&A Blythe House, and the archives of Tate, BFI, Concord Films, the Imperial War Museum, inIVA, Chelsea School of Art, Lambeth archive, and others. It also utilised the personal archives of some of the cultural producers and groups who were in receipt of GLC sponsorship, analysed particular cultural texts, and reconsidered the social history of these cultural policies in action.

This thesis does not offer a definitive narrative or evaluation of the GLC's time in office. This task would be better served by a combination of existing broad literature surrounding the politics of local socialism in the 1980s,²³ analysis and debates in left publications,²⁴ analyses of the national tabloids and media relationship to the GLC,²⁵ political biographies and autobiographies of key figures, and so on.²⁶ Nor has this thesis attempted an account of all GLC community and voluntary organisation support initiatives, many of which, though significant, fall outside the remit of cultural policy.

Agendas, minutes, presented papers and publications of the GLC held by the London Metropolitan Archives have provided the main evidence for this thesis's account of GLC's cultural policy work. At the GLC in the early 1980s, minutes of committee meetings were typed up by clerks according to standard procedural methods, then checked, corrected, and finally stamped and signed by the Chairperson as an official record. They represent at least a partial record of issues raised, discussion papers presented and decisions taken or postponed at the monthly meetings of each committee. Minutes do not, however, convey decisions made on behalf of the committees outside meetings, or in casual or private meetings, and so only detail some, not all, of decisions and decision-making processes. They also detail attendance of the majority and minority party members who voted on decisions, occasionally name objectors to motions, and list the attendance of non-voting advisors and other requested attendees. The London Metropolitan Archive also holds volumes of 'presented papers' from arts committee meetings which were circulated for discussion and represent further insight into the issues that were pertinent to the committees at various stages, relating to pending sponsorship decisions, planned campaigns or actions proposed in response to current affairs. Oral history interviews with those who were present at these committee

²³ See literatures on the 'local socialism' in local government during the 1980s, John Gyford, *The Politics of Local Socialism* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1985); Martin Boddy and Colin Fudge, *Local Socialism?: Labour Councils and New Left Alternatives* (London, Macmillan, 1984).

²⁴ Franco Bianchini, 'GLC - R.I.P' in *New Formations* 1, (1987); Beatrix Campbell and Martin Jacques, 'Goodbye to the GLC' in *Marxism Today* (April 1986), pp. 6-10; Hilary Wainwright, 'Bye-Bye GLC' in *New Statesman*, 21 March 1986.

²⁵ This thesis will also consider contemporaneous media representations of the GLC and its sponsored groups where relevant, though will not attempt a full examination of the GLC and the press, which is well documented in: James Curran, Julian Petley and Ivor Gaber, *Culture Wars: The Media and the British Left* (Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 2005).

²⁶ John Carvel, *Citizen Ken* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1984); Ken Livingstone, *If Voting Changed Anything, They'd Abolish It*, new ed. (London: Fontana, 1988 [1987]).

meetings have served to augment the official records, though were treated with due caution.²⁷ Alan Tomkins, advisor to Tony Banks, reported in an interview that committee meetings were in fact lively occasions, contrary to what dry reportage in the minutes might convey.²⁸ During the course of this research, I conducted formal and informal interviews, in person and via email with a number of ex-GLC arts advisors, cultural producers, activists and academics including Alan Tomkins, Loraine Leeson, Joram Ten Brink, Lis Rhodes, Sylvia Stevens, Sean Cubitt, Tony Dowmunt, Karen Alexander, Helen Petts, Mark Saunders, Peter Kennard, John Dugger, Tamar Swade and Frankie Armstrong. Contemporaneous interviews given to journals and magazines by individuals involved in GLC policy making or those with upon whom it impacted, have also been of importance to this research.

The London Metropolitan Archive also holds some of the grant applications of diverse small organisations who applied to the GLC for sponsorship. Examining these was also a task of methodological interest, as Stephen J. Brooke attests in a recent paper examining GLC Women's Committee grants,

[...] looking at grant applications in the archive [...] that process required local groups seeking funding to describe themselves, their objectives, their achievements and the community they spoke for- very different communities- working class communities [...] and they also had to say what were the ends to which the funds would be used and we have the responses of the granting bodies as well so it is a wonderful prism for thinking about what is happening on the ground in London.²⁹

These need to be approached with caution, however, as the process of groups 'describing themselves' may also record the self-conscious process of writing grant applications, the task of making an organisation appear to match the expectations of grant-awarding bodies. The process of grant application was not always undertaken unaided, and guidance from GLC employees was often necessary for groups less well versed in the art of grant application writing.³⁰ Femi Otitolu who worked in an 'outreach' position at the GLC Women's Support Unit (a 'civil service' to the Women's Committee), had the job of visiting

²⁷ It is acknowledged that oral history cannot be fully relied upon for factual accuracy, particularly considering that these events occurred over three decades ago. This account will refer closely to Franco Bianchini's unpublished doctoral thesis, for which many interviews were conducted with key figures, between 1985 and 1986. See Franco Bianchini, 'Cultural Policy and Political Strategy: The British Labour Party's Approach to Arts Policy with Particular Reference to the 1981-86 GLC Experiment', (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Manchester, 1995), pp. 320-323. GLC employees and the GLC's critical observers on the 'outside' wrote contemporaneous opinion pieces about GLC arts policy and its sponsored projects in periodicals, which can provide further insight into contemporaneous debates.

²⁸ Alan Tomkins, interview with the author, January 2015. For the most part, the 'general public' were invited to sit in the upstairs gallery and observe the proceedings of the committees, and sometimes participate in impromptu fashion, as part of the GLC's policy to 'open up' their decision making and work. This 'general' audience would have consisted of any interested parties including groups whose applications were being voted upon, or other arts organisations including Arts Council representatives, and notably, members of the press seeking their next opportunity to laud or lambast the GLC for its sponsorship decisions. According to Tomkins, a meeting in which an application for musical instruments for a youth majorettes troupe was being discussed was attended by the majorettes in full uniform, twirling batons and throwing them into the air to make their case – an example of the kind of lively detail lost in the recorded minutes. Tomkins conveyed that on committee days, 'all kinds of people' could be encountered wandering the corridors of County Hall and Loraine Leeson recalled that the GLC's stance on women's equality permitted her to bring her young son to meetings in a pram, and to breastfeed in County Hall. Loraine Leeson, interview with the author, December 2014; Alan Tomkins, interview with author, 2015.

²⁹ Stephen J. Brooke, *Spaces Emotions and Bodies: The Everyday Culture Of Politics in 1980s London*, paper given at the Modern British Studies Conference, University of Birmingham, July 2015, video recording, <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=03pN3P7hbcY>> [accessed 05.11.2015].

³⁰ Andy Beckett, *Promised You a Miracle: UK80-82* (London: Allen Lane, 2015), p. 359.

black and working class women's groups around London, encouraging them to apply for GLC grants, and in some cases, she '[...] sat up late at night with them, filling in the application forms.' Eventually, detailed advice on application criteria and legal requirements regarding bookkeeping and adherence to equal opportunity policy was published by the GLC and distributed to applicants.³¹ In this sense, the archive of grant applications represents an early record of groups describing themselves, but also of their development of professional arts administration skills in their applications for sponsorship.

Public Relations branch materials, including GLC press releases and its collection of photographs, posters and commissioned films are another source of evidence of the strategic role the Arts and Recreation Committee decisions played in the GLC's public image. The GLC also published its own policy research, producing booklets on various topics, such as women's rights in the workplace, advice on how to run voluntary organisations, or the ratepayer's guides to GLC's budget, intended both for internal information and distributed to the general public.³² Some of these publications simply collected the research of particular departments, presented as 'evidence' of or publicity for GLC work and efficiency, particularly as abolition loomed. The key GLC-authored text for this thesis is *Campaign for a Popular Culture: A Record of Struggle and Achievement: The G.L.C.'s Community Arts Programme 1981-1986*, a last-minute and somewhat rushed publication (by their own admission) from the Community Arts Sub-Committee documenting their work prior to abolition.³³ Documents such as this have been examined for the GLC's claims for its successes and failures. Another important aspect of examining the history of the GLC's cultural policies has involved situating their work in relation to other governmental bodies charged with the responsibility for state sponsorship of culture. Records kept in the Arts Council Archive related to the GLC's funding policies and its encroachment upon the work of the Arts Council and GLAA,³⁴ have also provided useful evidence of the relationship between the established cultural sponsorship bodies and the GLC as a new contender. These documents also detail the consultation work undertaken by the Arts Council regarding the cultural consequences of the abolition of all Metropolitan County Councils.

The latter chapters of the thesis include the analysis of cultural texts, derived from the archives of the GLC, BFI, Concord Films, Tate and others. These also consult the personal archives of groups and

³¹ 'So keen was the [Women's] unit to distribute money, it offered training sessions on how to apply for grants, and checklists of suggested items that women's groups could get GLC funding for.' Andy Beckett, 2015, p.358.

³² The following GLC organisational information is derived from the London Metropolitan Archive catalogue website: Providing information about London issues and services was one aspect of the GLC's legal role, as described in the 1963 London Government Act. The GLC had its own Research Library and specialist Policy Research Units, designed to research and implement policies that fell outside the remit of its main departments. The Public Relations Branch promoted the public image of the council, also commissioning items such as booklets, posters and videos in relation to particular campaigns. The GLC's creative arts unit produced many of the published materials in-house, and they were generally printed and bound by the Supplies Department. See: London Metropolitan Archive website, <<http://search.lma.gov.uk>> [accessed 01.01.2014]. The status of these booklets and promotional materials seems uncertain, however, not all of them have ISBNs, only a few are scattered across university libraries, besides the full archival set at the London Metropolitan Archive. It might be speculated that their 'brochure' like format, and dated 1980s local authority information, may have given them a 'disposable' character, except in specialist libraries.

³³ GLC, *Campaign for a Popular Culture*, 1986. Alan Tomkins is somewhat critical of this document, stating that in his view, the Committee's radical intention to redirect funds from 'mainstream' arts such as opera and theatre and towards community groups was toned down for the purpose of the publication. Alan Tomkins, interview with the author, 2015.

³⁴ Greater London Arts Association, the Regional Arts Association for London, which had responsibility to distribute Arts Council funds in London.

individual cultural producers, alongside interviews, in order to ascertain the activist aims and interests of sponsored cultural producers, and to establish what GLC sponsorship actually enabled different groups to do. It is this latter issue, which, in this researcher's view is most neglected in published literature surrounding cultural policy and is certainly harder, though not impossible to locate records of: scattered and partial as they are, on VHS tapes in personal archives, photographs in local library and museum collections, in the fading murals on London walls, and in the personal testimonies of cultural producers, media workers and academics whose careers really began with a GLC grant.

1.4 Chapter Structure

The first three chapters provide the relevant theoretical and historical background to situate the GLC's London cultural policy experiment. Chapters four and five examine case studies selected from the hundreds of GLC-sponsored cultural organisations, through correspondence sourced from the archives, oral history interviews and documentation of cultural products and events, that reflected the GLC's support of various social movement activists in cultural projects.

Chapter Two Concepts and Critical Analysis:

Operationalising Raymond Williams's aforementioned *Keywords* concept, chapter two approaches the thesis literature review through an investigation of 'key terms' pertinent to the research themes, explored in the context of 1980s Britain. These will include reflections on the key interlinked terms: The State, Hegemony, Consensus, Culture, Cultural Policy, Creative Industries/ Cultural Industries, Community, New Social Movements, Community Arts, Community Media.

Chapter Three: Reconsidering the emergence of radical cultural policy at the GLC: 'Less for the Opera-going snob and more for the Trot on the Clapham Omnibus'

The first section provides an overview and literature review of political attitudes towards cultural policy and directions taken by the Arts Council in Britain since the 1960s, with particular focus on new developments and emphases during the Thatcher period. Next, this chapter considers social transformations in London in the postwar period which afforded the rise of the 'new urban Left', and Ken Livingstone's rise to the leadership of the Greater London Council in 1981. An expansion in cultural provision became a new focus for the Council's Arts and Recreation Committee. This chapter will explore how innovative and overtly political approaches to cultural policy were developed at the GLC, which sought to operationalise cultural policy in the empowerment of hitherto overlooked constituencies, and amass popular support for the GLC itself, to encourage broader democratic participation. This chapter identifies some of the key personnel, policy proposals, public consultations and advisory committees through which the GLC's Arts and Recreation Committee began to chip away at existing cultural policy dogma: reshaping the landscape of cultural sponsorship in London. These strategies are considered in their relationship to broader context of social movement activism and the contestation of Thatcherism through popular political participation in early 1980s London.

Chapter Four What gift is life if the world must die?' Emotional Politics, Nuclear Culture and GLC Peace Year, 1983.

This chapter explores GLC's contribution to what Jonathan Hogg has termed the 'nuclear cultures' of 1980s Britain, through the cultural forms of activism it promoted and commissioned during GLC Peace Year 1983. This included anti-nuclear poster campaigns and banners, murals, exhibitions, public concerts, theatre productions and documentary videos, all aimed at promoting the GLC's own critical narratives about the British Nuclear State, in opposition to the Thatcher Government's pro-nuclear position. It draws together, documents and analyses a number of cultural projects which have yet to be written about in this context, also highlighting the GLC's support for the production of positive representations of women's peace activism, and the GLC's direct appeal to Londoners emotions and 'nuclear anxieties' in the run up to the 1983 General Election.

Chapter Five: It was a big hindrance, but it was also a help': GLC's Ethnic Arts Sub-Committee and Black Culture in London

The work of the GLC's controversial 'Ethnic Arts Sub-Committee' (EAS), which sought to sponsor and promote cultural production by and for London's black British constituents provides the focus for chapter five. It begins by situating the formation of the EAS within the broader contexts of the GLC's London Against Racism campaign, the failures of state authorities, local and central government on equalities issues, and the inadequacy of the Arts Council's attempts to recognise cultural diversity in the late 1970s and early 1980s. This chapter revisits the few accounts of EAS cultural policy that exist, and examines these critical narratives against the EAS papers from the London Metropolitan Archive. It takes as a case study the GLC-commissioned 'Anti-Racist Mural Project', of which there is little historical record beyond narrowly critical accounts, and also begins to record some of the other projects organised by and funded by the EAS. This chapter considers how the GLC was simultaneously, as Sonia Boyce argued, 'a big hindrance' but 'also a help' to black cultural producers. It proposes that the time has come for more nuanced critical accounts of the EAS, and further study of its work, open to investigating both its positive and negative impacts on the communities it was devised to support. While cautious not to overstate impacts or make unqualified claims for its success, the GLC was the first to make a significant monetary commitment to what was a relatively new departure for both local government and cultural policy at the time.

Chapter 6: GLC Cultural Policy 'Beyond Our Ken': Conclusions

The concluding chapter of this research project begins with a consideration of the impacts of GLC arts policy upon cultural spaces and institutions of the city, and their longer term importance for the assertion of a politics of difference. It emphasises the need to look beyond Livingstone-centred narratives of the GLC, to acknowledge the complexity of its bureaucracy and the networks of 'creative communities' whose work was to impact on the cultural landscape and spatial politics of 1980s London, in many cases with lasting effects. I will argue that these diverse narratives of the period relating to the GLC's cultural policy experiment need to be recovered with urgency, not only to learn from past mistakes, but as part of a drive to recover 'cultural democracy' arguments for continued state sponsorship of public culture.

Chapter Two: Concepts and Critical Analysis

2.1 ‘Structures of Feeling’ in 1980s London

The ideas of Raymond Williams have made a modest comeback in recent years through the work of a number of historians of modern Britain, seeking to identify the ‘*structures of feeling* of ordinary people’ as an approach to writing ‘History from Below’, through what has been termed a new ‘affective turn’.³⁵ The Birmingham Modern British Studies conference, *New Times Revisited: Examining Society, Culture and Politics in the Long 1980s* (2013), and in particular the recent work of historian Stephen J. Brooke which explores an important intersection between political history and the history of emotions, have both been significant in directing this thesis towards a revisionist and interdisciplinary approach to reading GLC cultural policy, and its impact on London between 1981 and 1986.³⁶ The Birmingham conference’s title cites Stuart Hall’s influential ‘New Times’ thesis of 1988, which referenced the changing social and political challenges that the rise of Thatcher’s ‘New Right’ and its attendant neo-liberal ideological project posed to a Labour Party whose traditional support base was in jeopardy, a development Eric Hobsbawm had recognised, writing in 1978.³⁷ Stuart Hall argued that the 1980s were ‘New Times’ that demanded a novel strategy for a renewal of the left, which would seek to counter what he perceived to be Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher’s intended ‘hegemony’ of ‘authoritarian populism’.³⁸ In the conference’s keynote address,

³⁵ As Claire Langhamer has written, the ‘History of Emotion’ is today a diverse field of study which approaches emotion variously as an analytical category, but is increasingly attuned to exploring the everyday emotions and lived experiences of ‘ordinary’ people, their embodied practices, material and social relations. Claire Langhamer, ‘Everyday Love and Emotions in the 20th Century’, QMUL History of Emotions blog, <<https://emotionsblog.history.qmul.ac.uk/2013/09/everyday-love-and-emotions-in-the-twentieth-century/>> [accessed 24.05.2017]. See also Margaret Wetherell and David Beer, ‘The future of affect theory: An interview with Margaret Wetherell’, 15 October 2015, blog post <<http://www.theoryculturesociety.org/the-future-of-affect-theory-an-interview-with-margaret-wetherell/>> [accessed 24.05.2017]. In addition to Williams’s ‘structure of feeling’, Margaret Wetherell also cites the importance of ideas of the ‘personal as political’ that had their foundation in the women’s movement of the 1970s for this development. See also Selina Todd, ‘History From Below’ <<https://manyheadedmonster.wordpress.com/2013/08/23/selina-todd-history-from-below-modern-british-scholarship/>> [accessed 01.01.2017].

³⁶ The conference, *New Times Revisited: Examining Society, Culture and Politics in the Long 1980s* was a joint initiative between the Birmingham Centre for Modern and Contemporary History and the University of Warwick’s Institute for Advanced Studies on 28-29.06.2013. <<http://newtimesrevisited.com>> [accessed 01.01.2015]. The conference sought a reappraisal of Hall’s ‘New Times’ thesis, and the decade’s reputation as an era of ‘crisis’ and ‘fracture’ for the Left in Britain, and its relationship to Eric Hobsbawm’s periodization of the ‘short twentieth century’ ending in 1989, in view of developments since the 1990s. See also, ‘Modern British Studies at Birmingham Working Paper no.1, February 2014’, <<https://mbsbham.wordpress.com/working-papers/working-paper-no-1/>> [accessed 02.02.2014]. The keynote by historian Stephen J. Brooke, his ongoing research relating to the Greater London Council in 1980s London and continued correspondence with researchers in attendance, in particular Daisy Payling, have been influential. Attending this conference prior to the commencement of my doctoral study was formative in the direction this thesis took. See Stephen Brooke, ‘Living in ‘New Times’: Historicizing 1980s Britain.’ *History Compass*, 121 (2014) pp.20–32; Stephen Brooke, ‘Space, Emotions and the Everyday: The Affective Ecology of 1980s London’, *Twentieth Century British History*, (2017) 28 (1): 110-142. <<https://doi.org/10.1093/tcbh/hww055>>; Daisy Payling, ‘Socialist Republic of South Yorkshire: Activism in Sheffield in the 1970s and 1980s’ (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Birmingham, 2015).

³⁷ Throughout the 1980s, the Labour Party had suffered from the reduction of its industrial support base, successive general election defeats, and media vilification of its trade union supporters. See Daisy Payling, 2015, p.2. Eric Hobsbawm had perceived that post-war changes to social and economic structures were having the effect of weakening working class identity and solidarity, a factor in the decline of the Labour party at the close of the 1970s. Eric Hobsbawm, *Age of Extremes: The Short Twentieth Century, 1914-91* (London: Abacus, 1995); Stuart Hall, ‘New Times.’ *Marxism Today*, (October 1988), pp.24–30; See also ‘New Times Revisited Conference Research Agenda’, <<http://newtimesrevisited.com/research-agenda/>> [accessed 01.01.2015].

³⁸ See Stuart Hall, *Marxism Today*, October 1988. These debates in *Marxism Today* have themselves influenced historical accounts of the period. See Daisy Payling, 2015, pp. 2-3.

Stephen Brooke observed that the majority of historical accounts of 1980s Britain have been unduly dominated by narratives of Central Government, frequently taking Margaret Thatcher herself to be the ‘guiding spirit of the age’.³⁹ This occurrence, in Brooke’s view, has obscured more quotidian narratives.⁴⁰ In order to reach beyond these accounts of the rise of the New Right which also dominate histories of the 1970s and foreground the period of study of this thesis, Niall Ferguson has emphasised the significance of social and material transformations brought about by globalisation, and Thomas Borstelmann highlighted how the growth of social movement activism and identity politics challenged established hierarchies, which were simultaneously being reorganised around ‘the turn toward the market [which differentiated] people around their natural socioeconomic levels’.⁴¹ The 1980s was a period in which this ‘turn toward the market’ was realised in Thatcher’s commitment to monetarist economic policy, which some argue saw stark social inequalities grow.⁴² Deindustrialisation impacted most heavily upon Labour constituencies and unemployment was to reach over three million between 1983 and 1986, in extreme contrast to the growth of the deregulated financial sector in London in the latter half of the 1980s which made those widening inequalities apparent.⁴³ The Labour Party’s difficulties persisted throughout the 1980s, it suffered badly from the decline in its industrial support base and successive General Election defeats. The 1970s and 1980s have therefore been characterised as a period of ‘crisis’ for the left in Britain, however more recently historians Lawrence Black and Stephen Brooke have questioned whether such expressions were the common experience, or in fact ‘[...] a triumph of political will of the New Right and media.’⁴⁴ Brooke asserted that attention to identify the different ‘crises’ unfolding on multiple fronts, and the everyday implications of these ‘crises’ is important, to provide the opportunity ‘to get at how and where that political change was absorbed, to uncover the implicit and the explicit in this context.’⁴⁵ Significantly, Brooke cites Raymond Williams to assert that an important focus for new narratives of 1980s Britain will be to identify the simultaneous ‘competing currents’ that exist within society, the areas

³⁹ The following are Westminster-centred accounts, as cited by Stephen Brooke: Hugo Young, *One of Us* (London: Macmillan, 1989); Richard Vinen, *Thatcher’s Britain* (London: Simon and Schuster, 2009); Ben Jackson and Robert Saunders (eds.), *Making Thatcher’s Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012). Others citing Margaret Thatcher as a central influence on the decade, include: Graham Stewart, *Bang! A History of Britain in the 1980s* (London: Atlantic Books, 2013); Andy McSmith, *No Such Thing as Society: a History of Britain in the 1980s* (London: Constable, 2010); Alwyn Turner, *Rejoice, Rejoice! Britain in the 1980s* (London: Aurum, 2010).

⁴⁰ In accordance with Stephen Brooke’s call to examine narratives beyond Westminster, recent studies have approached the territorial dimensions at play at the level of local government during this period, particularly in the ill-fated Metropolitan Counties. See Dianne Frost and Peter North, *Militant Liverpool: A City on the Edge* (Liverpool University Press, 2013). Daisy Payling, ‘Socialist Republic of South Yorkshire’: Grassroots Activism and Left-Wing Solidarity in 1980s Sheffield.’ *Twentieth Century British History*, (2014) 25 (4): 602-627, <<https://doi.org/10.1093/tcbh/hwu001>>. A number of contemporaneous accounts exist which examine ‘local socialism’ of the 1980s, see John Gyford, 1985; Martin Boddy and Colin Fudge, 1984.

⁴¹ Thomas Borstelmann, ‘The Shock of the Global’, in N. Ferguson, C.S. Maier, E. Manela, and D. J. Sargent (eds.), *The Shock of the Global: The 1970s in Perspective* (Cambridge, MA, 2010) p.353; Daisy Payling, 2015, p.2.

⁴² See Daisy Payling, 2015; Stuart Hall, *The Hard Road to Renewal: Thatcherism and the Crisis of the Left* (London: Verso 1988), p.2 ; Jeremy Black, *Britain Since the Seventies: Politics and Society in a Consumer Age* (Reaktion: London, 2004), p.176; Mark Garnett, *From Anger to Apathy: The British Experience since 1975* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2007) p.9; Andy McSmith, 2010, p.298.

⁴³ BBC and Office of National Statistics, ‘The Thatcher Years in Statistics’, 09 April 2013, <<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-22070491>> [accessed 01.01.2017].

⁴⁴ Stephen Brooke, 2014; Lawrence Black, ‘An Enlightening Decade? New Histories of 1970s’ Britain’ *International Labor and Working-Class History* 82, (Fall 2012), pp. 174–186 <[doi:10.1017/S0147547912000506](https://doi.org/10.1017/S0147547912000506)>.

⁴⁵ Stephen Brooke, 2014, p.22.

of contradiction, where social democracy and neo-liberalism can be seen to intersect.⁴⁶ Britain in the 1980s, in Brooke's assessment,

[...] was not a stable hegemony or consensus, rather a society based upon unevenness and contradiction, a society that was partly neoliberal, partly social democratic, partly individualist, partly collectivist, a society or an idea of 'the social' that was not so much half-formed as asymmetrically formed, unfolding in different directions and surprising ways.' [...] It is contradiction, not consensus or hegemony, which might be the real legacy of the 1980s. [...] When looking at the 1980s, we need to think about how, in different ways and at different points, social democracy persisted against or even alongside neo-liberalism. One of the distinctive features of the 1980s may be the means by which neo-liberalism and social democracy co-existed in the British context, however contradictory this was.⁴⁷

Echoing Ferguson and Borsellmann, Brooke emphasised that political change may have only partly driven the many fast-paced global, economic, industrial and technological developments that impacted upon daily lives, and the geography of Britain in the 1980s.⁴⁸ Fast-paced changes to the material space of the city occurred as a matter of policy, physical changes brought about social transformations and upheavals, such as the 1980 Housing Act that altered the country's relationship to social housing, de-industrialisation and the privatisation of publicly owned industries, newly designated 'enterprise zones', the expansion of retail and office spaces and new forms of gentrification. Britain's social landscape was to be transformed from the discourses of 'civic provision' of the 1950s, towards an ideology of individualism and entrepreneurial and corporate futures. In Thatcher's new climate of 'urban entrepreneurialism', British cities were now required to compete to encourage inward investment, to 'win' the resources they required from the private sector, rather than relying on government assistance to provide the electorate with services.⁴⁹

Following Sara Ahmed's conception of 'affective economies' in which 'emotions do things [...] they align individuals with communities [...] through the very intensity of their attachments.'⁵⁰ Stephen Brooke has drawn attention to the ways in which the emotional and political significance of urban space provide a way to think through the 'affective economy' of 1980s London and its competing currents, but also how technological developments brought global crises into contact with local experiences with increasing speed,

In some British cities, the local and the global increasingly intersect in the 1980s on any number of political issues: nuclear disarmament (the creation of nuclear-free zones), green politics, and apartheid protests and activism in Britain. I have reached for the political in making this point, but there are other registers that also bear it out, such as popular culture, tourism, consumption and sexual life.⁵¹

⁴⁶ Ibid.; Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), p.112.

⁴⁷ Stephen Brooke, 2014, pp. 25-27.

⁴⁸ Brooke argues the case for historians to borrow from human geography to explore changes to material space, *ibid.* p.28.

⁴⁹ David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990); Dianne Frost and Peter North, 2013, p. 68.

⁵⁰ Sara Ahmed, 'Affective Economies', *Social Text* 22, (2004) 2 79, 117-139, p.119; Sara Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* (New York: Routledge, 2015 [2004]), p.9.

⁵¹ Stephen Brooke, 2014 p.28.

In London, opposition to Central Government policy developments sometimes pitched local community activist groups in inner-city boroughs such as Lambeth, Newham, Southwark and Tower Hamlets, against the powers of incoming development corporations touting ‘enterprise zones’ which threatened their homes, against the perceived risks and implications of state nuclear policy, or against the oppression of local black communities by state authorities. All of which, though experienced locally, related to global struggles and global crises. Residents may have found some common ground in disputes over who might claim, to paraphrase Henri Lefebvre and David Harvey, the ‘right to the city’, the right to a particular neighbourhood, a safe and clean environment, the right of access to housing and services, or the right to a dignified life.⁵²

While it would be possible for this thesis to focus on positive narratives of community cohesion or self-reliance in the face of adversity and diminishing public service provision, Raymond Williams’s *Keywords* alerts us to be wary of the usage of the term ‘community’ and its ‘warmly persuasive’ overtones. Problematically, the AHRC’s ‘Connected Communities’ directive appears to summon such positive connotations. Local populations in 1980s London were sometimes deeply divided by the new pressures presented by decolonisation and a newly global understanding of the world, and particularly those pressures that migration to Britain was perceived to place upon the provision of stretched local services. Brooke’s subsequent research into racist attacks on housing estates in Tower Hamlets attests to this, how such racial hatred was ‘normalised’ by some conservatives and the press, to become, as Stuart Hall argued, a new ‘commonsense’, and an ‘emnity used for political advantage’.⁵³

In opposition to these tendencies, the Livingstone GLC administration, between 1981-1986 proposed a different social democratic model for London’s local government, appearing to come out in support of the marginalised, against the hostility of some conservatives and the right-wing press towards minority groups, and also the Thatcher government’s neo-liberalisation of London’s material space. Brooke noted that ‘If there were enterprise zones, there were also social democracy zones...’ as new ‘communities of interest’ and new social movements sought to gain material presence in the city through the setting up of ‘community centres’ and ‘cultural centres’.⁵⁴ The GLC did provide a huge range of grants to support local groups to establish childcare and women’s centres, lesbian and gay men’s centres and services, services for disabled people, pensioner’s organisations, leisure facilities, and funding training centres for unemployed people. Within this broader context, the GLC Arts and Recreation committees became the significant sponsor for existing community groups’ arts projects and cultural centres, thereby asserting space for cultural forms of community activism in the city. Brooke’s idea of ‘social democracy zones’ could be expanded to the realm of cultural policy, where the GLC sought to designate ‘cultural democracy zones’, or space for equal opportunity of participation in cultural activities, on participant’s own terms,

⁵² David Harvey, *Rebel Cities: From the Right to the City to the Urban Revolution* (London: Verso, 2013).

⁵³ Stephen Brooke, 2016; See also Stuart Hall, *Policing the Crisis: Mugging, the State, and Law and Order* (London: Macmillan, 1978).

⁵⁴ Stephen Brooke, 2014, p. 28.

which differed from the top-down, didactic nature of much of national cultural policy.⁵⁵ These cultural centres became sites for the organisation of local activism: and some housed technical ‘workshops’ for the production of independent ‘community media’ projects. A local ‘alternative’ news video tape produced by young unemployed people in training, or recorded discussions about people’s experiences of racism to be reproduced on tape to raise awareness amongst the local community.⁵⁶ A photography group making slide-tape shows documenting a pensioners’ demonstration or deteriorating local facilities, to be shown to local authorities, or a print workshop reproducing material for campaigns on social issues for local distribution.⁵⁷ Community centres also functioned as locations for the display, circulation and distribution of such ‘community media’ projects. Given the partisan nature of the mainstream media in Britain, attention to this so-called ‘independent media’ work in community workshops may demonstrate the ways in which certain toxic media narratives, which impacted negatively on people’s daily lives, were being contested at the local level.⁵⁸ Citing William Reddy, Brooke has identified these community centres as important ‘emotional refuges’ from the kinds of hostility sometimes experienced by minority groups in 1980s Britain.⁵⁹ As Brooke writes,

In 1980s London, the democratic socialist agenda was based on the evocation of an emotional community sharply different to Thatcherism. Recalling Williams, the Left’s response to Thatcherism in London was not just thought, but felt; the feelings incited by Thatcherism found discursive form in a particular political ideology. Emotion and space were not, in this regard, unrelated. For the right, the struggle was about control over schools, housing and economic space like the Docklands. For the GLC, it was about establishing a landscape that reflected its political and emotional agenda.⁶⁰

The GLC’s ‘political and emotional agenda’ was frequently contested in this regard, arguably not only from conservatives and the press, but also from those sometimes divided populations they were mandated to serve. For instance as chapter five will explore, where the GLC sought to improve its record on service provision for London’s ethnic minority populations and incorporated a new cultural policy focus and significant budget for ethnic minority arts provision, they were to attract fiercely critical responses, perhaps evidence of where limits to the ‘connectedness’ of adjacent local communities began to appear and of where pressures of national and global crises came to bear upon local community experience.

It is in the spirit of Brooke’s call to search for the ‘everyday’ narratives that intersect with, though may not be fully determined by events at Westminster, that this thesis approaches GLC-sponsored cultural

⁵⁵ For a definition of ‘cultural democracy’, see this thesis, p. 4.

⁵⁶ See for example, *News At West 10*, West London Media Workshop, Kensington & Chelsea, in Heinz Nigg and Graham Wade, *Community Media: Community Communication in the UK: Video, Local TV, Film and Photography* (Zürich: Regenbogen, 1980), pp. 32-95; Mark Saunders, *Despite TV* community video project, Tower Hamlets. <http://www.spectacle.co.uk/catalogue_production.php?id=64> [accessed 24.05.2017]; Tony Dowmunt, *Being White*, Albany Video, Deptford, (1987).

⁵⁷ For example, *Blackfriars Photography Project*, Blackfriars Settlement, in Heinz Nigg and Graham Wade, pp. 194-230.

⁵⁸ For an account of the media and the left, see James Curran et al., 2005. For GLC and the press, see James Curran ‘The Boomerang Effect: The Press and the Battle for London’ in Anthony Smith and Pauline Wingate (eds.) *Impacts and Influences: Media Power in the Twentieth Century* (London, Routledge, 2013), p.125.

⁵⁹ Brooke has argued that GLC funded physical and discursive spaces can be considered as ‘[...] what Reddy called emotional refuges, material and discursive spaces against neo-liberalism that promoted or indeed protected groups or people from a hostile emotional regime [...]’, see William M. Reddy, *The Navigation of Feeling* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001). Such spaces are significant in the political recognition of marginalised groups, see Stephen Brooke, 2016, p.15.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

production and its audiences.⁶¹ In order to explore the contradictory elements and competing currents that made up 1980s London, this thesis's account will seek to investigate the interrelation between the GLC's aim to forge an alternative position within the State, its support for new social movement activism and its new cultural policies between 1981-1986. Through selected case studies, it explores what kinds of politicised cultural production were supported by GLC grants, presenting a re-reading of the cultural products of this interrelationship, the public spaces they occupied in the city, and how these may have been received by various loosely defined 'communities' in London.⁶² Through this, it may be possible to better understand the affective engagement of various 'community' groups with culture and politics in 1980s London, and what this might reveal about the relationship cultural production and the fast paced local, national and global transformations of the 1980s.

⁶¹ Stephen Brooke, 2014, p.22. 'I am advocating prying the 1980s away from a singular focus on the centre of gravity represented by Thatcher or Thatcherism and or the usual battleground of Westminster.'

⁶² The various usages of the term 'community' will be explored later in this chapter.

2.2 Key Terms for this research

In *Keywords*, Raymond Williams explored how the words of a language should not be considered as inert vessels for fixed definitions, but instead understood to have agency, being themselves a crucial part of historical processes. Meanings appear in language denoting ‘new kinds of relationship, but also new ways of seeing existing relationships’ from various subject positions. Meanings can be invented, adapted, altered, reversed, extended or transferred, with ‘old’ and ‘new’ meanings sometimes forging uneasy co-existences.⁶³ Interrelated key words and phrases of importance to this research project, such as *the State*, *consensus*, *hegemony*, *culture*, *cultural policy*, *creative industries*, *community*, *community art*, *community media* all require further unpacking, both to attend to their unstable meanings, and to relate them more specifically to this project. Lloyd and Thomas have argued that there exists a ‘theoretical convergence in relation to the social functions of the state and cultural institutions in an emergent modern society’, in which culture takes a role in the *formation* of citizens of the state.⁶⁴ In particular the concept of the capitalist State and its social and cultural apparatus requires significant engagement, especially considering the limited theoretical literature on the GLC and its attendant cultural and community policies.⁶⁵

2.3 ‘The State’

[The State’s][...] autonomy is concretely manifested in the diverse, contradictory measures that each of these classes and fractions, through its specific presence in the State and the resulting play of contradictions, manages to have integrated into state policy.⁶⁶

Theoretical attempts to locate, analyse and the define role of ‘the State’, particularly in relation to capitalism and the UK political system, have developed various conflicting trajectories since the late 1960s. While other socio-political conceptions of the capitalist State exist, the theories of Nicos Poulantzas in *Political Power and the Social Classes*, 1968, and *State, Power, Socialism*, 1978, those of Ralph Miliband, *The State in Capitalist Society*, 1969, and their subsequent debates in the pages of *New Left Review* have particular relevance to this critical study of the GLC and its local State policy.⁶⁷ Poulantzas and Miliband established new readings of ‘the State’ in relation to politics, history and sociology. They both take as their theoretical starting point the notion found in *The Communist Manifesto* that the role of the capitalist State is to represent

⁶³ Raymond Williams, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (London: Fontana, 1983 [1976]), p.22.

⁶⁴ [...]both [culture and the State] are given the role of sites of reconciliation for a civil and political society that is seen to be riven by conflict and contradiction. Both are seen as the sites in which the highest expressions of human being and human freedom are realised. Both are seen as hedges against the potential anarchy of rapidly transforming societies.’ David Lloyd and Paul Thomas, *Culture and the State* (New York, Routledge, 1998), p. 8.

⁶⁵ While ‘state sponsorship’ of culture might roughly equate to ‘government sponsorship’ in conversational usage, attention to hypotheses relating to the meaning and operation of ‘The State’ may provide clarification pertinent to this historical research project.

⁶⁶ Nicos Poulantzas, *State, Power, Socialism* (London: Verso 2014 [1979]), p.380.

⁶⁷ Other conceptions of the State, such as that espoused by the ‘New Right’, which derives from liberal traditions, privileges the positive aspects of capitalist competition and individual liberty; and are distrustful of even benevolent uses of state power as potentially detrimental to this liberty. See Friedrich Hayek, *The Constitution of Liberty* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1960). There are divisions between this liberalism and conservatism. This ‘New Right’ is to be distinguished from the ‘one-nation’ conservatism that resurfaced in Britain in the postwar period, which conceded that the State had responsibilities towards the common good, not only the freedom of individuals. In practice, ‘New Right’ claims to protect individuals’ freedom proved relatively illiberal, as Thatcher’s government sought to tighten controls on press freedom, curtailed the powers of local government, or deployed the police and military to oppress the striking miners.

and protect the long-term interests of the capitalist class.⁶⁸ Miliband perceived 'The State' as consisting of a number of interacting elements and institutions that make up an overall 'state system'. 'The State' here should not be confused with the term 'government', which represents only one element, the elected 'public face' of the overall 'state system', which also includes a large 'secret state' comprised of many other institutions, including the civil service, local authorities, and the judiciary.⁶⁹ Miliband asserted that ruling class dominance of the State occurs through power exerted by particular individuals of the capitalist class, placed in key positions in these interrelated State apparatuses.⁷⁰ He recognised that agencies of the State sometimes make concessions to classes other than the dominant capitalist class, and can respond to popular pressures, but he attributes this to the necessity to retain the stability of the overall system of the State, and to 'contain pressure from below'.⁷¹ In contrast, Nicos Poulantzas warns against interpretation of the State as an 'intrinsic entity' or an 'instrument' of a dominant capitalist class,⁷²

The (capitalist) State should not be regarded as an intrinsic entity: like 'capital', it is rather a relationship of forces, or more precisely the material condensation of such a *relationship* among classes and class fractions, such as this is expressed within the State in a necessarily specific form.⁷³

Contrary to conceptions that treat it as a Thing or a Subject, the State is itself divided. | In other words, the State is through and through constituted-divided by class contradictions.⁷⁴

Poulantzas considers it incorrect to regard the State as a 'thing', as that would be to render the State as a neutral 'tool' of the dominant class, incapable of autonomous action. He asserts that it is also incorrect to conceive of the State as a 'subject', '[enjoying] an absolute autonomy that refers to its will as the supposedly rationalising instance of civil society'.⁷⁵ Poulantzas argues instead that contradictory elements within the state and the political system render it *relatively autonomous* of the economy and of the capitalist class. Contradictory relations exist *within* the capitalist State, which is itself a complex ensemble of negotiations

⁶⁸ As asserted in The Communist Manifesto, 'The executive of the modern state is but a committee for managing the affairs of the whole bourgeoisie.' Friedrich Engels and Karl Marx, *The Communist Manifesto* (London: Verso Books, 2012 [1848, Transl. 1888]). Although this can accommodate the State following courses of action that at first appear to contradict the interests of that capitalist class by making concessions, for Marx and Engels, overall, 'the nature of the capitalist state was such as to render parliamentary action largely ineffective', with the abolition and replacement of the capitalist state as the only route to a socialist society. See John Dearlove, and Peter Saunders, *Introduction to British Politics: Analysing a Capitalist Democracy*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991), p.267.

⁶⁹ Institutions of the state include: 1. The national elected government charged with making state policy; 2. The administrative level, including the civil service, public corporations and regulatory bodies that manage economic, social or cultural activities; 3. 'Coercive' elements, including military, police, intelligence; 4. The Judiciary, legal and prison systems; 5. Local authorities: metropolitan authorities, districts. Ralph Miliband, *The State in Capitalist Society* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1969); Clyde W. Barrow, 'The State' in M. C. Horowitz (ed.) *New Dictionary of the History of Ideas* (Detroit, Scribner, 2005), p.2250.

⁷⁰ For Poulantzas, in the capitalist state, the role and actions of individuals is less significant, with structural constraints imposing the logic of the capitalist state system. The class backgrounds of agents of the state, held by Miliband to be central to the continued capitalist bias, were for Poulantzas secondary, an effect of the capitalist state, rather than the cause. Ralph Miliband, 1969, p. 54.

⁷¹ Ibid. p. 270.

⁷² Poulantzas concept of the state developed from his 1969 assertion that the state was an ensemble of institutions producing a 'factor of cohesion' within a 'social formation' (an existing capitalist society made up of different classes), towards a later assertion that the state represented not an 'intrinsic entity', but instead 'an unstable equilibrium'; and 'the specific material condensation of a relationship of forces among classes and class fractions.' Nicos Poulantzas, 2014[1978], p129.

⁷³ Ibid., p.128.

⁷⁴ Ibid., pp. 131-2.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

between diverging interests, fractions and ‘conflictual alliances’.⁷⁶ For Poulantzas, State power is the ‘form-determined reflection of the balance of political forces’.⁷⁷ Power is exerted through the formation of state policy which itself ‘...must be seen as the result of the class contradictions inscribed in the very structure of the State (the State as a relationship)’, and therefore, state policy may be formed relatively autonomously of will of the dominant capitalist class.⁷⁸ While Poulantzas appears to afford less agency to particular individuals to influence what occurs in State institutions and how they function, Miliband appears to give less attention to how significant persons in positions of power might be constrained by the interplay of the balance of contradictions within the State’s structure, including the power wielded by the Civil Service, military, the press and corporations.⁷⁹ It is likely that some understanding between both of these positions is necessary.

Thatcher’s government then does not represent a ‘pure’ example of the ‘New Right’ capitalist face of the State in practice. While its economic and social policies were influenced by neo-liberal ideas, its nationalism, emphasis on morality, and use of repressive controls and censorship were more authoritarian and conservative in character. Following Poulantzas, Thatcher’s government, or the capitalist State under Thatcher’s New Right principles, should not be conceived of as a pure development from neo-liberal theoretical principles in the service of the capitalist class but instead as comprised of internal contradictions itself. To acknowledge Miliband also, Thatcher’s government in the 1980s attests to the capacity of particular individuals, influenced by New Right ideas, to shape the direction of the conservative party and influence its policies at this time that have since had far reaching effects on the direction of British politics. Similarly, the GLC itself should not therefore be perceived as a unified power, but instead, following Poulantzas, should be viewed, as any ‘expression of the structure of the State’, as comprised of a multiplicity of ‘fiefs, clans and factions’, with its own internal contradictions.⁸⁰ It was but one of the multiplicity of institutions of the State in British politics during the 1980s, a locally elected Council representing the whole of Greater London. Moreover, policy that found its expression through, or was implemented by, the GLC should be perceived as a manifestation of the ‘play of contradictions’ specific

⁷⁶ Ibid. Poulantzas recognised that the State’s actions are not simply responses linked to economic developments but also affect the future of the economy, and are influenced by factors beyond the demands of capitalist classes. In theory, the State, in a capitalist political system, takes a regulatory role to manage the effects of class struggle and maintain capitalist relations, and an ideological system functions to legitimate these capitalist relations. However, as Dearlove and Saunders note, no ‘pure’ capitalist societies actually exist (for example, Britain retains its landed aristocracy and monarchy) and therefore the State takes a more relational character. This affords the State the possibility of taking on regulatory functions in society, occasionally acting against the immediate demands of the capitalist classes. Dearlove and Saunders, 1991, p.277.

⁷⁷ Bob Jessop, *The Capitalist State: Marxist Theories and Methods* (Oxford: M. Robertson, 1982), p. xiv.

⁷⁸ See Poulantzas, e-book edition, 2014 [1978] p. 374. ‘Its autonomy is concretely manifested in the diverse, contradictory measures that each of these classes and fractions, through its specific presence in the State and the resulting play of contradictions, manages to have integrated into state policy.’ Poulantzas, 2014[1978], p.135. The qualification of ‘relatively’ autonomous means that the State’s independent role in the maintenance of society and stabilisation of the capitalist economy is in fact limited by certain structural constraints.

⁷⁹ Overall, the implication of these arguments lies in the broader question: belief in the possibility of change through the democratic process from within the existing capitalist State, or otherwise.

⁸⁰ [...] we are dealing with fiefs, clans and factions: a multiplicity of diversified micro-policies. However coherent each of these may appear in isolation, they are nevertheless mutually contradictory; and the policy of the State essentially consists in the outcome of their collision, rather than in the (more or less successful) application of the global objective of the state apex. Hence the striking and recurrent phenomenon of the *volte-face*: governmental policy is continually constructed out of accelerations and breakings, about-turns, hesitations, and changes of course. This is not due to a native incapacity of bourgeois representatives and top-level personnel, but is the necessary expression of the structure of the State.’ Poulantzas, 2014[1978], p.135.

to its situation. Furthermore, the interrelation and communication between cultural policy makers at the GLC and the central government's 'arm's length' agencies such as the Arts Council and its regional representation for London, the GLAA, are therefore also pertinent to this research project.⁸¹

Between 1981-1986, with the election of the Labour party to the GLC, the GLC was comprised in the *majority* of voting councillors whose political allegiance lay to the Left of the nationally elected 'New Right' Conservative central government that had held power since 1979, the dominant capitalist 'face' of British politics during this period. In the early 1980s, the Marxist Left gained a significant foothold in the Labour Party, with Trotskyist groups such as *Militant* seeing two supporters elected to Parliament as Labour candidates, as well as making gains in local constituencies. In 1981, all six metropolitan counties and the GLC were Left-Labour controlled, and were exercising their 'relative autonomy' from central government through policy interventions in planning and industrial development, on nuclear issues, public transport fares, and taxation. The GLC in particular was pursuing an expanded programme of cultural sponsorship, in addition to positive action policies favouring women and under-represented social groups. Through promoting its own agenda, the GLC cultivated an antagonistic relationship with the Thatcher administration and its philosophy, exemplifying the idea that 'To gain control of the government [...] is no guarantee of gaining control of the state.'⁸² This particular state institution, the GLC, for a brief period *appeared*, at least from the outside, to enjoy a certain amount of autonomy from central government – how far this was actual, or cultivated public image is another question. As Saunders and Dearlove suggest, councillors may well have been constrained by many other factors- socialist members of local government 'while closer to radical activists, may find themselves at the mercy of central government dictates and financing'.⁸³ Ultimately, the GLC and Metropolitan Councils did find themselves at the mercy of central government, in abolition. In the face of opposition from central government, who made their intention to abolish the metropolitan counties clear as part of their re-election campaign in 1983, and powerful sections of the media's condemnation of the GLC's support for so called 'minority interests', the GLC made frequent reference to their legitimate, democratic election by London voters in public address and policy documents.⁸⁴ In relation to their cultural policy initiatives, much was made, by policy makers themselves, of the 'democratic' nature of the GLC's committee decision process, as well as their 'democratic' approach to cultural provision for the many, rather than the privileged few.⁸⁵ This assertion suggests a particular interpretation of what is 'democratic', as it fails to acknowledge the involvement of

⁸¹ Dearlove and Saunders suggest that any detailed picture of actions by the local level of the state would also attend to '...central government's arms'-length agencies; to public/private partnership organisations; to user organisations; to inter-governmental forums; and to various joint-boards and committees.' John Dearlove, and Peter Saunders, *Introduction to British Politics: Analysing a Capitalist Democracy*. 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Polity, 1991), p. 277.

⁸² Dearlove and Saunders, 1991, p.268.

⁸³ Furthermore, the capitalist system of production itself places economic constraints on the actions of individuals within it, with business able to exert 'a pervasive yet virtually invisible influence over the state institutions by virtue of its strategic importance.' *Ibid.*, pp. 270-271.

⁸⁴ As Dearlove and Saunders state, the fact that local councils are voted in by local constituents has historically given them the 'legitimacy to challenge the centre [...] the whole system of local self-government also provides a medium through which groups excluded from effective representation at the centre can try and flex their political muscles in order to secure what they want from the local public purse.' *Ibid.*, p.470.

⁸⁵ 'Democratic': a term used by Alan Tomkins in an early community arts advisory paper. Tomkins, A., in GLC, *Campaign for a Popular Culture* (1986). For further discussion of the word 'democracy' see Raymond Williams, 1976 [1983], pp. 93-98.

the extensive bureaucratic side of local government necessarily composed of many individuals whose actions affects voters lives, but whose names have never appeared on the ballot paper. Claims to 'democratic' actions and representation by any institution of the state then ought to be treated with caution and in this case may represent part of the GLC's positioning of itself in public discourse, in opposition to the perceived *hegemony* of 'Thatcherism'.⁸⁶

2.4 'Hegemony'; 'Consensus'

The concept of hegemony developed by Antonio Gramsci describes how the dominant forces of a state are able to maintain their place of political economic and power by ideological rule of consent. The making of political concessions towards subordinate groups to maintain popular consent represents a strategic alternative to the direct use of other forces of coercive power at a State's disposal, such as the police, military or judiciary.⁸⁷ An hegemonic relationship requires the continuing maintenance of this condition, 'a certain compromise equilibrium'.⁸⁸ In order to respond to the shifting interests and temporary alliances at play in the capitalist state, the relationship requires constant adjustment to regulate resistances by subordinate groups. The hegemonic relationship is not a one-way relation of domination, however, as Gramsci asserted that subordinated groups also 'participate' in their domination, through behaviours informed by their perceptions of society.⁸⁹

While Gramsci's *hegemony* describes the formation of consent in the polity, post-structuralist and post-marxist developments from this theory by Chantal Mouffe and Ernesto Laclau express how a plurality of different identities (which are themselves autonomous and constructed in discourse, and should not be seen as essentialisms, or privileged subjects) come to be formed in political struggles, articulated around common projects in antagonistic relationship to 'other' identities.⁹⁰ Every social order is hegemonic, and every identity has an 'outside', or frontier, so there will always be elements which are necessarily excluded from the consensus.⁹¹ Chantal Mouffe developed an 'antagonistic pluralist' model of democracy, in which political opponents are 'adversaries' within a democratic framework necessarily conflictual in nature.⁹² Dominated groups engage in a 'war of position' to destabilize the legitimacy of prevailing hegemony. Antagonistic pluralist democracy provides an alternative to the prevailing discussions of 'consensus' politics, which, in Mouffe's view, tended to downplay the role of social antagonism in societal change and in the shaping of democratic consensus. Hegemony should not be understood as a negative power

⁸⁶ Discussion of 'Thatcherism' to follow. See Stuart Hall, 'New Times' *Marxism Today*, October 1988, pp. 24–30.

⁸⁷ 'The life of the state is conceived of as a continuous process of formation and superseding of unstable equilibria (on the juridical plane) between the interests of the fundamental group and those of subordinate groups - equilibria in which the interests of the dominant group prevail but only up to a certain point.' Antonio Gramsci, *A Gramsci Reader: Selected Writings 1916-1935*, D. Forgacs ed., (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1988) pp. 205-6.

⁸⁸ Antonio Gramsci, 1988, p. 211.

⁸⁹ Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from Prison Notebooks*, transl. G. Nowell-Smith, (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1971), p.159.

⁹⁰ Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics* (London: Verso, 1985).

⁹¹ Chantal Mouffe, in Nico Carpentier, and Bart Cammaerts, 'Hegemony, Democracy, Agonism and Journalism: an interview with Chantal Mouffe.', *Journalism studies*, 7 (6), 2006, pp. 964-975 <doi:10.1080/14616700600980728>.

⁹² Chantal Mouffe in *Dimensions of Radical Democracy: Pluralism, Citizenship, Community* (London Verso 1995 [1992]).

relation, simply imposed from above, but rather as an essential component in the constitution of a democratic society, generated by different subjects in conflict. As Mouffe notes, some hegemonic relations may be more expansive and inclusive than others.⁹³

Robert Hewison argues that in the British context, *consensus* politics can be closely linked to the European concept of hegemony.⁹⁴ The ‘post-war consensus’ in British politics refers to agreements between Labour and Conservative parties on policies established in the immediate post-war years, which some historians assert lead to ‘[...] ‘pragmatic’ reform in a mixed economy’ and the formation, administration and elaboration of the modern welfare state during the 1950s and 1960s.⁹⁵ Stuart Hall coined the phrase ‘New Times’ in *Marxism Today*,⁹⁶ to refer to the rise of Thatcher’s ‘New Right’ and the challenges it posed to Keynesian social democracy, the ‘post-war consensus’, identity politics and class solidarity. In Hall’s conception of these ‘New Times’, ‘Thatcherism’ represented a new Conservative hegemony of ‘authoritarian populism’, through which social dissent was ‘managed’ while neo-liberal economic policies were pursued. The ‘remarkable degree of bi-partisanship’ represented by the post-war consensus was shaken by persistent social inequality despite welfare measures, and the expense of the rapid growth in demand for welfare services which by 1975 accounted for half of all public expenditure.⁹⁷ The Conservative Party’s ‘New Right’ began to question government expenditure on many aspects of the welfare state in the 1970s, overall deeming it an excessive financial burden, and seeing it as ‘a major source of the problems which were once again besetting British capitalism’, undermining individualism and the ‘work ethic’, as well as private sector profits. However, the system of state provision was also under attack by elements on the Left in Britain during this period, in particular for the idea that welfare provision had a tendency to serve the interests and legitimate the position of society’s dominant capitalist classes, rather than serving the interests of the working class: an argument that the welfare state represents little more than hegemonic concessions to limit opposition, ‘the “human face” of capitalism.’⁹⁸

Stephen Brooke observed that there has been a tendency for historical accounts of 1980s Britain to assert that the Thatcher government’s neoliberal transformation of Britain was the final ‘nail in the coffin’ for the post-war consensus; James Vernon characterising it as the ‘brief life of social democracy’ in Britain,

⁹³ As Chantal Mouffe remarks in a 2006 interview, Power is constitutive of the social; there is no social without power relations. Now, any form of order is a hegemonic order, but of course there are some forms of order that are more democratic than others. Power relations are constructed in different ways. A democratic society where there is accountability is a form of order and it is a better form of order than an authoritarian regime. We can revert to Gramsci, who makes a distinction between expansive hegemony, which can be brought about by the working class, and hegemony by neutralization, which is generally to impede the multiplicity of demands.’ Carpentier and Cammaerts, p.964.

⁹⁴ Robert Hewison, *Culture and Consensus: England, Art and Politics since 1940* (London: Methuen, 1995), p13.

⁹⁵ See Robert Hewison, 1995, p.13; Paul Addison, *The Road to 1945: British Politics and the Second World War* (London: Cape, 1975) p.14. Not all historians agree that there was ever such a simple ‘consensus’ between the two conflicting main parties. See Ben Pimlott, ‘The Myth of Consensus’ in Lesley Smith, ed. *The Making of Britain: Echoes of Greatness* (Hampshire: Macmillan Education, 1988). Richard Toye, ‘From ‘Consensus’ to ‘Common Ground’: The Rhetoric of the Postwar Settlement and Its Collapse.’ *Journal of Contemporary History* 48, 1, 2013, pp. 3–23 <doi:10.1177/0022009412461816>.

⁹⁶ Stuart Hall, 1988. These debates in *Marxism Today* have themselves influenced historical accounts of the period.

⁹⁷ Dearlove and Saunders, 1991, pp. 393-4.

⁹⁸ As Richard Toye indicates, consensus politics came under attack from both left and right: ‘Thatcher, of course, was very happy to be seen as marking a break with a post-war ‘consensus’ settlement that was perceived as having failed even by many on the left.’ Richard Toye, 2013, p.17.

and Geoff Eley describing it as a ‘finite and exceptional project’.⁹⁹ The effects of Thatcher’s time in office have also been described more cautiously, as ‘a series of incomplete ‘system changes’ that left key parts of the post-war settlement intact.’¹⁰⁰ This argument is more in accordance with Gramsci’s notion of the ‘compromise equilibrium’ of an hegemony. Similarly in Hewison’s view, the condition of ‘consensus’ does not rule out the presence of conflict and breakdown, as it can only ever describe a partial, compromise agreement. Policy making, according to Kavanagh and Morris, is an ‘[...] elite process (carried out by senior ministers, civil servants, producer interest groups and communicators) [...]’.¹⁰¹ In Britain, as Andrew Gamble states, consensus politics has overall tended towards conservatism.¹⁰² Following Gramsci’s notion of hegemony, consensus should also be thought of as an imperfect, shifting relation, which can produce positive and negative effects.

Gramsci also wrote that a *popular consent* to the ruling authority needs to be formed by making the authority appear natural and common sense.¹⁰³ Acceptance of this hegemonic rule of consent circulates through the population via institutions such as the media, the education system, the State provision of services and through cultural practices- in other words, by interrelated ideological and material means enacted through institutions of civil society.¹⁰⁴ The maintenance or contestation of any hegemony therefore required attention to ‘the cultural fact, of cultural activity, of a cultural front as necessary alongside the merely economic and political ones’.¹⁰⁵ Gramsci argues that it is the place of intellectuals in society to secure popular consent through cultural means, and to administer these subtly coercive powers of the state.¹⁰⁶ Hewison relates Gramsci’s idea of hegemony to the State’s institutions in support of cultural activity in the British context, in which culture becomes both a ‘means’ and ‘source of authority’ for a ‘class of intelligentsia’ (such as, we might speculate Hewison intends, institutions like the Arts Council) employed to police it and ‘disseminate’ it to those beyond the group in power, thereby extending the reach of the dominant class and its values.¹⁰⁷ As Stuart Hall observed, this allows the dominant class to be identified as *the culture* of a society, ‘The dominant culture represents itself as *the culture* [...] Its views of

⁹⁹ James Vernon, ‘The Local, the Imperial and the Global: Repositioning Twentieth-Century Britain and the Brief Life of its Social Democracy’, *Twentieth-Century British History*, 21, (2010) p. 408; Geoff Eley, ‘Historicizing the Global, Politicizing Capital: Giving the Present a Name’, *History Workshop Journal*, 63, 1 (2007) 154-188, p.166; See also Stephen Brooke, 2014.

¹⁰⁰ Richard Toye, 2013, p.23.

¹⁰¹ Dennis Kavanagh and Peter Morris, *Consensus Politics from Attlee to Major* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994), p.14.

¹⁰² Andrew Gamble, *The Free Economy and the Strong State: The Politics of Thatcherism* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Education, 1988), p. 207.

¹⁰³ Antonio Gramsci, 1988, pp.346-7.

¹⁰⁴ Terry Eagleton, *Ideology: An Introduction* (London: Verso, 1991), p. 112.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., p.114; Antonio Gramsci, 1988, p.194.

¹⁰⁶ Members of the ‘intellectual’ tradition were, according to Gramsci, ‘experts in legitimization’, but Gramsci also sought ‘organic intellectuals, able to voice the needs of oppressed groups.’ See Antonio Gramsci, 1971, pp. 306-7.

¹⁰⁷ ‘For the dominant group, culture will become a means of authority, and a source of authority for those who attach themselves to its values. It will be an expression of political authority, the basis of critical authority and an emblem of social aspiration. Control of the resources that support cultural activity will, in itself be a form of authority. The intelligentsia will be employed in servicing and policing culture. It has the crucial task of disseminating it to those beyond the immediate group in power, for one way of maintaining consent is to ensure that the culture of the dominant class is not enjoyed exclusively by that class, but that its values permeate the whole of society. Thus the culture of the dominant class becomes identified with the culture of society as a whole. In the twentieth century, Britain has developed institutions to ensure this[...].’ Robert Hewison, 1995, p. 16.

the world, unless challenged, will stand as the most natural, all-embracing, universal culture.’¹⁰⁸ If democracy is understood as a process in which groups of actors are engaged in antagonistic relationship, and hegemony is understood as a relational and shifting state, resistances to dominant hegemony occur through the formation of alternative positions by dominated groups through ‘counter-hegemonic’ projects enacted on the ‘cultural front’ and through the institutions of civil society, in ‘wars of position’ with the dominant order.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁸ Stuart Hall and John Clarke, *Resistance Through Rituals* (Birmingham: University of Birmingham, 1975), p.12.

¹⁰⁹ ‘Counter-Hegemony’ was not a term used by Gramsci, it was developed in Carl Boggs, *The Two Revolutions: Antonio Gramsci and the Dilemmas of Western Marxism* (Boston, MA: South End Press, 1984).

2.5 ‘Culture’ and ‘Cultural Policy’

In this sense, the word ‘culture’ has itself a difficult relationship to notions of authority. It was cited by Raymond Williams as one of the ‘most complicated words in the English language’.¹¹⁰ Its ‘evaluative meaning’ (between ideas such as ‘high and low arts’ or ‘cultured or uncultured’ people), as Harris notes, ‘remains an important symbolic issue for all those who study culture’ and moral and political beliefs concerning societal ideals are central to any idea of culture.¹¹¹ Raymond Williams wrote that the definition of ‘culture’ ought to more broadly encompass the ‘whole social process’, as opposed to narrow definitions of ‘art’.¹¹² The role of conflict in competing cultures was described by E.P. Thompson in *The Making of the English Working Class* (1963) and later, for Stuart Hall (1976), this pluralist approach was deployed to acknowledge the existence of multiple *cultures* in an antagonistic relationship, in struggle with one another for dominance.¹¹³

Conflicting positions regarding the role that culture (in the traditional sense, arts and heritage) should play in society are central to any State institution’s approach to public culture, through its formation of local or national cultural policy and approaches to the state sponsorship of cultural activity. Cultural Policy, in David Hesmondhalgh’s definition, refers to government policies that impact the ‘symbolic domain’ of ‘the arts’ through sponsorship, regulation and administration.¹¹⁴ Culture has gradually become central to the formation of citizens in the modern State and cultural policy therefore has hegemonic implications,

National cultural policies are, then, a privileged terrain of hegemony. They provide a means of reconciling contending cultural identities by holding up the nation as an essence that transcends particular interests. In keeping with the negotiated conflict that lies at the heart of hegemony, the cultural domain produces challenges from those sectors that the contingency of history has moved into contestatory positions.¹¹⁵

If culture is a contested domain implicated in the formation of subject positions, cultural policy can therefore be viewed as a hegemonic apparatus, available to be utilised by institutions of the state to achieve consensus. The early years of cultural policy in Britain saw the foundation of public service broadcasting, the BBC, and The Arts Council of Great Britain, a quasi-autonomous non-governmental organisation or ‘quango’, charged with sponsoring certain narrowly defined cultural forms, for their ‘civilising’ effect on the population. This was a task to be conducted, in theory, ‘at arm’s length’ from government or party

¹¹⁰ Raymond Williams, (1983. [1976]), p.87.

¹¹¹ For ‘culture’ and ‘cultural policy’ see Jonathan Harris, *Art History: The Key Concepts* (London: Routledge, 2006), pp.82-84; 86-87.

¹¹² Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977) p.108; Raymond Williams, *Culture* (London: Fontana Press, 1986), p.88.

¹¹³ E.P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (London: Gollancz, 1980[1963]). Stuart Hall states, ‘It is crucial to replace the notion of “culture” with the more concrete, historical notion of “cultures”: a re-definition which brings out more clearly the fact that cultures always stand in relations of domination- and subordination- to one another, are always, in some sense, in struggle with one another.’ Stuart Hall, 1976, p.12.

¹¹⁴ David Hesmondhalgh defines cultural policy as ‘[...] policy that has an impact on the primarily symbolic domain [...] in the Anglophone world [the term somewhat narrowly refers] to the subsidy, regulation and management of ‘the arts’, which I define here as those inventive, creative non-scientific forms of knowledge activity and institution...’ David Hesmondhalgh, *The Cultural Industries* (London: Sage, 2010), p.138.

¹¹⁵ Toby Miller and George Yúdice, *Cultural Policy* (London: Sage Publications, 2002), p8; David Lloyd and Paul Thomas, 1998, pp.114-8; Robert Hewison, 1995.

political interference.¹¹⁶ The subsequent thirty years also saw many theoretical challenges to these institutionally dominant, and narrowly defined cultural values, which fed into early cultural policy.¹¹⁷ Studies of the role of culture and class in society paved the way for a broadening of understanding of culture, in particular popular culture, the role of the media and their socio-political effects in Gramscian influenced research conducted at the Centre of Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) at Birmingham University.¹¹⁸ ‘Cultural Studies’ examined the reach of political power in the public sphere, through the interpretation of the media, and popular consumption of cultural commodities, recasting consumption as an arena of potential symbolic resistance against the prevailing social order.¹¹⁹ By the end of the 1970s, The Open University also ran significant courses in mass media and popular culture, which are considered by Jim McGuigan to have helped to popularise Gramscian readings of ‘hegemony’ and the role of ‘culture’.¹²⁰ Therefore, by the early 1980s, the breadth of definition of ‘culture’, and the understanding of its producers and consumers or participants had shifted in some circles, but in the realm of cultural policy in Britain, priorities for the most part held to traditional areas of arts and heritage. This emphasis on support for one conception of ‘high culture’ was still generally accepted by many in the Labour party and the TUC well into the 1980s, as well as Conservative groups.¹²¹ In chapter three, this thesis considers how the GLC’s cultural policies were divergent from the broader Labour Party position on culture at this time.

¹¹⁶ Developments in national cultural policy in the postwar period and in particular during the 1980s will be discussed in chapter three of this thesis. For further detailed accounts of the formation of state cultural policy and its institutions in Britain, see Robert Hewison, 1995; Nicholas Pearson, *The State and the Visual Arts: A Discussion of State Intervention in the Visual Arts in Britain, 1760-1981* (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1982).

¹¹⁷ Values espoused by figures such as T.S. Eliot prior to the Second World War. See T.S. Eliot, *Notes towards the Definition of Culture* (London: Faber and Faber, 1988[1948]); F.R. Leavis, *Mass Civilisation and Minority Culture* (Cambridge: Minority Press, 1930).

¹¹⁸ Of the texts to influence the development of Cultural Studies, see Richard Hoggart, *The Uses of Literacy: Aspects of Working-Class Life with Special References to Publications and Entertainments* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1957); Raymond Williams, *Culture and Society, 1780-1950* (London: Penguin, 1984[1958]), E.P. Thompson, 1963.

¹¹⁹ Stuart Hall, 1975.

¹²⁰ The Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS), established in 1964 under the directorship of Richard Hoggart, and taken over by Stuart Hall in 1969 until 1979. Its publications set it at the centre of the development of Cultural Studies, however, other institutions developed simultaneously with similar interests in interrogating the roles of culture and the media in society, including the Centre for Mass Communications Research founded at University of Leicester in 1966. See Graeme Turner, *British Cultural Studies: An Introduction* (London: Routledge, 2003[1990]), p.66. The study of popular culture and the media was further ‘institutionalized’ when Open University began running its aforementioned courses in ‘Mass Communication and Society’ (1977) and ‘U203 Popular Culture’ (1982-1987). Jim McGuigan has suggested that the OU reader, *Culture, Ideology and Social Process* was influential in first ‘popularising’ Gramscian writings on hegemony. See Jim McGuigan, *Cultural Populism* (London; New York: Routledge, 1992); Graeme Turner, 1990; Tony Bennett (ed.) *Culture, Ideology and Social Process: A Reader*. (London: Batsford Academic and Educational in association with OU Press, 1981). Alan Tomkins, who taught on one of the OU’s popular culture courses, later went on to become policy advisor on arts to Tony Banks at the Greater London Council, instigating an emphasis on ‘popular’ rather than ‘elite’ cultural policies. Alan Tomkins, interview with the author, January 2015.

¹²¹ See Robert Hewison, 1995; Franco Bianchini, ‘GLC-RIP: Cultural Policies in London 1981-1986.’ *New Formations* 1, (1987); Franco Bianchini, ‘Cultural Policy and Political Strategy: The British Labour Party’s Approach to Arts Policy with Particular Reference to the 1981-86 GLC Experiment’, (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Manchester, 1995).

2.6 ‘Creative Industries’, ‘Cultural Industries’, ‘Creative Communities’

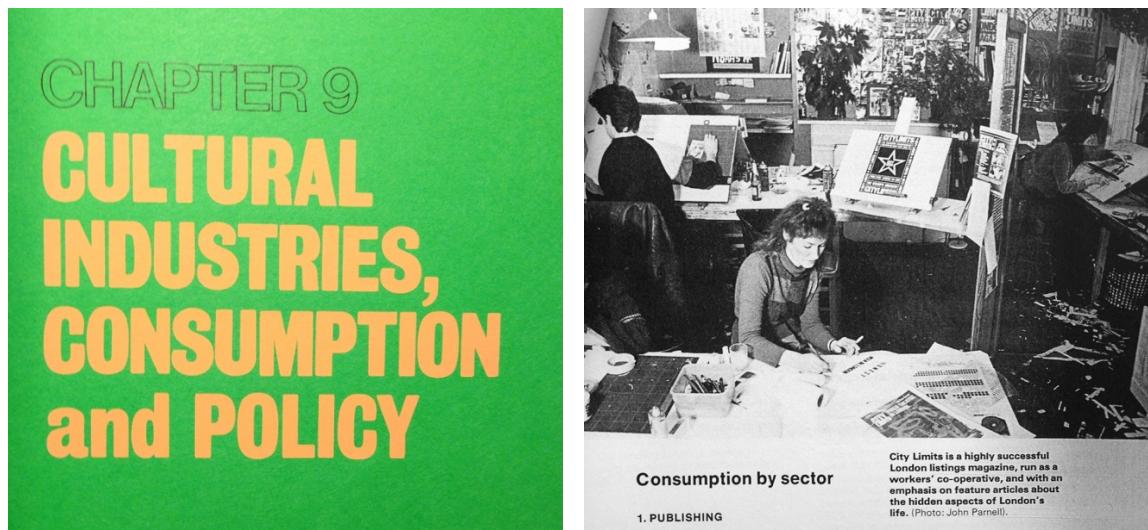


Figure 2: Detail from GLC cultural industries policy research publication, featuring GLC supported co-operative *City Limits* magazine. GLC, *The State of the Art or the Art of the State? Strategies for the Cultural Industries in London* (London: GLC Industry and Employment Branch, 1985).

The AHRC rubric for this thesis makes reference to ‘creative communities’ and the ‘creative industries’, seeking their economic benefits to broader ‘communities’ and their ‘regenerative’ potential.¹²² It is necessary to turn back the clock on the terms ‘creative industries’ and ‘creative communities’ to contextualise this industry-based economic model of the cultural sector, which was only beginning to be theorised in Britain in the late 1970s, though it was to have far-reaching effects. The term ‘Cultural Industries’ refers to an industry-based understanding of the significant national and international role that culture and heritage, and the aforementioned ‘cultural communities’ (artists, designers, media-workers, advertising agencies, publishers, and so on) play in the ‘cultural sector’ of the economy. This way of thinking about culture as an ‘industry’ diverged greatly from the attitudes that engendered the mode of ‘state patronage’ and charitable sponsorship of culture established thirty years earlier in the formation of the Arts Council. For clarity this concept also needs to be disentangled from the post-1990 policy fixation for all things ‘creative’, that allowed phrases like ‘creative communities’ and ‘creative industries’ to enter into policy vocabulary.

Nicholas Garnham, the media and communications theorist whose academic work led to what is now known as ‘The Political Economy of Culture’ school, was co-opted for a year to work at the GLC’s Industry and Employment Branch, setting up a ‘Cultural Industries’ department within it. Garnham makes clear that the ‘cultural industries’ approach represented a distinct ideological split from what he termed ‘...the whole tradition of Idealist cultural analysis...[defining culture as] a realm separate from, and often

¹²² For instance, this excerpt from an unpublished document of ‘Further Particulars’ for applicants to this WSA research project, ‘The four PhD projects will also relate their analyses specifically and systematically to contemporary debates and proposals on the ‘creative industries,’ the enterprise economy and generation of sustainable high skill/high wage jobs communities’ in art & design.’ Winchester School of Art, ‘Further Particulars’ Creative Communities in Art and Design since the 1960s, (unpublished document: Winchester School of Art, 2013).

actively opposed to, the realm of material production and economic activity.¹²³ He was referring to the tension between ‘culture’ and ‘economics’, which by the 1980s had been subject to a forty-year process of gradual erosion since the publication of Adorno and Horkheimer’s essay critiquing capitalism’s stranglehold on culture, *The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception*.¹²⁴ He was also critical of the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) approach to culture as ‘texts’, which in his view only served to obscure culture’s commodity status. The Political Economy approach developed from Marxist analyses of culture towards a more complex and plural understanding of how different sectors in the various cultural *industries* realise exchange values for their commodities, manage labour and exert corporate power. This plural understanding of cultural *industries* proved significant, allowing for increasingly nuanced models of production and distribution to be conceived of, and relationships between politics, cultural commodities and systems of communication, to be better articulated. A shift was also in evidence, away from policy strategies directed towards ‘artists’ or cultural producers, and towards ‘distribution’ and the reaching of audiences.¹²⁵ Within this 1980s-situated understanding of the ‘cultural industries’ as espoused by figures like Garnham, from a policy perspective, the ‘creative’ or ‘cultural communities’¹²⁶ of the 1980s might be defined as the associations between the cultural producers, the labour forces, creative and ancillary, distribution networks and participant-audiences of the newly defined cultural industries- in popular music and book publishing, advertising and media, film and television, visual and performing arts and design.

Garnham’s work therefore contributed significantly to the view that culture and the market were not in fact inimical to one another but should be acknowledged as interdependent. Garnham proposed that rather than rely upon the refined expertise of ‘quangos’ like the Arts Council operating behind closed doors, cultural policy should reflect the will and consumption habits of the electorate more ‘democratically’.¹²⁷ The newly defined sectors of the cultural industries could now be presented as a case for state intervention through national cultural policy initiatives, in addition to the long established arts and heritage policies already in place. This presented a contradiction, as the cultural industries had long been treated as the ‘[...] ‘other’ against which arts policy reacted, in the shape of arts subsidies[...].’¹²⁸ At issue was the traditional cultural policy strategy of ‘deficit funding’, which was viewed by Garnham and ‘cultural industries’ advocates as simply propping up the economically unviable, and therefore considered to be only a short-term solution to need, and by implication, a less efficient use of resources.¹²⁹

¹²³ Nicholas Garnham, ‘Concepts of Culture: Public Policy and the Cultural Industries’, *Cultural Studies*, 1, 1, (1987), 23-27. See also Nicholas Garnham in *The State of the Art or the Art of the State? Strategies for the Cultural Industries in London* (London: GLC Industry and Employment Branch, 1985), p.145.

¹²⁴ Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (London: Verso. 1979 [1944]).

¹²⁵ David Hesmondhalgh, 2010 [2007], p.139.

¹²⁶ To approach an understanding of the AHRC rubric’s phrase, ‘creative communities in art and design’.

¹²⁷ The use of the ambiguous term ‘democratic’ in this context ought to be qualified. Garnham appears to be referring to responding to the largest market demand as inherently ‘more democratic’, which may be true, but should not be at the cost of limiting the visibility of antagonistic elements or minority voices.

¹²⁸ Hesmondhalgh, David, and Andy Pratt, ‘Cultural Industries and Cultural Policy.’ *International Journal of Cultural Policy* 11, 1 (March 2005), p.4.

¹²⁹ An incompatibility of approaches which became apparent with the different cultural policy strategies deployed at the GLC.

In Garnham's view, the GLC's Arts and Recreation Committee under Tony Banks had simply followed the Arts Council's lead on deficit-funding strategies, despite their support for a wider variety of organisations. A difference of approach was in evidence, as Garnham considered its targeted grant-aid strategy as being, in Franco Bianchini's words, 'inadequate within a socialist strategy that attempts to be *hegemonic* rather than merely *responsive*'.¹³⁰ Garnham felt that simply giving grants to cultural organisations and 'community groups' would not sufficiently affect the balance of power in the cultural industries themselves, or provide long term social change.

Garnham left the GLC in 1983, following a conference that attempted to draw together the similar (though perhaps ideologically incompatible) projects of the cultural industries policy research of the Industry and Employment Branch with that of its far-better resourced relation at the GLC, the Arts and Recreation Committee and its 'Community' and 'Ethnic Arts' Sub-Committees.¹³¹ A GLC Cultural Industries Unit was eventually set up, and its preferred approach was to provide loans for equity investment rather than grants, though it was only able to do this for a year (1984-5). At the recommendation of consultants including Nicholas Garnham and GLC staff Ken Worpole and Geoff Mulgan, who went on work in the GLC's short-lived Cultural Industries Unit, the 'cultural industries' were to play their part in the GLC's new 'London Industrial Strategy'. This was an interventionist plan targeted at improving London's unemployment problem, developed by the GLC's Industry and Employment Committee and the Economic Policy Unit, which was to be put into practice by the Greater London Enterprise Board (GLEB).¹³² Although cultural industries ideas were formulated into policy at the GLC, the GLC's untimely abolition, and the relative unimportance of 'culture' compared to other aspects of the GLC's 'Industrial Strategy' to the Industry and Employment Branch, limited their actual implementation in this department. However, it was 'cultural industries' ideas that ultimately proved influential for future developments in cultural policy into the 1990s, the business-centred approach to cultural policy also appealing to the centre right and gaining traction in an increasingly neo-liberal and outward-facing Britain, in which 'culture' became a key asset of 'Cool Britannia'.¹³³ By the time figures such as Charles Leadbeater were heralding the cultural industries as the key to new local economic growth geared towards the global market,¹³⁴ an inversion of the more forward-thinking, social-equality-promoting aspects of the GLC's cultural policy projects is in evidence, as Hesmondhalgh notes;

¹³⁰ Franco Bianchini, 1987, p.112.

¹³¹ While the Community Arts Sub-Committee quickly found itself overwhelmed by applications for a share of its cultural policies revenue, which saw it allocate over £5.2 million in the four years up to 1985, the Cultural Industries budget for allocating capital loans was only £600,000 by comparison, and ran for only one year prior to abolition. Robert Hewison, 1995, p.240.

¹³² See GLC, *The London Industrial Strategy* (London: Greater London Council, 1985).

¹³³ Robert Hewison, *Cultural Capital: The Rise and Fall of Creative Britain* (London: Verso, 2014).

¹³⁴ Charles Leadbeater was writing for the left-of centre think-tank Demos in the 1990s, though formerly associated with the GLC. See Charles Leadbeater, and Karen Oakley, *The Independents: Britain's New Cultural Entrepreneurs* (London, Demos, 1999), p.14.

The view that independent cultural production might be connected to wider movements for progressive social change, implicit in at least some of the GLC work, was being steadily erased. [...] It seems to be the case that the democratising intent in the original GLC strategy, by this stage of cultural industries policy, had become deeply submerged.¹³⁵

This inversion has led to the dominance of accounts that herald the GLC's 'cultural industries' policy research as a prototype for today's so-called 'creative industries' and have overshadowed some of the radical social potential of the GLC's local 'community'-directed cultural policies undertaken by the Arts and Recreation Committee, and its 'Community' and 'Ethnic' Arts Sub-Committees.. This thesis will amend this oversight through a historicisation of the relationships between the GLC's Arts Committees and cultural producers working in politicised community arts and media practices during the 1980s. Cultural industries discourses form part of a theoretical background to this thesis, representing one of the 'competing currents' on the issue of state support for culture within the GLC between 1981-1986.

2.7 'Community'

Following Benedict Anderson's conception of 'nations' as political 'imagined communities',¹³⁶ recent analysis of 'Thatcherism' by Lawrence and Sutcliffe-Braithwaite suggests it could be read as an attempt to build a new 'imagined constituency' by replacing class-specific terms in political discourse with the re-interpellation of working class constituents as 'ordinary working people'. In their account, Thatcherism entailed an attempt to promote new hegemonic identities of 'popular individualism' and a 'property owning democracy' by encouraging the private purchase of council housing and shares in newly privatised industries.¹³⁷ This reported transformation in the relationship of individuals to society leads neatly to a discussion of another other key term within this thesis, namely 'community'.

'Community' is clearly a key term in this research project, as part of the wider AHRC 'Connected Communities' project, but also as a significant term in 1980s discourses in relation to the politics of identity, as well as the cultural policy strategies of the GLC's 'Community Arts Sub-Committees'. The term 'community' immediately presents a problem, however. What will this research take 'community' to mean, or to whom will 'community' refer within the context of this historical approach? In much of the AHRC text relating to the 'Connected Communities' project, the term 'community' appears to be a generalised descriptor of some form of social group, and is applied in an heuristic sense for the purpose of analysis, familiar to us from media discussions of public policy: the term is ubiquitous although infrequently interrogated.¹³⁸ In sociological discussions since the 1970s, attempts to deploy 'community'

¹³⁵ David Hesmondhalgh, 2010, pp. 140, 144. The discussion of 'democracy' and the GLC's 'democratising intent' here would benefit from further exploration.

¹³⁶ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1991[1983]). For a discussion of the term 'high culture' see Jonathan Harris, 2006, pp.140-141.

¹³⁷ John Lawrence and Florence Sutcliffe-Braithwaite, 'Margaret Thatcher and the Decline of Class Politics.' in *Making Thatcher's Britain*, Ben Jackson and Robert Saunders eds. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

¹³⁸ The AHRC project seeks to identify and study the 'creative community'- to whom will this refer in this thesis, and how can the relationship of this 'creative community' to the broader 'other communities' be defined or studied, in retrospect? Using the AHRC's wording, 'other communities' might suggest the consumers, users, or audiences of cultural production by the 'creative communities'. See Raymond Plant, *Community and Ideology* (London: Routledge & Keegan Paul, 1974), p.1; Elizabeth Frazer, *The Problems of Communitarian Politics: Unity and Conflict* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p.47.

as an empirical description of any social group have been approached with caution. The term is frequently considered too problematically unspecific and value-laden, inscribed with long standing moral and religious societal ideals. As such it is frequently operationalised within discourses on both the left and right. ‘Community’ is thus a complex term, deployed deceptively simply in its ‘vernacular’ usage. Debates between practitioners, journalists, policy makers and academics about initiatives such as ‘community policing’ ‘community health’ or ‘community arts’ are now familiar. Adrian Little has observed it may be precisely the lack of clarity with which ‘community’ is used in these contexts that makes the term such a useful tool for State politicians and policy makers, and ‘when community is employed it is often as a secondary device to support some other political objective.’¹³⁹

The idea of ‘community’, as deployed more recently in conservative ‘political communitarian’ and New Labour ‘Third Way’ politics since the 1990s, often entails a shift of focus away from the rights of individuals and towards personal ‘duty and responsibility’, as individuals are made responsible for themselves and their families alone, with no expectation of State provision to fall back on.¹⁴⁰ This idea is commensurate with aspects of Thatcher’s New-Right neo-liberal ‘No such thing as Society’ vision for Britain in the 1980s, and continues to echo through Prime Minister David Cameron’s 2011 appeal to the ‘Big Society’ of ‘self-reliant communities’ of citizen volunteers.¹⁴¹ It is also a neo-liberal idea of ‘community’, implying the upholding of a ‘moral’ consensus, an acceptance of the law of a ‘common good’ amongst its ‘members’ that overrides the antagonistic fact of the multiplicity of cultural values that exist within the polity. On a related note, as Adrian Little has argued, the role of a nominated ‘community leader’ or spokesperson, often deployed when groups need to make demands of institutions of the State, is also a contradictory role, as it suggests that harmony or agreement, or a ‘natural’ authority exists within membership of interest groups, ‘as if there could be a singular voice to emerge from them to guide policy.’¹⁴² Crucially, the assertion that it is possible to agree upon certain universal ‘community’ values makes little sense within the complex plurality and diversity of cultures and value systems that make up modern Britain.

¹³⁹ Adrian Little, *The Politics of Community: Theory and Practice* (Edinburgh, Edinburgh UP, 2002a), pp. 1; 28.

¹⁴⁰ See Adrian Little, 2002a, p.70. Elizabeth Frazer identifies the emergence of a ‘political communitarianism’, described as ‘a body of analysis, theory and political claims... [which entail] the elaboration of the ideal of community, and prescriptions about the political and social institutions that could realise this ideal, in public political discourse, and commentary on it.’ Elizabeth Frazer, 1999, p.11. While the philosophical thought provides one influence on this political strand, religious doctrine, particularly related to ‘community’ and ‘settlement’ in Judaism and Christianity, ethical socialist thought, the cooperative movement in Britain, republicanism, and conservative currents relating to institutions, also influence a diverse field of political communitarian thought. Most visibly, political communitarian discourses are espoused by a branch of the ‘Chicago School’ of political science, typified in the writing of American-Israeli sociologist Amitai Etzioni and his followers. Etzioni’s political communitarianism prescribes ‘community’ as a universal remedy for a range of social ills in modern urban life, from community solutions to crime and drug problems, through to the promotion of traditional two-parent family values. Although too broad to summarise in total here, of particular relevance to this discussion is the centrality of ‘community’ to the model Etzioni prescribes for contemporary society, to encompass the presence of diversity and multiplicity of cultural values. See Amitai Etzioni, *The New Golden Rule: Community and Morality in Democratic Society* (London: Profile, 1997).

¹⁴¹ An overused Thatcher cliché perhaps, see Andy McSmith, 2011. For the controversial ‘Big Society’ speech, see: David Cameron, ‘Big Society’ Speech, Liverpool, (19.07.2010) <<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/big-society-speech>> [accessed 31.12.2013].

¹⁴² Adrian Little, ‘Community and Radical Democracy’ *Journal of Political Ideologies* 7, 3 (2002b), 369–382, p.374.

Considering the loaded nature of the term ‘community’, can it still prove useful to an historical analysis or ought it be jettisoned? From a social anthropology perspective, Vered Amit asserts that ‘[...] community is ‘Good To Think With.’, particularly due to the everyday productiveness of the term’s ‘strategic ambiguities’. ¹⁴³ Amit argues that the fact that ‘community’ is used with such frequency in vernacular and political discourses attests to its importance as an idea, and we should take this ‘propagation as important in its own right [...] The ambiguity linked with the ubiquity of references to community might just prove to be a useful vehicle for thinking about certain classes of sociation’. ¹⁴⁴ Ambiguities, like the many surrounding the term ‘community’, are not to be avoided, but rather focussed upon to interpret the ‘strategic moments’ of their deployment. As can be deduced from this discussion, strategic deployments of ‘community’ are involved in re-drawing social and political frontiers at particular moments, such as the resurgence of interest in ‘community’ related policies by GLC policy makers in the early 1980s. Rather than only treating ‘community’ as a category of social relations, from which persons are excluded or included, Amit proposes that ‘A more effective working model of community must therefore focus on the uncertainties arising in the intersection between the idea and actuation of sociation.’¹⁴⁵ In accordance with Chantal Mouffe and Ernesto Laclau’s political theory of discourse and concept of social *agonism*, Amit also views ‘Disjuncture as ‘Good to Think With’.¹⁴⁶ She emphasises that everyday experiences of disjunctures in social relationships can be helpful for thinking about ways in which people negotiate conflicting roles and responsibilities, practices, or desires. I would add to this, following Laclau and Mouffe, that examining instances of disjuncture and antagonism may also draw attention to ways in which individuals respond to imbalances of power which underlie seemingly innocuous notions like ‘community’ and ‘consensus’, as deployed in the political context.

One instance of use of the term ‘community’ that will be encountered frequently in this thesis is in the context of the GLC’s cultural policies aimed at particular ‘communities’. Some of which were described as representing ‘minority’ social groups within the population, such as black and ‘ethnic minority’, or lesbian or gay men’s community groups; others representing groups who were not numerically ‘minorities’, but whose cultural provision had hitherto been neglected, such as women, pensioners, or young people within a locality, as well as what might be termed ‘communities of interest’ centred around a particular purpose, such as anti-nuclear activist ‘communities’. This strategy, important and pioneering though it was for recognising and supporting competing differences within the polity, left the GLC open

¹⁴³ Vered Amit, Nigel Rapport, *Community, Cosmopolitanism and the Problem of Human Commonality* (London; Pluto, 2012). Here Amit is paraphrasing the oft-paraphrased Claude Levi-Strauss maxim from *Totemism*, 1962. ‘Community’ as a theme has arisen notably in anthropology in Benedict Anderson’s aforementioned *Imagined Communities* (1983), describing the abstracted idea of identification in the construction of nationalism, and Anthony Cohen’s *The Symbolic Construction of Community*, in which community is characterised as a symbolic construction of human relationships, particularly around relational boundaries and differentiation between the self and the other. As Amit notes, both of these examples centre upon extreme polarisation and dramatic circumstance, rather than the everyday, and consider ‘community’ as an ‘idea’ or symbol rather than a substantive relation. She identifies the tendency to slip between community as ‘social category’ and community as ‘social group’, which can downplay the practical difficulties in ‘mobilising collectivities’. See: Vered Amit and Nigel Rapport, 2012, Chapter 2; Benedict Anderson, (1991 [1983]); Anthony Cohen, *The Symbolic Construction of Community* (London: Routledge, 1985); Claude Levi-Strauss and Rodney Needham, *Totemism* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1973[1962]).

¹⁴⁴ Vered Amit and Nigel Rapport, 2012, Chapter 1.

¹⁴⁵ Vered Amit specifies particular instances in which ambiguities arise: intersecting moments relating to ‘joint commitment’, ‘belonging or affect’ and ‘forms of sociation’. Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, 1985, pp. 96, 108.

to criticism where this ideal of unified ‘community’ consensus failed to materialise into wholesale ‘community’ support for the GLC’s efforts, or where majority groups felt aggrieved at the use of their rates for the backing of what were perceived to be ‘minority’ community interests.¹⁴⁷ Given this example, ‘community’ is a word to be considered with caution, deployed strategically at times where interest groups need to make claims of the State, but it is an idea that has practical limits as ‘community’ groups are often unable to reach the idealised internal consensus, making ‘community’ a shifting form of relation.

The key question of how ‘community’ will be approached as a central concern of the AHRC directive, presents an interesting problem. While it is tempting to ‘throw out’ a term like ‘community’ as too emotive or evaluative to be of use, the fact that it *is* used, and that community discourses have become so naturalised since the 1970s that many interest groups now self-describe as ‘communities’, if perhaps for heuristic purposes- makes it difficult to ignore. Ignoring this, as Amit has pointed out, may be to overlook some crucial intricacies of processes of sociation, be they permanent or fleeting connections, or expressions of political subjectivity. The introduction of Mouffe and Laclau’s antagonistic and discordant understandings of sociation into the idea of ‘community’, may productively take ‘community’ as an idea in this thesis beyond the realm of unproblematised ‘consensus’. As discussed at the outset of this chapter, an acknowledgement of the importance of ‘emotion’ and Raymond Williams’s conception of ‘structures of feeling’ in relation to the formation and disjunctions in ‘community’ identification also informs this thesis’s approach to the term ‘community’. ¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁷ For example, Paul Gilroy notes the implausibility of statements purporting to represent the whole ‘Black community’, ‘In this country, the Black community is too diverse and fragmented to be conceptualised as one cohesive nation.’ Paul Gilroy, *‘There Ain’t No Black in the Union Jack’: The Cultural Politics of Race and Nation* (London: Hutchinson, 1987), p.66.

¹⁴⁸ See Stephen Brooke, 2016; Jeff Goodwin, James Jasper and Francesca Polletta eds., *Passionate Politics: Emotions and Social Movements* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2001).



Figure 3: GLC promotional pin badge designs: Women’s Committee GLC anti-abolition badge, GLC London Against Racism, lesbian and gay men’s and anti-nuclear peace campaigns, 1981-1986.

The term ‘movement’ as in ‘social movement’ is first to be distinguished from its use as an ‘imposed art historical designation’.¹⁴⁹ Some loose associations of cultural producers which will be discussed in this thesis have come to be referred to, either through acts of contemporaneous self-identification or subsequent analytical designation, in terms of art historical ‘movements’ including the ‘community arts movement’ or ‘Black Art movement’, for example. While in these cases, cultural producers’ use of ‘movement’ may align with particular social and political projects, of more import for this thesis will be the historians’ analytical category, ‘new social movement’. Holger Nehring has outlined four distinct theoretical ‘schools’ that have emerged in the study of social movements since the 1950s, variously examining activists’ motivations, sociological studies of resources required for collectively organised actions, political scientists’ studies of the relationship between political institutions and protest movements, and finally, European social scientists’ examination of the ‘protest cycles of the late 1960s, the 1970s and the early 1980s’ as a critique of the Marxist model’s focus on the ‘centrality of labour and capital’ to social conflicts. The latter put forward the idea that the grassroots mobilisations of the ‘new social movements’ of the late 1960s contrasted with formal, established political processes. More recent accounts have combined various aspects of these approaches.¹⁵⁰

Historians including Adam Lent and Paul Byrne have identified activist ‘social movements’ in Britain as a set of particular post-war social formations assembling in support of specific campaign issues, centred on the pursuit of anti-war and anti-nuclear peace, environmentalism, gender, sexuality, disability, ethnicity and civil rights.¹⁵¹ Manuel Castells has written that new social movement activism of the late 1960s,

¹⁴⁹ Art historical designations such as this are often [...] running the risk of conflating artists and artworks according to merely the values of the person claiming some connection between them.’ Jonathan Harris, 2006, p.202.

¹⁵⁰ Holger Nehring, ‘The Growth of Social Movements’, in *A Companion to Contemporary Britain*, ed. Paul Addison and Harriet Jones (Oxford: Blackwell, 2005) pp.389-390.

¹⁵¹ Adam Lent, *British Social Movements since 1945: Sex, Colour, Peace and Power* (Hounds Mills: Palgrave, 2001). Paul Byrne’s account is similarly organised to Adam Lent’s, around chapters on the Peace Movement, the Green Movement and the Women’s Movement. Paul Byrne, *Social Movements in Britain* (London: Routledge, 1997). As Byrne has stated, ‘Social Movements are like political parties, in that their adherents share a common outlook on what should and should not be happening in society. They differ from political parties, however, in that their adherents are motivated by expressive as well as instrumental considerations.’ Paul Byrne, 1997, p.3. While it is possible to consider this way of structuring accounts of social movements as somewhat reductive in their designations, Byrne acknowledges that social movements are [...] amorphous entities which resist neat classification [...] if it is so difficult to say what is and what is not a social movement, then how are we justified in referring to feminism, pacifism and environmentalism as if they are self-evidently examples of such movements? The easy answer to that is to say that, well, everyone else does. People may disagree on whether particular groups or networks are actually part of these wider movements, but a common theme since the late sixties has

particularly in the United States, reflected changing demands, away from a pre-war ‘politics of redistribution’ and towards a ‘politics of recognition’, centred on identity politics, oppression and social inequality.¹⁵² In Adam Lent’s account, British social movements centred around identity politics had an earlier genesis, in the radical mobilisations of Campaign For Nuclear Disarmament (CND) founded in 1958.¹⁵³ Lent asserts that prior to CND, citizens and organisations who sought social, political and legislative change in post-war Britain did so through more conventional lobbying methods such as letter writing and petitions, with the new radicalism of CND representing a generational shift in campaigning strategy which would overshadow established pressure groups and their practices.¹⁵⁴ The foundation of the ‘New Left’ following both the Soviet suppression in Hungary and imperialist British involvement in Suez in 1956, also represented the beginning of a shift towards the development of a new socialist project.¹⁵⁵ As the 1960s progressed, peace movement activists gained a new focus, and renewed support amongst students for the Vietnam Solidarity Campaign (VSC). 1970 saw the first national women’s liberation conference, the first meeting of Gay Liberation Front (GLF) and the founding of Friends of the Earth (FoE). ‘Radically democratic, based on mass participation and wedded to the notion of self-transformation,’ Adam Lent describes how these early social movements set a precedent for future movements of the late 1970s and early 1980s, which expanded to include demands for equality of gender, sexuality, disability and ethnicity.¹⁵⁶

While Lent and some other historians have characterised these movements as a wholly new departure, as they were frequently organised around non-hierarchical structures, employed ‘direct action’ strategies in their work and had a support base drawn predominantly from middle class activists, others have preferred to situate post-war social movements as part of a longer trajectory of activist practices in Britain.¹⁵⁷ As Holger Nehring states,

been that these areas constitute the irreducible core of social movement activity.’ *Ibid.* p.3. Activists’ own identifications with national or international ‘movements’, temporary groupings or networks of others, and their own stated motivations related to particular social issues are necessarily central to any historical account of British radical grassroots politics, and are also considered important in sociological approaches to analysing social movements. On the primary reliance upon persons ‘utterances and actions’ in identifying a population’s interests, See Charles Tilly, *From Mobilization to Revolution* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1998 [1977]) pp.60-61. In Tilly’s account, a secondary analysis can be derived from considering ‘connections between interest and social position, i.e. its relation to the means of production [...] individual vs. group interests.’

¹⁵² Manuel Castells, *The Rise of The Network Society* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010) p.73. See also, Jessica Horn, *Gender and Social Movements Overview Report* (Brighton: Bridge, 2013), p.19 This view is broadly associated with the USA where the identity politics of race were much more pronounced.

¹⁵³ Adam Lent, 2001, p.4.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.* p.29. The lobbying and letter writing of these more moderate social movements can be seen as the basis of the liberal reforms of the 1960s, often sharing, in a less radical form, similar concerns to the ‘progressive’ or ‘new’ social movements that arose from the liberal society their elders helped create. Lent sees these earlier organisations as ‘moderate campaign groups’, for example, the Abortion Law Reform Association, Homosexual Law Reform Society, World Wildlife Fund, the Disablement Income Group, and the Campaign Against Racial Discrimination (CARD). Most of these were primarily single-issue lobbying organisations which sought legislative change from the political establishment. In Lent’s account, these organisations would be ‘eclipsed’ by a rising tide of student radicalism around issues of gender, sexuality, race, disability, peace and environment in the 1970s. Adam Lent, 2001, pp.8-9.

¹⁵⁵ See Stuart Hall, ‘Life and Times of the First New Left’, *New Left Review*, 61, (January-February 2010), pp. 177-169.

¹⁵⁶ Adam Lent, 2001, p.4.

¹⁵⁷ ‘This was democratically structured and based on mass participation, demanded radical change and employed unconventional tactics such as mass demonstrations, non-violent direct actions (NVDA), and occupations [...] This era [was] a period of ‘parallel universes’ with little contact between the different modes of campaigning. A distance enhanced by a generational difference – the low-key moderate groups drawing on an older generation of activists with their roots in

In asserting that social movement activity of the 1960s was a revolutionary period of social change, accompanied by newly ‘permissive’ lifestyles and an ‘explosion’ of popular protest. It is possible some historians seeking to offer chronological accounts of radical social movements since 1945 may have over-emphasised the ‘newness’ and wider societal influence of social movement activism since the 1960s, when in actuality, social changes may have occurred by processes of more gradual reform, in response to debates about culture and society which had their foundation in the nineteenth century.¹⁵⁸

This thesis does not dwell in detail on ‘social movement theory’, a parallel historical and sociological discipline through which post-war social movements have been analysed, however some ideas about the importance of interpersonal relations and networks to the work of activists, and Tilly’s useful conception of the polity are appropriate to note here. The polity is made up of government, the various established groups with access to political decision makers, and those groups on the outside, who are challengers to the polity, and lacking access must instead ‘resort to collective action’. Those who lack such access can seek to make alliances with members of the polity. Daisy Payling has commented on this notion that ‘[...] within a local political setting there are movements on the inside who work well with each other and local government, and movements on the outside. It also suggests that the dynamics of the polity can change.’¹⁵⁹ Payling’s recent research also emphasises the importance of local networks, interpersonal bonds and broadly defined community identities, for the development of social movement activism. Donatella Della Porta has recognised that it is frequently smaller community networks, rather than national movements, that are most central to successful sustained mobilisation.¹⁶⁰ In 1980s London, interconnected networks of politically active cultural producers coexisted, many of whom were committed to various social movements be they anti-nuclear, those concerned with equality for women, people with disabilities, lesbians and gay men, or black British people. Within these associations, identity groups sometimes formed strong collective resources and support networks to develop actions and ideas in support of their political cultural mobilisations, in the perceived ‘safe space’ offered by community-specific or exclusive organising, the outputs of which took many forms – exhibitions, fringe theatre, symposia, documentary films, community photography, public art works and demonstrations. Activists committed to different movements and organisations sometimes made important alliances in solidarity with other activist groups, but these were not always smooth relations.¹⁶¹

the politics of the war and immediate post-war period and the new mobilisations drawing on young radicals who were very much the products of the 1960s and Cold War.’ Adam Lent, 2001, p.29.

¹⁵⁸ See Holger Nehring, 2005, p.397. “[...] extra-parliamentary movements have been a part of British society and politics since at least the end of the eighteenth century.” Ibid., p.390. See also Donatella Della Porta and Mario Diani, *Social Movements: An Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), p.vii. The study of socio-political action has been described as a ‘developing field’ amongst historians of modern Britain. The existing ‘social movements school’ of historical analysis has more recently been challenged by accounts which seek to reconsider the political activism of non-state actors, rather than as representative of ‘civil society’ or of ‘social movements’, but instead as ‘Non-Governmental Organisations’ (NGOs). This approach, it is argued, may encompass a broader range of left and right political positions and forms of activism and to avoid undue focus on only those deemed most radical in their repertoire and demands. Matthew Hilton and James McKay, ‘Introduction’, in Nick Crowson, Matthew Hilton and James McKay (eds.), *NGOs in Contemporary Britain: Non-State Actors in Society and Politics since 1945*, (Palgrave, Basingstoke, 2009).

¹⁵⁹ See Daisy Payling, 2015, p.21; Charles Tilly, (1998 [1977]) p.63; Steven Buechler, *Understanding Social Movements: Theories from the Classical Era to the Present* (London: Paradigm Publishers, 2011) pp. 128-9.

¹⁶⁰ See Donatella Della Porta and Mario Diani, 2006, pp.117-120.

¹⁶¹ At a national level, one example is the support that lesbian and gay men’s organisations gave to striking mining communities during this period, Diarmaid Kelliher, ‘Solidarity and Sexuality: Lesbians and Gays Support the Miners, 1984–85’ *History Workshop Journal* 77(1):(2014), 240–262.

Buechler has described how 'new' social movements also called 'old' class-based conceptions of identities into question, by 'valorising' new identities. As Daisy Payling's work has suggested, this at times brought older class-based identities and newer identity associations around gender, sexuality and ethnicity, into conflict.¹⁶² In the case of the women's movement, there was significant 'internal conflict between black feminists and white feminists' and division often along the lines of class and socialist politics that culminated in 'fragmentation [and] the weakening of nationally co-ordinated activities.'¹⁶³ The late 1970s and early 1980s are frequently articulated by historians as a period in which inter- and intra- movement conflicts took hold, with differences forming on questions of strategy as well as identity politics, which had atomising effects on activism. These frictions and fragmentations amongst activist personnel had a significant implication for this thesis's account of the GLC, its relationship to social movement discourses, and the sponsorship of culture in 1980s London,

Simultaneously, large numbers of movement activists were throwing in their lot with the radicalised grassroots of the Labour Party, ultimately, coming to play a part in the local authorities which the Labour Left controlled, promoting radical equality policies and the funding of movement organisations.¹⁶⁴

The fragmentation of social movements made a return to Labour Party politics through Labour left controlled local authorities seem an attractive prospect for some, though it subsequently laid these activists open to bitter criticism.¹⁶⁵ This period of political institutionalization was, and remains, controversial.

Historical interest in the conflicts and compromises which ensued when social movement activists of the left came into closer involvement with institutions of the local state during the early to mid 1980s have frequently focussed on what has been read as an overwhelmingly negative impact of this period, with Social movement activists reportedly curtailed their radicalism in their move into co-opted positions in local government or academic posts, in accepting local government grants, professionalising their campaigning organisations and losing their grassroots support in the longer term.¹⁶⁶ Lovenduski and Randall argue that "The decline and de-radicalisation of the British Women's Movement since the end of the 1970s was accompanied by and in many ways the consequence of, its greater involvement in

¹⁶² 'As they continued to develop into the 1970s and 1980s, it is argued that these movements challenged old identities and valorised the new ones. This notion sets up a dichotomy between class and identity, suggesting a conflict of interest between movements.' Daisy Payling, 2015, p.20. 'Many of these movements both reflected and promoted not just a 'cultural turn' but also an 'identity turn' across many disciplines. Poststructuralist, postmodernist, multiculturalist, anticolonial, feminist, and queer theorists all called attention to the socially and political constructed nature of diverse social identities, just as the movements associated with these labels challenged old identities and valorized new ones as part of these sociocultural struggles.' Steven Buechler, 2011, p.159.

¹⁶³ See Jane Pilcher, *Women in Contemporary Britain: An Introduction* (London: Routledge, 2002), p.161. These fragmentations were to some extent exacerbated by changes within campaigning movements themselves as they responded to the demands of a rapidly changing world. Thus CND, whose visible presence declined in the 1970s before re-emerging in the 1980s, had 'tried to spawn a wider peace movement, and while its prime aim remained the same, expanded its action repertoire from demonstrations to many different forms of direct action, as well as placing its conventional lobbying and use of media on a much more professional footing.' See Paul Byrne, 1997, p.33. See also, Sheila Rowbotham, Lynne Segal, and Hilary Wainwright, *Beyond the Fragments: Feminism and the Making of Socialism* (London: Merlin Press, 1979).

¹⁶⁴ Adam Lent, 2001, p.234.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid. p.5.

¹⁶⁶ See Adam Lent, 2001, Chapter 5, 'The Fragments: Descent into division in the Late 1970s and Early 1980s' pp. 134-166, and Chapter 6, 'Quenching the Flames: Professionalisation and Integration in the 1980s' pp.167-197.

mainstream institutions.¹⁶⁷ Jane Pilcher, however, recognises that, ‘with varying degrees of success, women’s presence has made itself known in political parties (especially the Labour Party), the trade unions, in local government [...] this process of institutionalization has been accompanied by a ‘diffusion’ of feminist values into the mainstream of political and public life.’¹⁶⁸ This diffusion of personnel committed to social movement aims was vital for the GLC’s experiments in radical cultural policy in the early 1980s, and may have brought harder to measure longer term change to bureaucratic practices, but perhaps as some have argued, at a cost to particular forms of radical mobilization seen since the late 1960s.

Historical accounts of new social movements in Britain provide an important context for comprehending the demands and alliances being made by politically engaged cultural producers in 1980s in London, and the direction taken by the Labour left at the GLC in its radical cultural policy between 1981-1986. The social movement activists that will concern this thesis in particular will be those working on public, community-focussed cultural strategies that attempted to raise public consciousness about particular issues and promote local social change. Many of these cultural activists worked through the medium of their creative practices and found institutional backing and a sympathetic ear in the new 1981 GLC administration. A select few also took the decision to serve within the GLC as administrative staff in its various departments, or were invited onto its Committees as cultural experts, advising on sponsorship decisions. In the case of those co-opted onto GLC arts panels, decisions made in the spirit of those alliances between different social movement activists were, in theory, to be carried into local government cultural policy making at the GLC. However, faced with the long-established and complex bureaucratic structures of local government, those more accustomed to the direct action repertoires of social movement activism may have had to adapt their practices and expectations, and perhaps their radicalism, to this new line of work. A complex social and political dynamic can be identified between activist ‘outsiders’, who came to be viewed by some as relative ‘insiders’ when co-opted onto new GLC advisory panels, and those cultural activists whose ideological commitments located them firmly ‘outside’, as challengers to the polity. Daisy Payling’s study of the relationship between activism and local government in 1980s Sheffield has recently drawn attention to not only instances of solidarity between activists, but also to solidarity’s limits, a reminder of the contingent and fragile nature of such interpersonal bonds between activists, and how the demands of local government electoral success or broad public appeal could sometimes supersede such commitments of solidarity.¹⁶⁹

Another major criticism levelled at these new entrants to local government was the impact their radical objectives were to have on the Labour Party’s credibility nationally. Activists’ demands of local government were easily portrayed as extreme by Conservatives in Parliament and by the press, which may

¹⁶⁷ Joni Lovenduski and Vicky Randall, *Contemporary Feminist Politics: Women and Power in Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993) p.15.

¹⁶⁸ Jane Pilcher, 2002, p.161.

¹⁶⁹ Daisy Payling, 2015.

have contributed to the weakening of Labour's position in both the 1983 and 1987 General Elections, and was certainly blamed for it subsequently.¹⁷⁰ Adam Lent comments on the negative consequences,

The impact of the political opprobrium was consolidated by swinging cuts in local authority budgets [...] Equality policies and officers were dropped and many groups folded after losing their funding. The great mobilization which had begun back in 1958 with the founding of CND was over as many of the 1960s political campaigners withdrew from full-time political activity.¹⁷¹

While these criticisms are well founded, it could also be argued that by the early 1980s, internal fractures were already beginning to diminish the power of social movement activists to attract large crowds to mass demonstrations and fierce internal disagreements were not conducive to broad participation. In this context, it is less surprising that some activists perceived this brief opening of bureaucratic routes to effecting local social change as a positive development. How far these activists should be blamed for the ways in which their approaches were used against the Labour Party at a national level is a moot point, but charges of a lack of foresight on this potential outcome might be fair.

As McKay and Hilton have warned in their work on NGOs, it is important to challenge the tendency to focus only on 1960s radical and confrontational protest movements and their successors, in order to incorporate a more broad-reaching understanding of the roles of pressure-group organisations involved in 'more conciliatory forms of action'.¹⁷² For this thesis, which examines instances where the personnel and ideas from the field of social movement activism briefly came to bear upon local government cultural policy, I would argue that it is also important to approach such relatively conciliatory moments between activists and institutions of local state more even-handedly, rather than solely in the service of narratives of the 'death' of these forms of radical activism.¹⁷³

¹⁷⁰ Adam Lent highlights significance of 'the ferocious attack' of the Conservative Government and tabloid press in 1986 on 'these local authorities and the policies inspired by movement activists and ideals'. Adam Lent, 2001, p.235.

¹⁷¹ Adam Lent does acknowledge that mobilisations against Clause 28, the poll tax, the Criminal Justice Bill and the growing green movement did spawn a NVDA protests in the 1990s yet 'for a variety of reasons, despite the immediate success of these mobilisations they never had the depth and breadth of impact achieved by the movements of the 1970s', Adam Lent, *ibid*. Lent, writing in the early 2000s, was unaware of the re-emergence of progressive social movements, such as Occupy or the anti-war movement, that were to occur in the middle of the decade.

¹⁷² James McKay and Matthew Hilton, 2009, p.15.

¹⁷³ As aforementioned critics of this 'new social movement school' have suggested. 'Conciliatory' also seems an inappropriate term to describe the GLC situation, as clearly gains made by activists in the arena of the local state at this time were the product of struggles and sometimes met with internal opposition.

2.9 ‘Culture’ and ‘Community’: ‘Community Art’

‘Community Art’ is another phrase which will arise with frequency in this thesis, however it is important to acknowledge the exact meaning of it remains contested terrain. The term ‘Community art’ was used by the Arts Council in the early 1970s to formally categorize a broad variety of cultural practices taking place in local ‘community’ settings. The ‘Community Art Movement’ grew out of a combination of the ideas including the ‘community development’ movement, institutions supporting adult education such as the Workers Education Association (WEA), and the ferment of 1960s social and political activism and cultural experimentation.¹⁷⁴ This thesis does not focus on this ‘Community Arts Movement’, but instead interrogates the question of the relationship between cultural production and ideas about ‘community’, ‘culture’ and ‘society’ in 1980s London.

It is necessary to briefly provide a background to the kinds of ‘community arts’ and cultural activism of the 1960s and 1970s that informed later developments in the 1980s.¹⁷⁵ The definition of ‘community arts’ by The Greater London Arts Association (GLAA)’s ‘community arts advisory panel’ was somewhat vague, asserting that it ‘[...] involves people on a collective basis, encourages the use of a collective statement but does not neglect individual development or the need for individual expression.¹⁷⁶ More specifically, art historian John A. Walker described the beginnings of the community arts movement as politically driven, a ‘[...] last-ditch attempt to nurture and preserve [...] the traditional values and spirit of the British working class’, in which ‘community’ was interpreted simply as a by-word for ‘working class’. ¹⁷⁷ Encompassing a diverse range of practices, community arts centres and workshops were set up to attract local people to participate, directed in various cultural activities by a ‘community artist’ or ‘community

¹⁷⁴ As François Matarasso identifies, it is significant that these cultural practitioners themselves refer to ‘community arts’ as a ‘movement’. He cites three influential predecessors of ‘community arts’. Firstly, the *community development movement* was involved in improving ‘community’ living standards through participative action: ‘Although initially linked with decolonisation (and promoted as an alternative to communism), the thinking and practice of community development spread quickly to urban renewal programmes in the USA, in the context of the civil rights movement, and to Britain.’ See: François Matarasso, ‘All in This Together: The Depoliticisation of Community Art in Britain, 1970-2011’ in *Community, Art, Power: Essays from ICAF 2011*, Eugene van Erven ed., (Rotterdam: ICAF, 2013), pp. 217-218. Su Braden states that an early sponsor of community arts, The Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation was also involved in community development. Su Braden, *Artists and People* (London: Routledge and Keegan Paul, 1978), p.135. The community development movement was ‘embedded’ in many British cities by the 1970s, and according to Matarasso, provided the ‘community arts’ movement with a ‘natural ally’. François Matarasso, 2013 p.219. Secondly, The Workers Education Association (WEA) was founded in 1903 and describes its aims thus: ‘A better world - equal, democratic and just; through adult education the WEA challenges and inspires individuals, communities and society’; see WEA website: <www.wea.org.uk/about/vision> [accessed 01.05.2015]. Thirdly, Matarasso cites more general transformations in cultural practices during the late sixties and early 1970s as important for the ‘community arts’ movement. In particular, arts practices were described as experiencing ‘de-materialisation’ towards conceptualism and practices that focussed on ‘process’ including new experimental installations, environments and happenings occurring outside the gallery system, defying traditional categorisation and often holding culture’s social role to be of central importance.

¹⁷⁵ Heinz Nigg and Graham Wade, *Community Media* (Zürich: Regenbogen, 1980); Tony Dowmunt, in Kate Coyer et. al., *The Alternative Media Handbook* (London: Routledge, 2007), p. 37.

¹⁷⁶ Owen Kelly, *Community, Art, and the State: Storming the Citadels* (London: Comedia with Marion Boyars, 1984), p.2.

¹⁷⁷ John A. Walker, *Left Shift: Radical Art in the 1970s* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2001), p.130; Sam Wetherell, ‘Painting the Crisis: Community Arts and the Search for the ‘Ordinary’ in 1970s and ‘80s London’ *History Workshop Journal* 76, no. 1 (October 2013) 235-49, p.237 <doi:10.1093/hwj/dbt008>. It is likely that this attitude was influenced by Richard Hoggart’s *Uses of Literacy*, (1957). Hoggart later decried the paternalism of some in the community arts movement, ‘What they call art is often propaganda which implicitly belittles the people they are working among.’ Richard Hoggart, quoted in Brian Cox and Raymond Williams, *The Arts Council: Politics and Policies: The 1981 W.E. Williams Memorial Lecture given at the National Theatre on 3 November 1981* (London: Arts Council of Great Britain, 1983).

arts worker'. The range of activities embraced many that traditional arts funding bodies would consider less favourably for sponsorship, including mural painting, creative writing classes, 'community media' workshops providing access to film, video, printing and photography facilities, community theatre, 'traditional' music and dance, street festivals and children's activities such as creative play and inflatables.¹⁷⁸ Frequently, community artists were motivated by Left wing politics and a desire to initiate local social change.¹⁷⁹ Many groups were committed to consciousness-raising about local issues, the communication of broadly socialist, if not party-political political messages, and the presentation of alternative social models.¹⁸⁰ Often considered beyond the Arts Council's remit, sponsorship was more readily available for these activities from local councils and educational authorities, charities such as the Gulbenkian Foundation, and the Arts Council's Regional Arts Associations- in London's case, the Greater London Arts Association (GLAA).¹⁸¹ An Association of Community Artists (ASA) was formed in the early 1970s to lobby the Arts Council to formally recognise community arts, submitting a list of 149 community arts organisations to the Arts Council.¹⁸² In response the Arts Council set up the 'Community Arts Working Party' in 1974, whose report recommended that community arts be formally funded.¹⁸³ While acknowledging its fresh commitment to community arts as 'a new path to the fulfilment of the Council's second chartered duty to increase the accessibility of the arts to the public', some at the Arts Council were alarmed by the political activities of certain groups, warning that '[...] there is clearly no justification for funding any activity which is not arts based.'¹⁸⁴ The Lord Gibson Report, *Art in Hard Times*, (1976) sought to encourage a redirection of community arts aims, towards the more paternalistic goal of encouraging art appreciation,

[...] what is undoubtedly true is that many people who have had no chance to enjoy the arts can be helped to approach them by being encouraged to participate in creative activity rather than merely to experience it passively. It is this feature of community arts which is of particular interest to the Council.¹⁸⁵

¹⁷⁸ See François Matarasso, 2013.

¹⁷⁹ Owen Kelly, 1984, pp.13, 36.

¹⁸⁰ Community murals such as the Greenwich Mural Workshop's *Floyd Road Mural* in Charlton, begun in 1976 by Carol Kenna and Steve Lobb, depicts local residents resisting yellow diggers that threaten to destroy a house and *The Battle of Cable Street*, begun in 1976 and finished in 1983, commemorating local multi ethnic residents' resistance against Oswald Mosley's British Union of Fascists in 1936, give a flavour of the politics and purposefulness espoused by many in the 'community arts' movement at this time. See London Mural Preservation Society: <<http://www.londonmuralpreservationsociety.com/murals/floyd-road/>> [accessed 01.05.2015]. See also *The Battle of Cable Street* mural <<http://www.londonmuralpreservationsociety.com/murals/battle-cable-street/>> [accessed 01.05.2015].

¹⁸¹ Tower Hamlets Council was cited by several figures interviewed in the course of this research as a pioneer of local government support of community arts during this period, sponsoring the Basement Community Arts Project (1972, Cable Street, Shadwell, started by filmmaker Maggie Pinhorn and artist and youth leader Dan Jones), and the Tower Hamlets Art Project (THAP, established 1976 in Watney Street, Shadwell). Both Alan Tomkins and Loraine Leeson mentioned this in interviews with the author, 2014 - 2015.

¹⁸² Later, the Association for Community Artists (from 1980).

¹⁸³ According to Richard Witts, '[...] community arts had developed through the Seventies, along with a number of disciplines dumped by the council in a bin marked 'Alternative'.' for its anti-establishment leanings. Richard Witts, *Artist Unknown: An Alternative History of the Arts Council* (London: Warner Books, 1998), p.480. In fact, 1969 saw the establishment of a 'new activities committee' at the Arts Council, which received applications from these early community projects. A Community Arts Committee was set up by the Arts Council for a two-year experimental period from 1975 distributing £526,000 to 132 projects. See Heinz Nigg and Graham Wade, 1980, p. 30. This was later evaluated in a report, 'Community Arts- A report by the Arts Council Community Arts Evaluation Working Group' (Arts Council, 1977).

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., as noted in Heinz Nigg and Graham Wade, 1980, p.30; Owen Kelly, 1984, p.15.

¹⁸⁵ Lord Gibson and Arts Council, *Art in Hard Times* (Arts Council, 1976); as quoted in Kelly, 1984, p.21.

In many cases, pragmatism took precedence, and the political content of community art was quietly elided. Owen Kelly argues that the ACA's appeal for Arts Council legitimisation proved counter-productive for the autonomy of the movement as a whole, as funding bodies increasingly were able to define activities they commissioned. Once predicated upon a degree of radical autonomous community organisation, community arts became another area of bureaucratic organisation by a newly appointed elite of officers and advisory panels, themselves directing artists working in 'community' settings, who in turn quickly learnt to accommodate the paternalistic language of the grant application.¹⁸⁶ By the early 1980s, Kelly argues that this situation had harmed any nascent radical potential and the reputation of 'community arts' as an idea. In Kelly's view, the community arts movement itself now appeared to be 'a play facility for children [...] a kind of 'social provision'[...]community artists held to be 'do-gooders' [...]they ceased to be threatening revolutionaries and became instead primitive guides whose role was to lead people through the badlands to the citadels of culture.'¹⁸⁷ Community artists found themselves operating at the interstices between local social services and arts funding agencies, a situation which saw them transition from heady 1970s radical activism towards bureaucratic professionalism.¹⁸⁸ The Arts Council's experimental 'Community Arts Committee' was disbanded following restructuring in 1979, and responsibility for funding community arts was devolved to the Regional Arts Associations (RAAs) by 1982.¹⁸⁹ While this released the Arts Council from any responsibility for funding community arts directly, it enabled the RAAs to define community arts as they each saw fit, and local councils also began to employ community arts officers to their arts and recreation programmes.

It was during this period, between 1981-1986 that the GLC entered the contested terrain of 'community arts' sponsorship, employing a more radical definition of 'community arts'. Significantly, this definition was more inclusive of so-called 'minority communities' and activist groups than the Arts Council would have hitherto permitted. Owen Kelly notes, the GLC's decision to initiate a Community Arts Sub-Committee as part of its Arts and Recreation Department was the 'spectacular' example of this, with its

¹⁸⁶ [...]they got the money they wanted, but it came in forms which directed the community arts movement away from the areas of danger [...] towards altogether safer pastures [...] its main effect has been to legitimise the right of funding bodies to *define* the activities they find, rather than accepting them as they are presented and choosing to fund them or not; and the ability of funding agencies to move beyond mere definition to the active *initiation* of projects designed to meet their own criteria [...]The strategy of vagueness which had resulted from the determined pragmatism of the ACA played into the hands of the funding agencies, who established a small but effective support industry for community arts, consisting of advisory panels, officers and periodic working parties. [...] The 'strategy of vagueness' took community artists into a period of growth which was *led* by the funding agencies; in which they were the officers and community artists the troops, and during which, community artists lost control of their own movement.' Owen Kelly, 1984, pp.22-25.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid. p.24.

¹⁸⁸ Taking a longer view, François Matarasso, states that the 1990s saw the term 'community arts' displaced by 'participatory arts', a move that has, in his view, marked the general turn away from the political in socially engaged community art practices. Grant Kester also identifies terms used to describe artists working outside the contemporary art world and gallery system such as 'community-based art' and 'socially engaged art practice'. How far the practices described in his book can be considered 'community arts' or 'participatory arts' is a matter of interpretation. See Matarasso, 2013; Grant Kester, *Conversation Pieces: Community and Communication in Modern Art* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004).

¹⁸⁹ The Regional Arts Associations (RAAs) were voluntary organisations set up unevenly across the country since the late 1950s, following the Arts Council's closure of its regional offices in the post-war period. The twelve RAAs were made up of individuals from each region, elected by their governing board, drawn from local arts interest groups, institutions of education and local authorities. Together they were charged with distributing Arts Council funding in their area, and, as Hewison notes, 'The RAAs did not make the same distinction between amateur and professional made by the arts council, and had a more democratic tradition [...] the slightly different criteria used could also lead to conflict [with the Arts Council]'. Robert Hewison, 1995, p. 254.

£1 million initial budget.¹⁹⁰ Culture's social role weighed heavily in GLC policy documents, with funding generally directed towards groups and participant 'communities' rather than to individual artists or 'traditional' centres of elite culture. Unlike the Arts Council's increasingly de-politicising agenda for the community arts movement, the GLC sought to actively encourage 'community arts' that fit with its own political messages. The Arts and Recreation Committee, and its new 'Community' and 'Ethnic' Arts Sub-Committees had devised a radical, headline-grabbing positive-action approach to the redistribution of its arts sponsorship away from the well-established London opera and theatre venues and towards local cultural organisations within the GLC's priority targeted 'community' groups instead: 'Women, Ethnic Minorities, Irish, Young people, Gay men and Lesbians, People with Disabilities, [the] Elderly.'¹⁹¹ Certain cultural forms and organisations were also prioritised, including printing co-operatives, photography, film and video workshops, local history projects, writing workshops, community bookshops and local festivals. This thesis considers the implications of the GLC's radical approach to 'community arts' funding, which targeted frequently excluded 'minority' groups, and politicised community arts projects.

2.10 'Community Media': Video, Photography and Print workshops

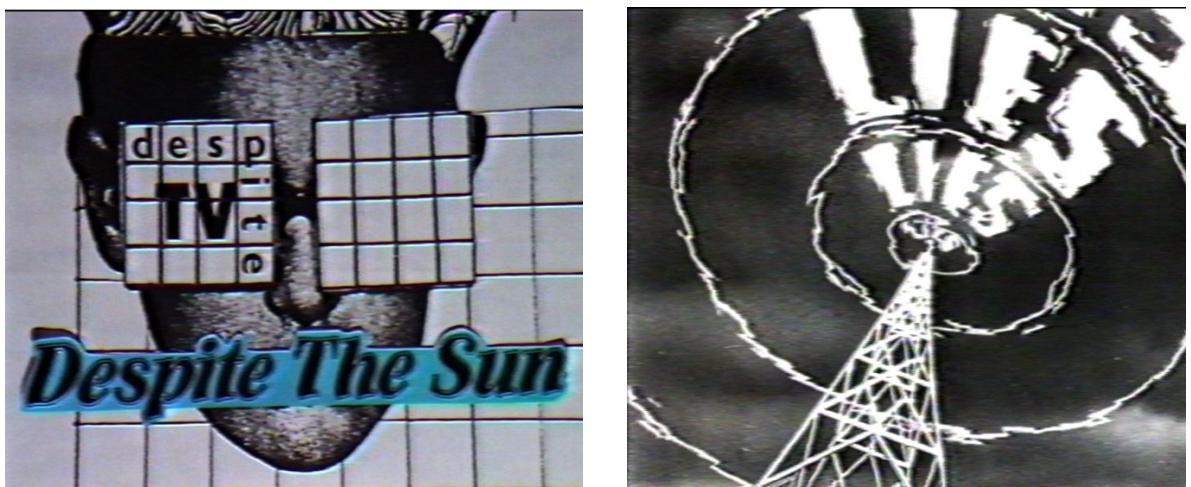


Figure 4: Mark Saunders, *Despite TV 9: Despite the Sun*, video stills, 1986.

'Community media access workshops' provided local people and particular 'communities of interest' with access to media and communications technology, such as film and video editing facilities, photographic darkrooms or printing and reprographics. Trained community media workers managed these workshops, (many of whom may have rejected the label 'artist' or 'community artist'), assisting users to initiate new projects or facilitating the self-directed work of participants.¹⁹² Community media workers became involved in local community activism, utilising the technologies at their disposal in consciousness raising projects, or to lobby local councillors on social issues. The 'workshop' model was derived from film and photography co-operatives of the 1960s and 1970s that pooled resources to secure access to or collective ownership of the often expensive technologies for use by artists, though many of these were initially

¹⁹⁰Owen Kelly, 1984, p.34.

¹⁹¹ GLC, Campaign for a Popular Culture (1986).

¹⁹² Heinz Nigg and Graham Wade, 1980; Tony Dowmunt in K. Coyer et al., 2007.

centred upon artists rather than aims of working with or for broader 'community' groups.¹⁹³ Video workshops for community use had a precedent in groups such as TVX, the London Arts Lab, John Hopkins' Fantasy Factory Video, promoting the use of low-gauge video in community settings, and advocating for the then-controversial idea that video be considered an art form in its own right.¹⁹⁴ The formation of an association of video workers in the mid 1970s created a forum for communication between groups and sought to obtain more support from funding bodies, particularly the BFI and the GLAA, though they were not particularly successful to this end.¹⁹⁵ Heinz Nigg records that a leaked Arts Council report from the mid-1970s entitled 'The Resistible Rise of Video Culture' warned against the funding of video, indicative of the Arts Council's attitude to the new medium at this time.¹⁹⁶ By the early 1980s, many community based video projects operated in London. Video cassette recorder (VCR) ownership in the UK had grown to about 35% of all households by 1985, and video was seen as a cheap and accessible alternative to 16mm film production, with 'instant replay' and home viewing attractive features, although access to the tools and skills required to make television broadcast-quality video were less readily available.

Unlike the Arts Council, the GLC's new arts committees deemed community video workshops a priority for sponsorship, allocating capital grants to secure suitable premises and equipment for production, for independent and community video distribution organisations, and also moved to secure regular salaries and training for community video workers. Workshops were seen to be providing technical training and skills to a more diverse range of users than the television industries accommodated, capable of producing video work reflecting issues of communities own choice, for projects that may not otherwise have been able to access professional facilities.¹⁹⁷ Despite TV, a video group based at the Tower Hamlets Arts Project (THAP) led by Mark Saunders, deployed an 'alternative news' strategy making regular 'magazine' style community news video programmes with local volunteers. [Figure 4] Their important video documentary *Despite the Sun* recorded the Wapping Dispute at News International and was exhibited as part of the *Keywords* exhibition at Tate Liverpool in 2014.¹⁹⁸ Sean Cubitt has recently stated that for many 'community video' groups, the intended 'output' of such projects was not the video tape itself, but rather

¹⁹³ As discussed in: David Curtis, *A History of Artists' Film and Video in Britain, 1897-2004* (London: BFI Publishing, 2006); A.L. Rees, *A History of Experimental Film and Video*, 2nd ed., (London: BFI, 2011).

¹⁹⁴ Some following the example of projects from Canada such as *Challenge for Change*, and the New York alternative media magazine, *Radical Software* (1970-74). Radical Software, web archive, <<http://radicalsoftware.org/e/history.html>> [accessed 01.05.2015].

¹⁹⁵ Between 1974-1977, the Association of London Independent Video Groups (later Association of Video Workers AVW) was formed, and following this, former members met under the banner of a 'London Community Video Workers Collective' and the 'Community Communications Group' (COMCOM), with a more specific focus on community video. Heinz Nigg and Graham Wade, 1980, p. 31.

¹⁹⁶ See: Heinz Nigg and Graham Wade, *ibid*.

¹⁹⁷ GLC, Campaign for a Popular Culture, 1986, p.20.

¹⁹⁸ Despite TV received a small amount of GLC funding to pay for equipment in 1985. Mark Saunders, interview with the author, 2015. Despite TV, *Despite The Sun*, (1986) <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Iw6hegU4Xm4>> [accessed 08.05.2015]; Despite TV video archive at: <http://www.spectacle.co.uk/catalogue_production.php?id=64> [accessed 08.05.2015].

a ‘community’.¹⁹⁹ This claim for the simple creation or cohesion of a so-called ‘community’ through joint action on a video project sounds somewhat idealistic. However, the statement also points to the elusiveness of archival material on the subject of community video to historians, and perhaps one reason why these films have received little critical attention until now. The BFI have preserved few of the many of the titles produced by community video projects. Where archives of video material and correspondence exist, they often reside, as Cubitt noted, in former community video workers’ lofts and garages. As formats like as VHS, Beta and U-matic became technologically obsolete, their playback quality also degrading over time, one can speculate that many tapes and distribution copies have not survived the transition to digital.

Photography was another area in which community workshop organisations began to flourish in the 1970s. Relatively cheap compared to video and film, community photography was well established by the mid 1970s and featured heavily in Arts Council reports on ‘community arts’ projects across Britain. Between 1974 and 1981, the Arts Council both commissioned and awarded grants to community photography projects.²⁰⁰ By 1980, The Half Moon Photography Workshop’s *Camerawork* magazine was declaring that ‘community photographers continue both a photographic and communal tradition [...] we think that community photography can actively involve people in social change.’²⁰¹ A new generation of photographers were seeking more positive, and less exploitative uses of photography, providing photography workshop facilities for local children and also exploring the use of photography to enhance the effectiveness of campaigns by local action groups.²⁰² Those community media groups whose histories are noted in the literature are generally those figures or groups whose practices caught the attention of documentary film, photography or ‘art world’ audiences, such as Jo Spence who participated in groups including the *Hackney Flashers* women’s photography collective at the Half Moon Photography Workshop and its important theoretical magazine, *Camerawork*.²⁰³

The GLC’s Arts and Recreation department were committed to sponsoring London’s community photography workshops for several reasons. Broadening access to facilities for photographic printing was thought to encourage the uptake of photography training as a skill for young unemployed people. It was considered important to enable public expressions of ‘community’ identity and local activism, and participation in local photography exhibitions. Furthermore, some GLC advisors recognised the importance of community access photography workshops as an intervention into the ‘politics of representation’, enabling the production and distribution of alternative narratives to the frequently prejudicial representation of women, black British and Asian people, lesbians and gay men frequently

¹⁹⁹ Sean Cubitt, ‘The Other Pluralism’ conference paper given at *Now That’s What I Call Pluralism*, British Artists’ Film and Video Study Collection, Central Saint Martins, University of the Arts London, 19 March 2015. <<http://www.studycollection.org.uk/content/2015/02/25/now-thats-what-i-call-pluralism>> [accessed 19.03.2015].

²⁰⁰ David Mellor, *No Such Thing as Society: Photography in Britain, 1967-1987: From the British Council and the Arts Council* (London: Hayward Gallery, 2007) p.53.

²⁰¹ Editorial, *Camerawork*, no. 17, (January/February 1980), p.12.

²⁰² Heinz Nigg and Graham Wade, 1980, p. 29.

²⁰³ Jo Spence’s photography featured in the aforementioned *Keywords* exhibition at Tate Liverpool in 2013.

encountered in mainstream print media. The latter issue was also a consideration in the GLC's intervention to support a number of women's groups, such as the Women's Photo Collective, to set themselves up as independent photographic agencies, producing positive images of women for use by the women's movement and 'by sympathetic sections of the media'.²⁰⁴

Independent community printing workshops had also been a feature across the UK in the late 1960s and 1970s, providing facilities amenable to the printing of radical print materials cheaply for distribution and use in campaigns by activists, in which 'The printshops were a nodal point in a network of activist groups, radical publishers and alternative distributors, many of whom put their politics into the way they worked and organised'.²⁰⁵ Groups such as Poster Workshop; and later See Red Women's Workshop and Poster-Film Collective were formed in the wake of 1968 and according to Jess Baines, their constitution reflected the fractured Left in Britain at this time, 'libertarians, aligned and non-aligned Marxists, anarchists and feminists', critical of representations in the mass media and of art.²⁰⁶ Their frequently non-hierarchical organisation reflected their politics, and their posters were concerned with themes of resistance and solidarity with struggles worldwide. Independent print workshops and poster projects were another area that received GLC support, as the GLC considered it advantageous that they provided local campaign groups 'an effective way of reaching a large number of people', reproducing print media for local residents' activism.²⁰⁷ Feminist projects in the alternative press mode included See Red Women's Workshop, located on the Walworth Road in South London. Run on a collective basis by women who were active in radical organisations, See Red received GLC sponsorship to produce print material for community organisations, as well as consciousness-raising posters about women's experiences of media representation, housework, relationships, childcare and medicine.²⁰⁸ [Figure 5]

Other GLC-funded community projects used printed posters creatively as part of their strategy of local activism. The Docklands Community Poster Project, facilitated by community artists Loraine Leeson and Peter Dunn, made visible local people's grievances against the developers of new 'enterprise zones', a reshaping of the city enacted without public consultation, enabled by policies of Thatcher's government. Leeson served as a non-voting advisor on the GLC's Community Arts Sub-Committee, which awarded significant grants to the Docklands project. The project was successful in drawing press coverage for the issue of the Docklands redevelopment, in particular for the 'People's Armada' event which floated a billboard past the Houses of Parliament during the GLC Thames Day celebrations in 1984.²⁰⁹ [Figure 6]

²⁰⁴ GLC, Campaign for a Popular Culture, 1986, p.24.

²⁰⁵ Jess Baines, 'Free Radicals', *Afterall*, (2010), <<http://www.afterall.org/online/radical.printmaking#.VTelRmbW1Zc>> [accessed 22.04.15].

²⁰⁶ Poster Film Collective began with a group at The Slade School of Art in 1971.

²⁰⁷ Alan Tomkins in GLC, Campaign for a Popular Culture, 1986.

²⁰⁸ Jess Baines, Susan Mackie, Anne Robinson and Prudence Stevenson, *See Red Women's Workshop: Feminist Posters 1974-1990*, (London: Four Corners Books, 2016); Carol Kenna, L. Medcalf, R. Walker, *Printing Is Easy: The Community Printshops 1970-1986*, (London: Greenwich Mural Workshop, 1986).

²⁰⁹ Jon Bird, 'Dystopia on Thames' in John Bird, Barry Curtis, Tim Putnam, Lisa Tickner eds., *Mapping the Futures: Local Cultures, Global Change* (London: Routledge, 2012) pp.120-135; Loraine Leeson, *Docklands Community Poster Project*, <<http://www.arte-ofchange.com/content/docklands-community-poster-project-1981-8>> [accessed 08.05.2015].

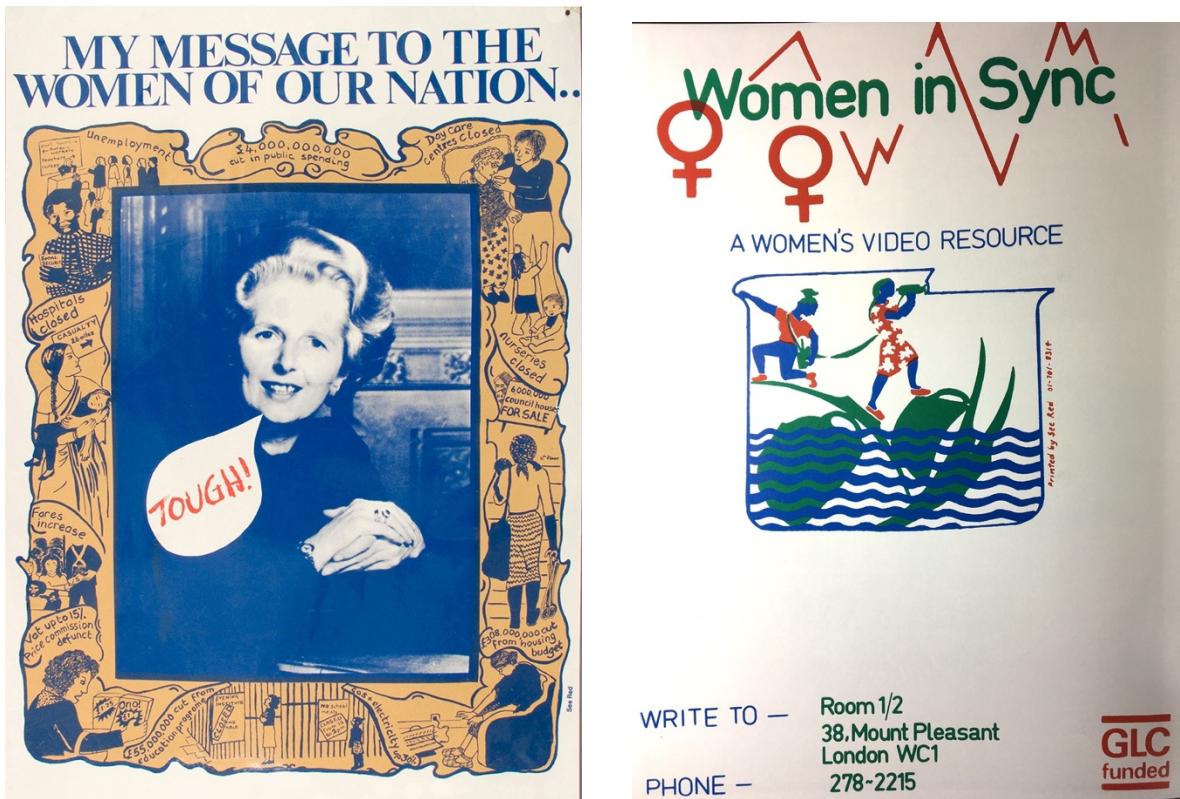


Figure 5: See Red Women's Workshop, *Tough* (1979); See Red Women's Workshop, Publicity poster for a GLC-funded women's video resource, *Women in Sync*, (1983-4).

While it is not the central purpose of this thesis to present a history of community media workshops in their various forms, it does present an argument for the historical and political significance of particular examples of these independent media formations, to emphasise that it is of value to historians to document and preserve their records. Although much of 'community art' practice has stood outside the traditional remit of 'art history', this thesis argues that examining these projects can have relevance when seeking to explore how different voices within the polity responded to social and political events culturally, often reaching beyond mainstream media narratives, expressing what workshop participants may have felt was an issue of importance to them at any given moment.²¹⁰ Put another way, recovering the history of community media and community arts projects could be another avenue for historians seeking to uncover 'History from Below'.

²¹⁰ Except in cases where particular groups have become of interest to some art historians, such as those associated with the Black Art movement, for instance.



© Peter Dunn, Docklands Community Poster Project 1985

Figure 6: Docklands Community Poster Project, Community Photo-Mural, Loraine Leeson and Peter Dunn.



Figure 7: Docklands Community Poster Project, *The People's Armada to Parliament*, 'GLC Thamesday' 1984.

2.11 Summary

This chapter began with a consideration of the importance of the ideas of Raymond Williams in this thesis's approach to histories of 1980s Britain, which aims, following Stephen J. Brooke's lead, to reach beyond dominant narratives of Thatcher's New Right in central government and to give voice to the coexisting contradictory elements within the polity. This thesis resists approaching the GLC in ways which frame it only in terms of a controversial footnote in the political history of the Labour Party, or portray its cultural policy solely as a precursor to creative industries discourses of the 1990s. Instead, it argues for a more nuanced consideration of the bureaucracy within which arts policy aims were formulated and implemented. It also seeks to examine responses from various loosely defined 'communities' of cultural producers and audiences, to consider what these can convey about the interrelationship between cultural producers, participant audiences, social movement politics and State cultural policy in 1980s London.

This chapter has also borrowed from Raymond Williams's strategy in *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* to examine the changing social and political meanings and significances of particular key terms of relevance for this thesis on the Greater London Council's community centred cultural policies between 1981 and 1986.²¹¹ It has gone some way towards exploring the complexity of key words and phrases that will be encountered with frequency in this thesis, namely: 'the State', 'hegemony', 'consensus', 'culture', 'cultural policy', 'cultural industries' 'community', 'social movements', 'community arts', 'community media', tailored to the context of a discussion of the GLC's cultural policy interventions for 1980s London, which the subsequent chapters and their selected case studies will seek to address.

²¹¹ Raymond Williams, (1983 [1976]).

Chapter Three: Reconsidering the emergence of new cultural policy at the GLC: 'Less for the Opera-going snob and more for the Trot on the Clapham Omnibus'.



Figure 8: Tony Banks MP (1943-2006), portrait by Jane Murphy.
Oil on Canvas, 91x70cm, 1986, Collection of the City of London Corporation.

This chapter will discuss the emergence of radical cultural policy at the GLC between 1981-1986, in the broader contexts of national cultural policy developments and wider social and political changes in post-war Britain. It presents an overview of structures of arts funding prior to 1981 to explore how the GLC's Arts and Recreation Committee and new 'Community' and 'Ethnic' Arts Sub-Committees both resisted and incorporated practices from wider cultures of arts sponsorship. It outlines the relationship between GLC arts policy revision and the 'new urban Left' in London local government, which began to incorporate ideas drawn from new social movements into Council work and cultural policy.

3.1 Cultural Policy in Britain, 1945-1986

Britain in the 1980s had inherited in the form of the Arts Council of Great Britain (ACGB) a complex bureaucratic structure of government arts sponsorship.²¹² A quasi-autonomous non-governmental organisation or ‘quango’, it purportedly conducted the business of disbursing State arts grants to cultural organisations and individual artists selected by invited panels of ‘experts’, at an ‘arm’s length’ from party political interference, but its claims to neutrality came under increasing scrutiny.²¹³ Although nominally ‘autonomous’, the Arts Council was in fact wholly dependent on its grant from government and was therefore ‘subject to central government policies,’ but it was also at the mercy of changes in its leadership and the designs of incumbent culture ministers.²¹⁴ Early Arts Council sponsorship policies were narrowly focused in their post-war paternalism, their stated aim being to bring the ‘best to the most’.²¹⁵ For the Arts Council, the ‘best’ of the arts consisted of professional opera, ballet, orchestras, theatre and visual arts. This was to be provided for the benefit of an unspecified ‘most’, a seemingly a-political term suggestive of a ‘general public’ but most likely dominated by the middle classes in London. By the 1960s, more radical demands for cultural provision to reach wider audiences were beginning to be heard by Jennie Lee, the first arts minister with cabinet status, appointed to Harold Wilson’s Labour government. Lee’s 1965 White Paper ‘A Policy For The Arts: the First Steps’ was a pioneering cultural policy statement that sought to shift the emphasis away from London’s ‘centres of excellence’ for a fairer distribution of funding towards the regions and local community projects.²¹⁶ Lee achieved an almost threefold increase in state subsidy for arts between 1963 and 1965, encouraged the formation of new Regional Arts Associations thereby decentralising the powers to allocate funds to locally elected panels, as well as instigating a new building policy, ‘Housing the Arts’.²¹⁷ While ‘welfarist’ notions of increasing public ‘access’ to culture and cultural education (uncontroversial to both Labour and Conservatives alike) played a large role in Lee’s proposals, the report also detailed a more radical demand for the Arts Council to redefine its elitist conception of what constituted ‘culture’,

[...] bridging the gap between what have come to be called higher forms of entertainment and the traditional sources – the brass band, the amateur concert party, the entertainer, the music hall and pop group – and to challenge the fact that a gap exists [...] ²¹⁸

²¹² The Arts Council had developed from The Council for the Encouragement of Music and Arts (CEMA), originally formed in 1940 to boost morale and defend Britain against Nazi cultural influences during wartime. See Oliver Peterson-Gilbert, ‘Pop Art Redefined, British Pop Arts of the 1960s, Towards A Social and Institutional History’ (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Southampton, 2015), p.54.

²¹³ At ‘arm’s length’ was the phrase used by Lord Redcliffe-Maud in John Primatt Redcliffe-Maud, *Support for the Arts in England and Wales: A Report to the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation* (London: The Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, UK and Commonwealth Branch, 1976), p.24.

²¹⁴ Antony Beck, ‘The Impact Of Thatcherism On The Arts Council’ *Parliamentary Affairs* 42, no. 3 (July 1, 1989), pp. 362–79, p.363.

²¹⁵ See Clive Gray, *The Politics of the Arts in Britain* (Hounds Mills: Macmillan, 2000), p.40-42.

²¹⁶ In an attempt to counteract the post-war closure of the Arts Council’s eight regional offices in the 1950s, which had focused resources in the Capital. See Stuart Davies and Sara Selwood, ‘English Cultural Services: Government Policy and Local Strategies’, *Cultural Trends*, 8, 30, 1998, pp.69-110, <doi: 10.1080/09548969809365039>.

²¹⁷ Robert Hutchinson, *The Politics of the Arts Council*, (London: Sinclair-Brown, 1982), p.171. RAAs were to be set up to ‘cover the whole country’: see Government White Paper 1965, *A Policy For The Arts: The First Steps*, HMSO, Cmnd. 2601, paragraph 43.

²¹⁸ Ibid., paragraph 71.

The 1964-1970 Labour administration did not hold on to power long enough to realise the full practical application of Lee's policies, and she lost her parliamentary seat in 1970.²¹⁹ Furthermore, little progress was made in expanding the forms of culture deemed deserving of Arts Council endorsement. Lee's recommendations were largely not brought forward by Labour's next Shadow Arts Minister, Andrew Faulds, who was replaced by left-winger Hugh Jenkins when Howard Wilson returned to power in 1974, as 'Under-Secretary for the Arts'.²²⁰ Jenkins's attempts to increase accountability in line with Labour's 1974 manifesto, to 'make the Arts Council more democratic and representative of the people in the arts and entertainment' or in his own words, to 'loosen the grip of the snobocracy on the arts scene', were soon rebuffed.²²¹ Another change of Arts Minister occurred following Wilson's resignation in 1976, with James Callaghan replacing Jenkins with Lord Donaldson, a figure more acceptable to the arts establishment which was a move to maintain the art establishment's hegemony, in Hewison's view.²²²

Professional theatre, opera, ballet, orchestras and visual arts, housed in the so-called 'centres of excellence', continued to dominate the Arts Council's concern and budgets throughout the 1960s and 1970s despite the best efforts of reformers like Jennie Lee. Adherence to concepts of 'quality' and 'standards' also continued to dominate the language of the Arts Council, with the 'Annual Report 1972-3' stating that 'The first object in our Royal Charter covers quality and standards'.²²³ Though proposed as objective, these subjective judgements on quality, written into the Arts Council's remit, go some way towards explaining its more tentative engagement with practitioners of 'non-traditional' art forms who were beginning to seek Arts Council sponsorship in the 1960s and 70s. These included 'community arts' projects that often occupied a position between 'amateur' and 'professional' practices that proved problematic to those who sought to uphold the Charter on 'standards'. The Arts Council was slow to respond to 'new' technologies such as photography, and their use in visual arts and community arts practices. Photography exhibitions only became eligible for Arts Council support in 1967. Following an investigative report by the Arts Council's 'Community Arts Working Party' in 1973, the Arts Council's central administration had briefly experimented with the formation of a 'Community Arts' panel between 1975-8, responding to pressure from the Association of Community Artists (ACA).²²⁴ Under this banner, applications from projects that did not fit into the traditional funding categories including local community-based 'access workshops' in video, photography and film, street theatre, mural painting and community print resources, aimed at broad access rather than solely for professional artist's use, were also considered for direct Arts Council funding.²²⁵ While deemed a successful experiment by the Arts Council

²¹⁹ Although a somewhat more balanced, less London-centric distribution of Arts Council funds was achieved.

²²⁰ Later, Lord Jenkins of Putney, who was to return to prominence with a role in the GLC. See Hewison, 1995, p.174; Hugh Jenkins, *The Culture Gap: An Experience of Government and the Arts* (London: Marion Boyars, 1979).

²²¹ Labour Party Manifesto, 1974a, p.16; Hugh Jenkins, 1979, p.204.

²²² Robert Hewison, 1995, p.178.

²²³ Referring to paragraph 3, Section (a) of the Arts Council's charter, see Nicholas Pearson, 1981, p. 98.

²²⁴ Su Braden, 1978, p. 106.

²²⁵ These projects were those that would have been looked upon more favourably by the Regional Arts Associations. In 1975, the Community Arts panel allocated £176,000 to 57 projects, and the following year, £350,000 was allocated to 75 projects, selected from across the UK. Heinz Nigg and Graham Wade, 1980, p.30.

in the fulfilment of its duty to increase public access to arts, there was a suspicion that political projects might include an arts element to exploit this kind of sponsorship.²²⁶

In addition to pressure from community arts organisations to highlight the Arts Council's responsibility to community arts participants of different class identities and age groups, some were beginning to put forward the argument that the Arts Council also needed to keep pace with the social and cultural transformations brought about by decolonization and migration to Britain. Naseem Khan's report, *The Arts Britain Ignores: The Arts of Ethnic Minorities in Britain* (1976) commissioned by the Arts Council, in partnership with the Gulbenkian Foundation and the Community Relations Commission (later the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) sought to demonstrate that they had begun to consider demands for the support of arts projects more representative of Britain's increasingly diverse population.²²⁷ As a result, the Minority Arts Advisory Service (MAAS) was founded in 1976 to 'provide information to those working in ethnic minority arts [and] promote ethnic identity and cultural traditions', however change would be painfully slow within the Arts Council itself, and amongst the RAAs and arts institutions it funded.²²⁸ The innovations and cultural ambitions that migrant populations brought with them to Britain were, as John Roberts has asserted, only welcomed by mainstream arts institutions in their 'private manifestations' as 'exotic', and they were far less welcome when they became 'assertive' stances against 'silent integration'.²²⁹ Khan's report included new events such as the Notting Hill Carnival (established in 1966) as well as classical dance, music performance and 'traditional' crafts, but a generation of artists and writers who had lived much of their lives in Britain were beginning to critique the terminology of 'ethnic arts' and its approach. They criticised the report's discourse of benign 'social integration', 'along pathways of separate development'.²³⁰ Khan's report had used various terms to refer to cultural production of black British people, including 'ethnic arts', 'non-British arts', 'multi-ethnic arts' and 'multi-cultural arts', each of which were problematically 'ethnicising' and divisive in their longer term effects, entrenching the idea of racial and cultural difference by writing it into national cultural policy.²³¹

Any hopes for the implementation of the more radical demands of Jennie Lee's White Paper were damped throughout the 1970s by successive Labour administrations' inability to act. However, Lee's

²²⁶ Arts Council, 'Community Arts – A report by the Arts Council's Community Arts Evaluation Working Group' (1977).

²²⁷ Naseem Khan, *The Arts Britain Ignores: The Arts of Ethnic Minorities in Britain* (London: Arts Council of Great Britain, Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation and Community Relations Commission, 1976); Richard Hylton, *The Nature of the Beast: Cultural Diversity and the Visual Arts Sector: A Study of Policies, Initiatives and Attitudes 1976-2006* (Bath: ICIA, Institute of Contemporary Interdisciplinary Arts, 2007). Alison Donnell, *Companion to Contemporary Black British Culture* (London: Routledge, 2002), p.314.

²²⁸ See Minority Arts Advisory Service (MAAS), 'The Arts Britain Ignores: Conferences on Britain's Ethnic Minority Arts', (MAAS, 1976).

²²⁹ John Roberts, 'Third Text: Modernism, Negritude, and the Critique of Ethnicity' conference paper, ICAS Seville, Spain, June 2011, <http://ayp.unia.es/dmdocuments/public_doc10.pdf> [accessed 24.02.2017].

²³⁰ Ibid., p.2. See, for example Rasheed Araeen's critical response to Naseem Khan: Rasheed Araeen, 'The Arts Britain Really Ignores', unpublished paper, edited version, 'In Response to Ethnic Arts', *Shakti*, 2 July 1982, full version in Rasheed Araeen, *Making Myself Visible*, Kala Press, 1984, pp.100-105. The latter publication was funded by the GLC. As Niru Ratnam was later to argue, 'Araeen was advocating an anti-racist position in contrast to Khan's multiculturalist position.' Niru Ratnam, 'Decibel: Running to Stand Still' in *Spin Cycle: Runa Islam, Damien Roach, Hiraki Sawa* (Spike Island, Bristol: Systemisch, 2004), p.71.

²³¹ See chapter five in this thesis for an expanded discussion of the development and use of particular terms of reference such as 'ethnic arts', 'black British', 'Black Art', both historically by the Arts Council and GLC and within this thesis.

more radical idea to ‘bridge the gap between [...] higher forms of entertainment and the traditional forms [...]’ and to fund more community based and local practices, did not completely disappear: they would be drawn upon again by the Labour GLC at a municipal level for 1980s London.²³² Naseem Khan’s notion of the so-called ‘ethnic arts’ would also resurface at the GLC, to be contested.

3.2 Arts Sponsorship in London: The Arts Council and GLAA

The question of where the responsibility for different areas of London’s cultural sponsorship lay had been in dispute prior to the election of the Labour group to GLC in 1981. In the late 1970s, London’s cultural organisations were sponsored through a complex and confusing system of varying levels of joint contributions by various bodies, including ACGB, GLAA, London Boroughs Association (LBA), the GLC, Inner London Education Authority (ILEA), and charitable trusts such as the Gulbenkian Foundation, with the share of the burden negotiated on a case-by-case basis. As the 1980s wore on, Central Government was to increase pressure on the Arts Council, insisting that organisations find a greater proportion of their sponsorship from local councils and corporate sources.

The Arts Council had the largest of all arts grant budgets and divided most of its sponsorship in London between a limited number of major organisations that it funded directly on an annual basis, alongside an annual contribution to the Greater London Arts Association (GLAA), the Regional Arts Association (RAA) representing and distributing funding to smaller arts organisations in Greater London.²³³ In 1979, the Arts Council’s highest contributions in London were directed towards running costs of the National Theatre, English National Opera, London Orchestral Concert Board, London Festival Ballet, and the Opera House Development fund, in addition to a list of smaller theatre, dance and opera companies and receiving theatres in London - about eighty percent of its Arts Council grants overall went to ‘performing arts’. ²³⁴ A number of visual arts centres also received direct ACGB funding, including The Hayward Gallery (a building rented from the GLC, with its art gallery run by the Arts Council) and Serpentine, ICA, Riverside Studios, the Whitechapel Gallery and the Photographer’s Gallery.²³⁵ Although the central administration of the Arts Council had experimented with directly funding smaller ‘community’ based projects in London between 1975-1978, with increasing pressure from central government to reduce arts expenditure, the Arts Council faced streamlining demands during the 1980s. The Council’s expense in processing smaller grants to ‘community’ projects in the late 1970s was found to be too high, and

²³² Jennie Lee’s White Paper (1965) was mentioned in Jeremy Corbyn’s cultural policy statements during his Labour leadership campaign in 2015. Archived content from ‘JeremyforLabour.com’, ‘The Arts’, September 2015. <https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/jeremyforlabour/pages/167/attachments/original/1441119444/Arts_v8.pdf?1441119444> [accessed 25.05.2017].

²³³ The RAAs, following the closure in the 1950s of ACGB’s regional offices, had grown up in an unplanned fashion, into twelve bodies representing local arts needs and interests in different areas of the country, their proximity to their custodian regions enabling provision of more direct support for local organisations.

²³⁴ ‘The pre-eminence of the performing arts in the Council’s operations is indicated by the fact that about 80% of its grants go to these arts.’ Antony Beck, 1989, p.363.

²³⁵ A GLC Arts Committee report stating grants for 1979/80 (dated November 1979) gives insight into the priority funding areas and the share of responsibility between The Arts Council, the GLAA, and the GLC (under the GLC’s Conservative group led by Horace Cutler between 1977-81). See also ACGB, *Thirty Fifth Annual Report and Accounts*, 1980-1981 (London: ACGB, 1981).

responsibility for these grants was increasingly devolved to their respective RAAs and in London these became the responsibility of the GLAA.

Those organisations not directly funded by the Arts Council, deemed to be of more 'regional significance for London as a whole', were sponsored through the conduit of the largely Arts Council-funded Regional Arts Association (RAA) for the Greater London area, the GLAA, which had been in operation since 1966.²³⁶ Within the GLAA, advisory panels of expert officers, largely drawn from local London arts organisations, were formed to liaise with, advise and assess particular organisations for project and revenue funding, in the following areas: Community Arts, Arts Centres (formerly Combined Arts Panel), Visual Arts, Music, Film and Video, Literature, Drama and Dance.²³⁷ Organisations could apply, or be invited to apply to any of these boards simultaneously to fund particular projects, while also being encouraged to seek funding from local authority sources, businesses, and charitable trusts. The 'pot' of funds distributed annually by the GLAA was itself comprised from a mixture of sources, largely from the ACGB, with contributions from local authorities through the London Boroughs Association (LBA), as well as from the GLC, to whom the GLAA had also provided advisory services on arts in the capital. In 1976/7, The LBA and the GLC each contributed around 6% of the GLAA's total budget, with the remaining 88% made up of ACGB funds and a modest contribution from the BFI.²³⁸ In 1979/81 the GLAA had £545,000 from the ACGB to distribute to London arts organisations of their choice, the figure divided between the various GLAA arts panels. While a co-operation with local councils for parity of arts sponsorship contributions had been the initial aim of the RAA's, funds for cultural organisations raised from local authorities were supposed to be 'grant-matched' by the RAAs but as the 1970s wore on, this parity funding model became unsustainable.²³⁹ Financial pressures on the Arts Council in the late 1970s, and their move to devolve responsibility for 'community arts' type projects to the Regional Associations had led the Arts Council to instruct Regional Associations including the GLAA to seek increased financial support from their local authorities. This coincided with a period in which local authorities themselves were similarly stretched and reluctant to duplicate arts sponsorship, which they saw as the Arts Council's responsibility.²⁴⁰

²³⁶ For example, in the year 1977/8, the Arts Council had provided sponsorship for, under the banner of 'arts centres and community projects', London-based 'community' film and video organisations including Albany Video, Fantasy Factory, Liberation Films and London Video Arts, London 'community arts centres' including Centerprise in Hackney and print workshops including the Lenthall Road Workshop, Paddington Printshop and other centres including WACAT and photography at the Blackfriars settlement. *Ibid.* pp. 70-71.

²³⁷ Project funding refers to money allocated for a specific project, revenue funding represents regular contribution towards running costs and for instance administrator or art worker salaries. Capital grants refer to investments made in equipment or premises.

²³⁸ 'In fact, the Boroughs, through the London Boroughs Association, give the GLAA a grant (£17,000 in 1975/76) equal to about 6% of the Association's total budget, matched by a similar grant from the GLC. The bulk of the remainder of GLAA's budget is found by the Arts Council (plus a small but useful grant from the BFI).' *Redcliffe-Maud*, 1976, p.95.

²³⁹ As the Redcliffe-Maud Report stated; 'Some difficult years for local government and the growing needs of the supported organisations in the regions, coupled with the Arts Council's wish to devolve subsidising of many regional and local matters to RAAs, meant that the parity principle was broken.' *Ibid.*

²⁴⁰ In London, the borough Councils of Westminster and Kensington and Chelsea were refusing to contribute to arts funding and the GLC had also not been as co-operative with the GLAA as was hoped. See 'Letter from David Pratley to Chris Cooper', 10 October 1979, (V&A: ACGB/103/198: GLAA). See also ACGB, *Thirty Fifth Annual Report and Accounts 1980/1* (London: ACGB, 1981), pp. 9-10.

3.3 Monetarists vs. The Arts Council: Policy developments in the early 1980s

‘Quangos emerged from more than the consensus idea; they emerged from and could only work where there was an assumed pattern of values about the nature of the good society and the good life.’²⁴¹

Richard Hoggart observed that ideological differences had emerged during the 1980s that threatened the Arts Council’s *modus operandi*. The Arts Council had come under attack from both the Left and the Right, in line with changing ideological commitments in both the Labour and Conservative Parties during the mid 1970s and 1980s. Amongst commentators and cultural producers on the Left, there was a perception that the Arts Council consisted largely of exclusively white, aristocratic and upper middle class appointees, clinging to an out-dated wartime cultural paternalism and operating behind ‘closed doors’. The Arts Council had failed to progress very far beyond its wartime agenda, and seemed to have paid little attention to Jennie Lee’s recommendations from 1965.²⁴² Commenting in 1979, Raymond Williams observed that Arts Council members were ‘politically and administratively appointed [...] not drawn from arts practice and administration but from the vaguer category of ‘persons of experience and goodwill’, which is the State’s euphemism for its informal ruling class.’²⁴³ Nicholas Pearson has asserted that the operation of ‘consensus’ on supposedly ‘a-political’ decisions about ‘artistic value’ had systematically denied ‘[...] the process of public debate and policy making which should and could be part of an open and more democratic system of public patronage,’ and with this, the denial of politics and of the centrality of political issues to State cultural patronage.²⁴⁴ It was this persistent denial of politics in the Arts Council’s operation, its paternalism and condescension towards working class cultural forms, that the GLC’s new Arts Committees under the leadership of Tony Banks would come to fervently oppose. This conflict was to occur during a period in which the New Right of the Conservative Party also sought to distance itself from the Arts Council’s cultural paternalism, by instead applying monetarist liberalism to cultural policy.²⁴⁵

²⁴¹ Richard Hoggart, *An Imagined Life: Life and Times* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1992), p.271.

²⁴² The ‘social duty’ to promote the ‘civilisation’ of the poor, and to protect them from the threats posed by ‘mass culture’ and ‘popular entertainment’ – a moral crusade fought through the selective endorsement of a narrowly defined category, ‘the arts’.

²⁴³ Raymond Williams, ‘The Arts Council’, *Political Quarterly*, 2, vol. 50, (1979) 157-171, p.13.

²⁴⁴ Nicholas Pearson has made a useful distinction between the ways in which the term ‘politics’ was being used in discourses surrounding State involvement in cultural sponsorship, by various interest groups- including by politicians and the Arts Council itself. The term ‘politics’, in the more limited sense, relates to the ‘formulation and implementation of policies, and the use and exercise of power, within the public or political domain.’ However, this usage should be considered in conjunction with a fuller definition of politics, ‘all attitudes and beliefs concerning people’s relationships one to another, the nature and structure of society, the position of men and women in society, the values of that society and the exercise of power within society.’ Pearson asserts that ‘State involvement in art has, of course, always been ‘political’ in both senses [...] the involvement of the State in art is directly political in the broader sense, since the exercise of that authority is wrapped up in values, decisions, attitudes and assumptions concerning people’s lives, experiences and social relations.’ Nicholas Pearson, 1982, pp. 74-80.

²⁴⁵ Tony Banks, a Labour MP and GLC Arts and Recreation Committee Chairperson between 1981-83. Monetarist intervention in the art world had been anticipated as early as 1976, when local authorities were encouraged to increase their spending to ‘match’ Arts Council funds for arts provision: ‘The [Redcliffe-Maud] report was an important step in introducing the principle of ‘matching funds’, whereby central support for the arts was made dependent on raising equivalent sums from other sources such as local government or business sponsorship, Private patronage was increasingly coordinated with the Association for Business sponsorship for the Arts, founded in 1976. ABSA estimated that such support grew from £600,000 in 1976 to £4 million in 1979 and £25 million by 1986. But support for these developments was not unqualified. Some anticipated the trend towards more conservative programming in bodies supported by the ABSA, while others interpreted the principle of ‘matching funds’ as demonstrating that the arts were becoming a less important priority for central government than had been the case in the 1960s.’ See Bart Moore-Gilbert, ‘Cultural Closure or Post-Avantgardism,’ in *The Arts in the 1970s: Cultural Closure?* (London: Routledge, 1994), p.136. However, it was soon

Although the Arts Council and its clients had benefitted from forty years of growing central government investment in culture as part of the post-war social contract, all items of public expenditure were under review in the 1980s, and the Arts Council's grants did not escape the scrutiny of the Thatcher government. Monetarist macroeconomic strategy asserted that local and central government seek constraint and efficiencies in spending, so as to reduce inflationary pressure, through 'reducing the supply of money to both private and public sectors of the economy'.²⁴⁶ Many public sector industries and utilities were earmarked for private sale and thereby removed from the Treasury's responsibility, based on the monetarist conviction that only the private sector is able deliver value for money.²⁴⁷ Most industries remaining in the public sector found their government grants reduced, and were forced to find efficiencies during this period, increasingly pushed towards private business for their income. While this was presented as a solution to Britain's economic problems, its ideological message was also clear to some commentators on the left,

' [...] a cultural revolutionary strategy to 'roll back' the welfare state, the mixed economy and the socialist-humanist values underpinning them in favour of an aggressive individualism and materialism which would also forever bury socialism and the Labour Party as political rivals to the Conservative Party. No sector of social life has been left untouched, not even the arts.' ²⁴⁸

Cultural policy divided opinion in the Conservative party. 'One Nation' Tories had long endorsed aspects of the post-war consensus and supported the Arts Council in its work, but there was a fear amongst these more moderate elements that the New Right of the party were poised to make cut backs. The Arts Council's government grant had grown to over £60 million a year by the time Thatcher came to power in 1979, a figure that the New Right sought to curtail.²⁴⁹ In 1980-81, a cut of one million pounds (a 3.3 percent reduction in real terms) was made to Arts Council's grant, enough to force it to terminate funding to forty-one organisations in December 1980 without warning, to concentrate on its forty six remaining regular clients.²⁵⁰ When Arts Minister in the first Thatcher government, Norman St John Stevas objected, he was replaced by Paul Channon, followed by Lord Gowrie in 1983. Each appointment presided over increased enforcement of Thatcher's economic policy in the arts field, and increased control of the Arts

recognised that an organisation's ability to attract corporate funding was largely dependent upon what it could offer its corporate sponsors. In the emerging mercenary climate, modest community-based practices would not attract corporate sponsorship. On the one hand, big businesses needed spectacular exhibitions of blue-chip art with which to associate their corporate identities. On the other hand, in order to ensure value for money, the ABSA needed art to become popular. This meant pandering to 'the people's taste' while introducing the masses to their idea of 'high culture'. Neil Charles Mulholland, *'Why Is There Only One Monopolies Commission? British Art and Its Critics in the Late 1970s.'* (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Glasgow, 1998), p.136.

²⁴⁶ Antony Beck, 1989, p.363.

²⁴⁷ For example, the sale of British Telecom, Cable & Wireless, Jaguar, British Aerospace, Britoil and British Gas occurred in the early 1980s, with British Steel, British Petroleum, Rolls Royce, British Airways, and the major utilities, water and electricity, following later.

²⁴⁸ Anthony Beck, 1989, p364.

²⁴⁹ Ibid. p. 365.

²⁵⁰ While the government were able to claim that arts spending had significantly increased during the 1980s, closer examination undertaken by Hewison reveals a different story. Increased spending on the British Library construction and on temporary arts funding put in place after 1986 to replace that lost in the closure of the Metropolitan County Councils, represented a 'transfer rather than an increase of resources' and percentage increases measured are dependent on which measure of inflation is deployed. The reality was that while demand for the arts increased in the eighties, arts organisations had a harder and harder struggle to meet it'. Robert Hewison, 1995, pp. 246-247. These cuts were very unpopular, affecting major companies including Prospect Theatre company at the Old Vic, the National Youth Theatre, National Youth Orchestra and National Youth Brass Band, as well as 'a number of left wing theatre companies.' See Robert Hewison, 1995, p.246, Franco Bianchini, 1995, p. 155.

Council by central government, through the replacement of 'non-political' Arts Council administrators or those with Labour sympathies with individuals more amenable to a Thatcherite position.²⁵¹

Some in the Labour Party were also seeking reform of both the Arts Council and the government's administrative organisation for culture more broadly, although with different objectives. Andrew Faulds, who returned to the post of Shadow Arts Minister in 1979, briefly renewed earlier proposals to establish a single government ministry to encompass 'Cultural Heritage', but was removed from his post in 1982.²⁵² Proposals for a democratisation of the Arts Council were also resurfacing at this time, not from the Labour Party leadership, but from the National Executive Committee (NEC) which took an interest in arts policy, with the 'Labour Programme 1982' proposing a reformed Arts Council comprised in the majority of elected representatives from 'workers' and managerial organisations in the arts, local authorities and consumers', with a focus on widening audiences for traditional arts through expansion of arts in education and community arts.²⁵³ The Labour Party's 1983 election manifesto did not mention the culture ministry or Arts Council reform ideas. Culture was not a priority at this time, seen as a marginal issue, given the more pressing concerns of the election campaign, and the threats posed by government economic policies to UK industry and employment.

Between 1983 and 1984, The Office of Arts and Libraries further cut the Arts Council's percentage grants increase from central government from 23% to 4%, putting an end to the generous yearly increases in the grant that the Arts Council had enjoyed during the 1970s.²⁵⁴ In a bid to reduce dependency on the public purse, a proportion of Arts Council grants were 'earmarked' for incentive schemes to encourage clients

²⁵¹ The appointment of William Rees-Mogg to Chair the Arts Council made management of the arts council 'easier' for the government, and Labour sympathisers were quickly replaced: Richard Hoggart's appointment to the Arts Council was simply 'not renewed' in 1981, Hoggart recalls, 'It confirmed that governmental intervention in such bodies started very early in the eighties, Fiats from Number 10 and compliance from some of her Ministers.' Richard Hoggart, 1992, p. 232. When Arts Council Secretary General Roy Shaw (the culturally conservative former WEA lecturer) retired in 1983, he was replaced by Luke Rittner, whose previous role was significant- as director of the Association for Business Sponsorship of the Arts (ABSA): Rittner's appointment clearly marked a break with the view held from the early days of the Arts Council that culture ought to be publically funded. See Robert Hewison, 1995, p.248; Franco Bianchini, 1995, p. 156.

²⁵² Faulds was replaced by Phillip Whitehead, also Party spokesperson on higher education, who was to lose his seat a year later in the 1983 general election. Historically, responsibility for various aspects of culture lay with a combination of the department of the environment (architectural heritage, sport, recreation), the Department of Trade and Industry (the commercial film industry, music, print, advertising, copyright), the Home Office (television and radio broadcasting) the Department of Education and Science (arts education and training). This idea of a single arts ministry had some precedent, having surfaced in the 1977 NEC Arts Study Group document, *The Arts and the People* (Labour Party, 1977), which also recognised the political importance of the arts, and the dominance of state sponsored arts by 'middle class' audiences. Andrew Faulds was proposing a single ministry for Cultural Heritage, to encompass 'archaeology, historic houses, art galleries and museums, film, performing arts and entertainment aspects of the media'. See Franco Bianchini, 1995, p.167. Also see Hugh Jenkins, 'Interview with Hugh Jenkins', *Marxism Today*, October 1982, p.42, in which Jenkins discusses the possibility of a single Arts Ministry under a single minister with cabinet status.

²⁵³ See *Labour Programme 1982* (London: Labour Party, 1982), pp. 215-216. A document approved at the Labour Party's conference in Blackpool, in September 1982. The 1977 NEC Arts Study Group document, *The Arts and the People* had also sought a more democratic Arts Council of 'elected representatives'. See: Labour Party, *The Arts and the People* (London: Labour Party, 1977), pp.11-12. This resonated with a TUC proposal from 1976, which suggested that Arts Council committees include 'at all levels representatives of organised workers.' See: Trades Union Congress, *The TUC working party report on the arts* (London: TUC, 1976), p.71. As Bianchini has noted, both Labour's *The Arts and the People*, and the TUC's 1976 report focused more on 'broadening access' to the arts, rather than on any redefinition of culture in the context of cultural policy. See Franco Bianchini, 1995, pp. 148, 169.

²⁵⁴ Antony Beck, p.370.

to seek an increased proportion of their income from the private sphere.²⁵⁵ To compensate for these falling funds from the Arts Council throughout the 1980s, its clients were forced to further commercialise their work, both in terms of expanding the cafes, restaurants, shops and merchandise on offer in their venues, and in seeking out commercial sponsorship and marketing for their productions.²⁵⁶ The Arts Council came under further attack in the 'Priestly Report', commissioned by Thatcher in 1984, which described it as an 'inefficient bureaucracy, prone to publicity attracting rows.'²⁵⁷ Under pressure from increasing government interference, in March 1984 the Arts Council moved to defend itself with a new strategy document for the decade, 'The Glory of The Garden', proposing more restructuring.²⁵⁸ It detailed its intention to further devolve responsibility for its regional 'community arts', experimental arts and performance based clients to the RAAs, as they represented a large administrative burden to the Council, and were seen as an area in which savings could be made.²⁵⁹ The cuts fell heavily upon more minor organisations, '[...] provision for training, arts centres, and community arts would be reduced and the capital fund for housing the arts run down [...] No new clients would be taken on in London [...] The Literature Department would effectively be wound up.'²⁶⁰

In London, some of these smaller organisations in receipt of Arts Council funding would have also been those anticipating a loss of direct funding, or a loss of the arts centres or facilities they used, hitherto supported by the GLC, which had been threatened with abolition since 1983. While government cuts to Arts Council budgets threatened the largest arts funding body that smaller cultural organisations could apply to, as Margaret Dickinson notes in her account of oppositional filmmaking in Britain, *Rogue Reels*, budget cuts to public services across the board, in schools and adult education, libraries, hospitals and museums, meant that any 'recreational' or 'community art' commissioned projects were vulnerable to losing their sponsorship, community spaces, and their networks of distribution.²⁶¹

²⁵⁵ *ibid.*, p.368

²⁵⁶ *ibid.* p. 369. See also Chin-Tao Wu, *Privatising Culture: Corporate Art Intervention Since the 1980s* (London: Verso, 2003).

²⁵⁷ The Priestly Report's central purpose was to assess the financial situation of the Royal Shakespeare Company and Royal Opera House whose large debts were due to be written off by an additional grant from the Arts Council. Cited in Malcolm Davies, *Politics of Pressure: The Art of Lobbying* (London: British Broadcasting Corporation, 1985), p.139. The Arts Council was deemed to be courting controversy due to a number of 'scandals' which had dominated the press in the late 1970s, bringing the public subsidy of art into disrepute. These included the press outrage in response to Tate Gallery's use of public funds to purchase Carl Andre's minimalist brick sculpture, *Equivalent VIII*, or the Institute of Contemporary Art (ICA)'s controversial *Prostitution* exhibition by COUM Transmissions in 1976. For a detailed analysis of the press reactions against these uses of public funds, and the challenge they posed to the Arts Council's status, which may have 'inadvertently aided the cause of monetarist "modernisers"'. See Neil Charles Mulholland, 1998, pp.13-36.

²⁵⁸ Aspects of this report were apparently leaked early to mobilise many arts organisations against further impending cuts. The real sub-text of the devolution and restructuring proposed therein, as deputy arts editor at *The Times* Bryan Appleyard perceived, 'concerned making the Arts Council respectable in the government's eyes'. See Malcolm Davies, 1985, p.141. Franco Bianchini, 1995 p.162. In addition to this, the Arts Council introduced what it called 'challenge funding', beginning to make its grants conditional on local authorities providing its clients with matching sums. Robert Hewison, 1995, pp. 254-255.

²⁵⁹ Twenty-five companies were to lose their grants entirely, and a further forty-four clients and six million pounds would be devolved to the RAAs, in an effort to appear to address the bias towards London institutions. Six million pounds was proposed for transfer to the regions. This figure was reported to have been found from a cut in London's funding, however, as Hewison interprets it, £5 million in fact came from cutting regional companies, so despite appearances, the restructuring did not achieve any significant redistribution of resources to the regions, '[...] in 1989 the Arts Council [...] was still spending forty-eight percent of the money for England in London.' Robert Hewison, 1995, p.255; see also Antony Beck, 1989, p.371; Franco Bianchini, 1995, p. 161.

²⁶⁰ Robert Hewison, 1995, pp. 254-255.

²⁶¹ As Margaret Dickinson notes, 'Cuts in cultural funding represented a direct threat to one source of income, but cuts to schools, colleges and adult education were at least as serious, because they affected those institutions which had provided a growing market for independent film, and the use of film in education not only provided a source of income [for

Following Labour's 1983 election defeat, Norman Buchan was appointed Shadow Arts Minister. Buchan was a critic of the government's handling of the Arts Council, and its approach to culture generally,

I suppose we could define the present crisis facing the arts in Britain today in a number of ways: the appalling shortfall in necessary public funding, for example, or the push towards [business] sponsorship with all the distortions that will bring about; or the failure to expand our definitions so that broadcasting, film, popular music, community arts are left out of what passes for an art ministry in Britain [the Arts Council], the failure to understand the consequences of new technologies; the patronage concept within our structures of administration, the narrow domination of ideas from within establishment London; the fear of using the word 'culture'; the creation of a permanent conceived dichotomy between 'high' and 'low' culture; between the respectable and the 'vulgar'; the false division between what is professional and what is not, between that which is 'good for them' – and that which we want to create for ourselves.²⁶²

On June 14th 1984, Buchan was able to outline Labour arts policy and criticise the monetarists' attack on the arts council in a full-day House of Commons debate on the arts, the first held in twenty-five years.²⁶³ During this debate, both Buchan and Tony Banks criticised the Arts Council's recent withdrawal of grants to smaller politically engaged theatre companies such as Temba, an important London based Black theatre company which was also in receipt of GLC sponsorship, and in Tony Banks's words, produced 'socially involved plays- what Conservative members would call political plays.'²⁶⁴ Buchan also supported proposals for a single 'arts and communications' ministry in the discussion which went on to form Labour's 'Charter for the Arts' (1986).²⁶⁵

The Arts Council proposed to take over the arts funding remits of the Metropolitan County Councils and the GLC, which were all due to be abolished the following year. It sought an extra £32 million of replacement funding from government in order to do this. In September 1985, Richard Luce replaced Lord Gowrie as Thatcher's Minister for the Arts, an appointee even less sympathetic to public subsidy for culture.²⁶⁶ The Arts Council responded with a new document, written by Anthony Blackstock, Arts

independent filmmakers] but also a rationale for grant aid. When schools and colleges had their funding cut, budgets for extras like film hire were naturally among the first things to go, especially when an obligatory curriculum was being designed which narrowed the choice of subjects and materials that teachers could use. When adult education was cut, the lowest priority tended to be the so-called 'recreational' courses, including the kind of open-ended classes on current affairs, women's issues or media which frequently used independent film. The effect cannot be judged only by the loss of existing business. Many ideas current at the beginning of the 80s about how to expand the use of independent film revolved round educational networks and resources. For example, the advent of tape created a potential for distribution through public libraries and for using all kinds of public spaces – in hospitals, doctors' waiting rooms, job centres as well as museums and libraries. But just as these developments were becoming practically possible, libraries everywhere were being closed and other institutions with public spaces facing a cut in funding came under pressure to adopt more commercial modes of operation.' Margaret Dickinson, *Rogue Reels: Oppositional Film Making in Britain, 1945-90* (London: British Film Institute, 1999), p.64.

²⁶² Norman Buchan, 'Introduction' in Geoff Mulgan and Ken Worpole, eds., *Saturday Night or Sunday Morning? From Arts to Industry - New Forms of Cultural Policy* (London: Comedia, 1986), p.5.

²⁶³ It was held on the same day as the European Election. *Commons Debate on Arts and Heritage*, HC Deb 14 June 1984 vol 61 cc1076-165.

²⁶⁴ Norman Buchan MP, Parliamentary Debates, Commons, 14.06.1984, col. 1099; Tony Banks MP, Parliamentary Debates, Commons, 14.06.1984, col. 1137. For Temba Theatre, see Colin Chambers, *Black and Asian Theatre in Britain: A History* (London: Routledge, 2011); Dimple Godiwala, *Alternatives within the Mainstream: British Black and Asian Theatres* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2006), pp.27-29.

²⁶⁵ A full account of Labour's *Charter for the Arts* (1986) is provided in Franco Bianchini, 1995, pp. 247-269.

²⁶⁶ Richard Luce made the following statement: 'There are too many in the arts world who have yet to be weaned from the welfare state mentality [...] They give the impression of thinking that all other sources of funds are either tainted or too difficult to get. They appear not to have grasped that the collectivist mentality of the sixties and seventies is out of date.' Richard Luce, 'Office of Arts and Libraries Press Release', 8 July 1987, as quoted in Robert Hewison, 1995, p.259.

Council finance director, 'A Great British Success Story: An Invitation to the Nation to Invest in the Arts'.²⁶⁷ This document broke from any paternalistic, civilising or spiritual justification for arts subsidy and orientated it towards the economic benefits and 'returns' of such an investment of public money, namely urban regeneration, tourism, increased tax revenue and employment at low cost to the Government. It was an attempt by Blackstock to '[...] talk to this government in the language it understands', that Tony Banks MP described as 'a crude economic analysis, but since we are dealing with a crude economic government, an arrow well aimed'.²⁶⁸ Despite these efforts, as Hewison has described, 'As the Arts Council bent to the government's bidding it found itself rewarded with less, rather than more, independence from the centralising tendencies of Thatcherism'.²⁶⁹ Richard Luce did not change his tune and the Arts Council's requested £32 million replacement funding was not forthcoming. It received only a £5 million increase to manage the transferral of the MCCs and GLC arts sponsorship in 1986-7, and the following year, it incurred another 1% cut to its grant in real terms.²⁷⁰ Many in the arts field lost confidence in the Arts Council during this period,

'The sense of anger, disillusionment and even betrayal now being expressed over the direction of the government's arts policy is virtually universal.'²⁷¹

Seeing Arts Council grants to their organisations shrink in real terms and become conditional upon achieving sponsorship from other sources, those working in state-supported cultural institutions were increasingly feeling the pressure from the government monetarists. Although the Arts Council in the main sponsored London's larger cultural organisations and performing arts venues, the cessation of direct funding to many smaller venues and simultaneous cuts to education and other social provision, are likely to have had broader limiting effects on distribution networks and facilities available to London's cultural producers and 'community artists'.

This section has given a brief overview of attitudes towards cultural policy in the Labour Party, Conservative Party and at the Arts Council, from the publication of Jennie Lee's 1965 White Paper into the early years of the Thatcher administration. It has detailed how Labour shadow arts ministers in the early to mid 1980s were unable to raise the status of national arts policy in the broader labour movement, which was facing significant challenges of its own from the Thatcher government. The Labour Party did not provide any significant challenge to increasing government pressure on the Arts Council to fall in line with Thatcher's monetarists and cut its budgets. While this was happening at the national level, it would certainly have had local effects on smaller arts organizations in London. From 1981 however, a radical reappraisal of London's cultural sponsorship was being undertaken by the GLC, in stark contrast to the Thatcher government's policy to reduce the public subsidy of culture.

²⁶⁷ ACGB, 'A Great British Success Story: An Invitation to the Nation to Invest in the Arts' (London: Arts Council, 1985).

²⁶⁸ Anthony Blackstock, quoted in *Sunday Times*, 15 September 1985; Tony Banks, quoted in *The Listener*, BBC, 26.9.1985; Franco Bianchini, p.164.

²⁶⁹ Robert Hewison, 1995, p.260.

²⁷⁰ Franco Bianchini, 1995, p.164.

²⁷¹ David Hewson, arts correspondent, *Times*, 14 February 1985.

3.4 ‘Labour has been in decline. But renewal is underway, and the GLC is very much a part of it.’

When Ken Livingstone joined the Labour Party in 1969, the Party was experiencing a significant decline in membership following dissatisfaction with the rightward trajectory of Wilson’s tenure which continued throughout the 1970s and into Callaghan’s leadership.²⁷² Livingstone considered himself atypical in this respect, as many of his young peers who were disillusioned with the Labour Party and local government in the late 60s were instead joining Trotskyist groups or lobbying councils with single-issue protest groups such as Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND), Anti-Apartheid, Feminism and Gay Liberation Movements, or committing themselves to work in trade unions and ‘community action’ groups.²⁷³ As John Gyford confirms, ‘Dissatisfaction with the Labour Party was a common theme among radical community activists of the late 1960s’, with Paris in 1968 inspiring a ‘radical optimism’, alongside a distrust of traditional political organisations of the Left.²⁷⁴ Radical community activists perceived these changes in Labour membership as ‘an opportunity to find a receptive constituency for militant action around local issues’.²⁷⁵ Despite this ‘desertion’ of the Labour Party by the Left during the late 60s and early 70s, the left-wing of the Labour Party began to grow in influence again towards the end of the 1970s, in part due to various new developments in politics and social factors. In inner city areas of London in particular, these factors included the return to the Labour movement of activists who had been part of the ‘community action movement’ and the influence of new theoretical positions on the state, the local and national economy, feminism, environmentalism and demographic changes, combining to form new proposals for a decentralised, local mode of socialism.²⁷⁶

²⁷² Title quotation, see Ken Livingstone, ‘Left Alive: Labour and the People debate’ *Marxism Today* (December 1984), p.19. The decline in Labour membership was attributed to dissatisfaction with Wilson’s policies in support of the US bombing of Vietnam, cuts to public services and immigration and trade union legislation.

²⁷³ Amongst those mentioned in Livingstone’s 1987 autobiography are the Socialist Labour League (later the Workers Revolutionary Party), International Socialists (later the Socialist Workers Party), and the International Marxists Group. See Ken Livingstone, 1987, p.11; John Carvel, 1984 [1987], p.40.

²⁷⁴ Marjorie Mayo, ‘Radical Politics and Community Action’ in Martin Loney and Mark Allen eds., *The Crisis of the Inner City* (London: Macmillan, 1979). See also John Gyford, *The Politics of Local Socialism* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1985), p.34; Jan O’Malley, *The politics of community action: a decade of struggle in Notting Hill* (Nottingham: Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation for Spokesman Books, 1977).

²⁷⁵ In 1969, the Labour government initiated ‘Community Development Projects’ (CDPs) to address urban poverty, which were radicalised by local activists, contributing to a growth in new political alliances, some seeking to reform the Labour party. See John Gyford, 1985, p.34-5; Martin Loney, *Community against Government: The British Community Development Project, 1968-1970- A Study of Government Incompetence* (London: Heinemann 1983), p.24.; see also Robert Kraushaar, ‘Pragmatic Radicalism’, *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* (1979), Vol.3, pp.61-80; Robert Kraushaar, ‘Policy without Protest: the dilemma of organising for change in Britain’ in Michael Harloe ed., *New Perspectives in Urban Change and Conflict* (London: Heinemann, 1981), p101-121; Joan Higgins et al., *Government and Urban Poverty* (London: Blackwell, 1983).

²⁷⁶ The ‘community action’ movement was described by Baines as ‘[...] about people in deprived areas looking at their own problems and seeking their own solutions.’, a bid, in Blunkett’s words, to ‘[...] mobilise the community in defence of itself.’ Using bargaining and persuading tactics to secure outcomes on issues from local government, ‘the distinguishing feature of community action [was] its refusal to stick to such tactics if they [did] not produce results.’ As Gyford describes, ‘community action’ ‘implied a highly politicised mode of operation, challenging established patterns of influence and resources, yet this politicisation lay outside the boundaries of the conventional left-wing politics of the day’. John Gyford, 1985, pp. 33-34. This period of ‘community action’ activity in areas of urban deprivation corresponds to the period of growth in ‘community arts’, a related movement that could at times be equally political in its aims, as Nigg and Wade describe, ‘Anyone with the vaguest knowledge of community theatre groups, poster printshops, or video groups, realises that often their activities and the individuals involved are intensely political. That is not to say that they are necessarily party political in the narrow sense that groups affiliate to the Labour Party or the Socialist Workers Party, but that their motivation stems from a desire to change society [...] Campaigning for tenants on council estates using video or drama is political. Printing and designing posters for the Grunwick strikers is political.’ Heinz Nigg and Graham Wade, 1980, p.31.

During the period of industrial conflict and high unemployment in the 1970s, local Labour parties suffered another decline in membership as Britain's manufacturing base began its decline and its dispersal of skilled work to 'new towns' outside of London.²⁷⁷ Between 1964 and 1974, forty percent of manufacturing jobs were lost in Greater London, and between 1973 and 1983, London's manufacturing jobs halved again.²⁷⁸ Ken Livingstone described inner London during the late 1970s as dominated by the unskilled, unemployed poor, with women playing an increasingly important role in the workforce, particularly in the service industries.²⁷⁹ However, an increase in public sector and service industry jobs, as well as available housing, was also attracting a new, post-1968 generation of left-leaning middle class to London's poorer inner city boroughs such as Camden, Haringey, Islington, Lewisham, Lambeth, Newham and Tower Hamlets.²⁸⁰ This demographic change in London became apparent in the makeup of the London Labour Party membership by the late 1970s, and is often described as the arrival of the new 'urban left'. The idea of the 'urban left' in London can be found across much of the literature on the politics of 'local socialism', referring to this new influx of members in local borough branches of the London Labour Party since the mid 1960s, many of whom sought reform of local government, and were able to rise to prominence in certain boroughs.²⁸¹ Some new members of the Labour Party were informed by the rise of the women's movement and London's post-1968 feminist publishers. Labour women's sections became significant caucuses campaigning to bring women's needs into view, and on the issue of unequal representation of women on councils.²⁸² Representatives of the gay liberation movement also began to call on local councils to combat prejudices and discrimination in employment in public campaigns. The urban Left's open support of gay liberation was distasteful to both the traditional right, and the more moderate conservatives who had only accepted the decriminalisation of gay sex in 1967.²⁸³

²⁷⁷ See Paul Whiteley, 'The Decline in Labour's Local Party Membership and Electoral Base, 1945-79' in Dennis Kavanagh ed. *The Politics of the Labour Party* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1982), pp.111-34; Barry Hindess, *The Decline Of Working Class Politics* (London: MacGibbon & Kee, 1971)

²⁷⁸ Roy Porter, *London: A Social History* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1994), pp. 346-7.

²⁷⁹ Ken Livingstone, 1988, p.114.

²⁸⁰ Ibid.; See also James Curran, 2005.

²⁸¹ Their emergence in the London Labour party was uneven, in some constituencies they were welcomed, in others, their presence resulted in conflict, or made little impact at all. Curran suggests that while Lambeth, Camden and Lewisham were amenable to the new influences, conflict ensued in Islington, Tower Hamlets, Newham and Southwark, and in traditional, less gentrified Labour stronghold boroughs like Barking, the urban left had little influence at all. Curran et al., 2005, p.8. For academic literature analysing the phenomenon of 'local socialism' and the urban left in local government, see: Martin Boddy and Colin Fudge, 1984; Hugh Butcher, *Local Government and Thatcherism* (London: Routledge 1990); Allan Cochrane, *Whatever Happened to Local Government?* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1993), Simon Duncan and Mark Goodwin, *The Local State And Uneven Development: Behind The Local Government Crisis* (Cambridge: Polity, 1988); John Gyford, *The Politics Of Local Socialism* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1985); John Gyford, Steve Leach and Chris Game, *The Changing Politics Of Local Government* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1989); Stewart Lansley, Sue Goss and Christian Wolmar, *Councils In Conflict: The Rise And Fall Of The Municipal Left* (Hounds Mills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Macmillan, 1989); Gerry Stoker, *The Politics Of Local Government* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Education, 1988). Other notable accounts, in addition to the academic literature listed above, include those from local government insiders, including David Blunkett and Keith Jackson, *Democracy in Crisis: The Town Halls Respond* (London: Hogarth, 1987); Maureen Mackintosh and Hilary Wainwright, *A Taste Of Power: The Politics Of Local Economics* (London: Verso, 1987).

²⁸² By 1986, only 22 percent of London councillors were women. The GLC's Women's Committee, set up by Valerie Wise in 1982, was an example of this in action, initiated despite the fact that women's policies did not form part of the 1981 GLC manifesto. These attempts to reform local government and social policy in support of women occurred against a backdrop of the New Right in government, with its first female prime minister arguing regressively for the restoration of 'Victorian' family values, 'with its fulcrum in the traditional roles for women' See Sue Goss, 'Making space- bringing feminism into the town hall' in Sue Goss, et al., 1989, pp.143-144; Stuart Hall, 1988, p.90.

²⁸³ The *Sexual Offences Act 1967* had decriminalised gay sex between men over 21, but prejudicial treatment persisted and homophobic rants by conservative journalists were common, attacking both lesbians and gay men themselves, and local government's 'urban Left' for funding for lesbian and gay men's organisations. For example, the GLC funded London's

In another social transformation, London was becoming, in Livingstone's words, a 'cosmopolitan city', however, inequality was endemic. Immigration from the West Indies, India and Pakistan in the late 1950s and early 1960s had begun to significantly alter the ethnic mix of inner London boroughs, as Roy Porter noted, 'By 1981, one in five people living in inner London, and one in ten in outer London, were of Asian and Afro-Caribbean descent.'²⁸⁴ Discrimination persisted in local politics as in daily life, from local council employment policies to the racism experienced by people of African, Caribbean and Asian descent seeking public services. Only the most progressive local councils began to introduce or enforce equality measures in the late 1970s, and frequently these small gains were only achieved through the struggles of individual black councillors.²⁸⁵ These individuals, who would have previously been pushed to the margins of politics were gradually entering mainstream politics by the late 1970s, and found support amongst some of the new urban left.

New entrants to the Labour party who had experienced local 'community action' campaigns in the 1970s, found that 'going it alone' had proven a weak strategy for effecting broad social change. Instead, their energies were to be redirected towards the Labour Party itself and local government during the 1980s.²⁸⁶ Internal struggles between the activists on the left and leaders on the right of the Labour Party during the 1970s further encouraged left-wing activists to return to the Party, this time campaigning from within the Party for constitutional reform. Tony Benn provided the parliamentary focus for this alliance of the left, and it was a similar personnel involved in London local politics who supported Ken Livingstone in his bid for GLC leadership.²⁸⁷ These individuals, informed by their experiences of community activism, were able to move into powerful roles in Labour council politics during the late 1970s and early 1980s,²⁸⁸ as Landry, Morley, Southwood and Wright's critical account of the failures of radical projects in the 1970s, *What a Way to Run a Railroad*, attests:

[...] it is still worth noting that many of those involved in the failed libertarian projects of the 1970s have now moved into positions of power (not least in local government, community work, and the Labour Party). Many of the key figures in squatting networks, women's groups and community projects of the 1970s are now employed as planning officers, or as executives of powerful public bodies with large budgets. In this journey to the foothills of power, they have carried into these institutions many of the ideological perspectives and premises established in their politically formative years: a particular set of libertarian attitudes to power, organisation, democracy, economics and culture.²⁸⁹

first Lesbian and Gay community centre in Farringdon, and the GLC Gay Working Party published an important document setting out its demands for equality in workplaces, see GLC *Changing the World: A London Charter for Lesbian and Gay Rights* (London: GLC, 1984), as well as supporting lesbian and gay men's cultural organisations.

²⁸⁴ Roy Porter, 1994, p.354. Ken Livingstone describes London in the early 1980s as 'a cosmopolitan city, with a million black citizens, a place with over 160 mother-tongue languages', as well as a significant gay and lesbian community enjoying 'a home of relative safety compared with less tolerant cities.' Ken Livingstone, 1987, p.114.

²⁸⁵ Herman Ouseley, 'Local Authority Race Initiatives', in Martin Boddy and Colin Fudge, 1984, pp.133, 136.

²⁸⁶ [...] from focusing on tenants and community groups to the range of organisations in the broader labour movement [...] Building strength and unity in the labour movement has to be the basis of the fight back' *Community Action*, (September-October 1980), cited in John Gyford, 1985, p.34.

²⁸⁷ For details of this, see David Kogan and Maurice Kogan, *The Battle for the Labour Party* (London: Kogan Page, 1982) p. 157; David Webster, *The Labour Party and the New Left* (London: Fabian Society, 1981); Franco Bianchini, 1995, p.183.

²⁸⁸ For example, George Nicholson and Michael Ward, both working on the Labour GLC's arts and grants committees.

²⁸⁹ Charles Landry, Dave Morley, Russell Southwood and Patrick Wright, *What a Way to Run a Railroad: An Analysis of Radical Failure* (London: Comedia, 1985), p.3.

Martin Loney made a similar observation,

The millennial visions which carried student radicals into poor neighbourhoods in the late 1960s and early 1970s had begun to be replaced by the end of the decade with a more low key but realistic strategy for action within working class areas [...] accompanied by an increasingly sophisticated theory of the state.²⁹⁰

John Gyford identifies this as the new theoretical position derived from the Miliband-Poulantzas debate, which complicated customary beliefs about the role of the State originally derived from the *Communist Manifesto*.²⁹¹ Gyford explains,

[The recognition of] ‘the relative autonomy of the state and the contradictions that exist within and between different layers of government and indeed within the ruling class itself’ was important because it suggested a ‘space’ within which radicals could manoeuvre, not least in challenging the ideological as well as the economic subordination of the working class.²⁹²

This was a new theoretical basis upon which Local government could be perceived as contestable ground for activists of the Labour left seeking more powerful channels to achieve social change and Labour party reform. This began to open up local government as a legitimate channel, particularly for middle class activists.²⁹³

On May 4th 1979, Margaret Thatcher secured victory for the Conservatives and became Prime Minister. Only the year before, Eric Hobsbawm had predicted how longer-term changes in the British economy and society were set to disrupt the unity of the Labour party in the decades to come, and signalled its decline.²⁹⁴ Stuart Hall argued that the seemingly unstoppable populist appeal of the radical New Right to the electorate, growing since the 1960s and set against failings in previous Labour leaderships, were shifting the agenda decisively to the right.²⁹⁵ The sense of Labour’s crisis that resulted from these changes became entrenched with the public display of Labour’s internal conflicts in the Social Democratic Party (SDP) split of 1981 and Labour’s subsequent devastating general election defeat in 1983. The radical socialist project of popular renewal instigated by the new urban Left in the early 1980s was a source of hope for some commentators on the Left, beginning the Labour party’s search for how it would define itself in opposition. A number of commentators reflected on what might be done to address this crisis in the Labour party. Writers for *Marxism Today*, the by then euro-communist influenced monthly journal, argued that the left must recognise the popular appeal of the New Right, and, breaking from its traditional ‘Labourist’ approach, Labour must respond to the new climate of Thatcherism.²⁹⁶ Some, including Hall,

²⁹⁰ Martin Loney, 1983, p.161.

²⁹¹ ‘The executive of the modern state is but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie.’ Friedrich Engels and Karl Marx, *The Communist Manifesto* (London: Verso Books, 2012 [1848, Transl. 1888]), p.37.

²⁹² John Gyford, 1985, p.37; See also Marjorie Mayo, ‘Radical Politics and Community Action’ in Martin Loney and Mark Allen, 1979, pp.136-7.

²⁹³ John Gyford, 1985, p.36-7. See also, Cynthia Cockburn, *The Local State: Management Of Cities And People*, (London: Pluto Press, 1977).

²⁹⁴ Eric Hobsbawm, ‘The Forward March of Labour Halted?’ (1978) Lecture reprinted in Martin Jacques and Francis Mulhern eds., *The Forward March of Labour Halted?* (London: Verso, 1981).

²⁹⁵ Stuart Hall, ‘The Great Moving Right Show’ *Marxism Today*, January 1979, pp.14–20. ‘No one seriously concerned with political strategies in the current situation can now afford to ignore the swing to the Right.’ *Ibid.*, p.14.

²⁹⁶ James Curran, 2005, pp.4-5. As Curran notes, later discussions of this theme in *Marxism Today* leaned towards adaption to and learning from Thatcherism, particularly from Charles Leadbeater. See Charles Leadbeater, ‘Thatcherism and

called for a Labour leadership to counter the ‘hegemony’ of Thatcherism and embrace cultural change and new social movements centred around identity politics.²⁹⁷ *Marxism Today* writers largely took the position that Livingstone’s GLC represented this renewal of the left in action.²⁹⁸ As Curran describes, Labour party insiders writing for Labour’s *New Socialist* sought to develop new policy directions to counter Labour’s failures. The policy innovations explored by writers for *New Socialist* included feminist, green and syndicalist perspectives and generally viewed the rise of ‘the new urban left’ as a positive development:

While Thatcherism enforced spending cuts and spurious market choice, and old Labour offered managerial paternalism, the urban left was pioneering, it was proclaimed, a new approach- giving power away to the people. Radical councils were funding community groups to formulate their own plans for community development and incorporating their representatives into the structure of local state decision-making. This approach also had the merit of enabling radical authorities to reach out beyond the male, white worker- the bastion of old Labour- to connect to new social constituencies, including progressive sections of the middle class. More generally, it offered a strategy of modernising the labour party, helping it relate to multiple social identities- including those of gender, race and sexuality- of a changing and more diverse society.²⁹⁹

This unfolding ‘new kind of local politics’ developing unevenly across different local councils in the capital was derived from a blend of these new social and economic influences. London’s Labour was only beginning to respond to these new developments in its own social constitution and the broader economic changes in early 1980s London. London’s local government was to become a test case for new policies in support of overlooked minorities, under the full scrutiny of the national press.³⁰⁰ The new urban Left’s actions came into direct conflict with both traditional conservatives and the New Right. James Curran has suggested that these conflicts, which were played out publically in the national media, were also a result of a generational difference revealing divergent ideas between collectivism and neo-liberalism, and the different constituencies and classes the opponents represented.³⁰¹ In many cases the urban Left represented a challenge to traditional authority, influenced as they were by new social movements, identity politics and ‘community action’ movement strategies. Thatcher’s cabinet was largely composed of white men in their fifties and sixties, whose formative years had seen the tail end of the British Empire, national service, the dominance of patriarchal and hierarchical values, and were those for whom the criminalisation of gay sex was in living memory. The Right conveyed its opposition to the perceived permissiveness, lack of discipline, and moral debasement of 1960s youth culture in its rejection of authority, blaming it for the perceived social ills of the 1980s, such as crime and rioting, the decline of family and community traditions, and traditionalists’ fear of increasing migration following the dismantling of the British Empire.³⁰² These

Progress’ in Stuart Hall and Martin Jacques eds. *New Times: The Changing Face of Politics in the 1990s* (London: Lawrence and Wishart with Marxism Today, 1989); Charles Leadbeater, ‘Back to the Future’ *Marxism Today*, (May 1989), p.16; Charles Leadbeater, ‘After ERM, Pragmatism Rules OK’, *Marxism Today* (November 1990), pp.18-19.

²⁹⁷ Particularly *Marxism Today* essays reproduced in Stuart Hall, *The Hard Road to Renewal* (London: Verso 1988).

²⁹⁸ They later lamented its demise in 1986. See Martin Jacques and Beatrix Campbell, ‘Goodbye To The GLC’, *Marxism Today* (April 1986), pp. 9-10.

²⁹⁹ James Curran, 2005, p. 4-5.

³⁰⁰ Ibid., p. 10.

³⁰¹ Curran qualifies this statement, as a perhaps over-simplistic characterization- both the radical right ‘included anti-statist libertarians [...] while the urban left included authoritarian traditionalists’ Ibid. p27.

³⁰² Margaret Thatcher in *Guardian*, 28 March 1982, responding to the national debate on the causes of the ‘riots’: ‘We are reaping what was sown in the 1960s, when the old virtues of discipline and self restraint were denigrated’. In this climate

arguments against 1960s ‘permissiveness’ and persistent fears about immigration gained the support of similarly oriented right-wing journalists. Central government’s authoritarian and backwards-looking rhetoric and policy on race, gender and sexuality was supported by right-wing journalism in the national press, clashing with the urban Left’s aims to reform local government and transform society and social attitudes. While local governments of the ‘new right’ sought to improve their work by cuts to spending, privatisation and introducing competition to public service provision in a bid to increase efficiency and choice, Labour local governments were also seeking to reform local government for the better, in their project to reconstruct London’s identity as a multicultural, global city of equal opportunity.³⁰³ Their ideological positions were very different and these conflicts formed the background to how the GLC’s policies were formed and how they were interpreted by the electorate and the press. Livingstone cites London’s demographic transformations since the 1950s as key to the GLC’s Labour left victory in 1981, as a combination of new social factors and perspectives were beginning to have an impact on the London Labour Party.³⁰⁴ Livingstone and his allies became focused on a strategic need to construct new alliances from disparate left groups and splintered London trade unions, forming a left coalition ‘[...]prepared to work with any left grouping inside or outside [the Labour Party] on a series of policy issues’.³⁰⁵ Reinforced by radical theoretical perspectives, and gathering support from disparate groups on the left, Ken Livingstone and members of the municipal left also promoted themselves as the Labour Party’s new way forward in its resistance to Thatcherism.³⁰⁶

of ‘moral panic’, as described by Stuart Hall, social ills such as rioting and crime, a perceived decline of traditional ‘community’ in inner city areas- were personified in such ‘folk devils’ as black youth, punks, single parents, Irish terrorists, ‘race’ rioters. See Stuart Hall, *Policing the Crisis* (1978); Stanley Cohen, *Folk Devils and Moral Panics: The Creation of the Mods and Rockers* (London: MacGibbon and Kee, 1972); James Curran, 2005, p. 23. Migration was a key source of alarm for more traditional voters, set against the view of Britain’s general decline in the world- a nostalgia for lost British power and identity, following the dismantling of the ‘Empire’ between 1947 and 1964. Thatcher infamously empathised with traditionalists fear that ‘...this country might be swamped by people with a different culture...’ Margaret Thatcher, TV Interview for *Granada World in Action*, 27 January 1978. <<http://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/103485>> [accessed 25.0.2017].

³⁰³ For further discussion of the GLC and the press, see James Curran, 2005, p.22-24.

³⁰⁴ [...] while nationally Callahan Labour leadership was being rejected in a shift to the left. Livingstone credits Tony Benn for the introduction and publicising of new ideas to the Labour movement at this time, including arguments for civil service transparency and for increasing the involvement of women and Black voters in politics, reaching beyond Labour’s historic focus on white male trades unionists.’ Ken Livingstone, 1987, p. 92, 114. However, it is likely that more credit is due to campaigners at the local level, from within these new movements in the instigation of these new ideas.

³⁰⁵ ‘The industrial trades unions are small, and absolutely splintered.’ Ken Livingstone quoted in Martin Boddy and Colin Fudge, 1984, p.264; Ken Livingstone, quoted in John Carvel, *Citizen Ken* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1984), p.69.

³⁰⁶ Further discussion of the Livingstone GLC’s route to power, See Ken Livingstone, *If Voting Changed Anything, They’d Abolish It* (London: Collins, 1987); John Carvel, 1984, Chapters 2-4.

3.5 ‘There was a baby and cans of Coke’: County Hall’s new Left shake-up



Figure 9: Ken Livingstone, Valerie Wise, Charlie Rossi, John McDonnell and Michael Ward at County Hall, January 11, 1982. Photograph by Mike Stephens, Central Press, Getty Images.³⁰⁷

At the first meeting of the Labour group, there was a baby and cans of Coke. Senior officers found it a great upheaval.³⁰⁸

For many local government officers who had grown accustomed to a largely non-ideological form of local politics, the coming to power of the new urban left provided a severe sense of culture shock. Councillors in jump suits and jeans; clenched fist salutes in the council chamber; the singing (and flying) of the Red Flag; employees wearing CND badges; office walls decorated with political posters and cartoons; disdain for many established practices and procedures; a frame of reference which gave party and ideology pre-eminence over professional considerations; the arrival of what Ken Livingstone described as ‘people with a basic radical contempt for existing bureaucratic structures... who were willing to kick a lot of backsides’.³⁰⁹

Ken Livingstone secured the leadership of the GLC by replacing Andrew McIntosh shortly after the election of the Labour GLC assembly on May 9th 1981, heralding a new, young ‘urban left’ takeover that came as something of a ‘culture shock’ to senior council officers. Those who had moved into local government via experiences of ‘community action’ had customarily viewed this bureaucratic ‘old guard’ of local officials as ‘the enemy’, and suddenly found themselves in a position to make a departure from local government convention. In January 1982, eight months into their term in office, the GLC’s Labour group erected a huge sign on the roof of County Hall facing the Palace of Westminster across the Thames, which read, ‘LONDON’S UNEMPLOYED DEC-81 326,238.’ [Figure 9] This was one of many symbolic transgressions. The urban left had gained significant ground, now occupying a prominent space on London’s political stage. They were perfectly placed to antagonise the Prime Minister and challenge

³⁰⁷ Image source: BBC News, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/in_depth/7973805.stm> [accessed: 01.09.2015].

³⁰⁸ Maurice Stonefrost, GLC Director General, in *Sunday Times*, 16 September 1984.

³⁰⁹ Ken Livingstone, quoted in *Standard*, 23 March 1984, in John Gyford, 1985, p.43.

the authority of the New Right in central government. Amongst the many proposals in the GLC Labour group's new 50,000-word manifesto, 'A Socialist Policy for the GLC: Discussion Papers on Labour's G.L.C. Election Policy', written on the basis of 'unprecedented levels of consultation', cultural policy played only a very limited role, with policies for industry, transport and housing the central focus.³¹⁰ The only hint at the cultural policy reform experiment on the horizon was its mention of the need to grant 'community based projects a more equitable share of resources' and to involve 'all sections of the community' in arts and cultural activities.³¹¹ As Livingstone admitted,

The [London] Labour Party went into the 1981 [GLC] election committed to having all of arts and culture and sports without having the slightest idea what that meant, but because the Tories had cut back the spending we knew that had to be a bad thing, therefore we should have more of it.³¹²

While 'Red Ken' Livingstone and his grants to radical minority groups garnered much attention and press derision, other figures, frequently overlooked in discussions of the GLC including Tony Banks, Alan Tomkins and the newly appointed arts committee advisors were more instrumental in influencing cultural policy directions.³¹³ These figures were enabled in their work by Livingstone's belief in delegating real decision-making power to trusted committees which he argued was a new feature in Labour party politics.³¹⁴ This leadership style paved the way for the GLC's radical cultural experiment policy between 1981-1986, but the increase in budgets for arts grants also occurred due to changing circumstances. As the Labour GLC's term progressed it became clear that action on significant areas of the GLC's 1981 manifesto proposals was being blocked by central government and Conservative boroughs, such as aims to build more housing, to modernise London's transport system and control fares.³¹⁵ This freed up funds for other purposes. While Michael Ward's Greater London Enterprise Board at the GLC had begun its plans to revitalise areas of London's economy and make it more equitable, several new focus areas also emerged from the initial manifesto commitment to set up an Ethnic Minorities Committee, including the proposal from Valerie Wise to set up a Women's Committee, and increasing spending and broadening the GLC's focus on culture for London by the Arts and Recreation Committee.³¹⁶

³¹⁰ GLC, *A Socialist Policy for the GLC: Discussion Papers on Labour's G.L.C. Election Policy*, (London: GLC, 1981). <<https://www.scribd.com/doc/152207038/A-Socialist-Policy-for-the-GLC-Labour-s-London-Manifesto-1981>> [accessed 01.11.2015]. The manifesto was formed as the result of unprecedented levels of consultation, according to Ken Livingstone this helped to secure unity in the Labour group following the election. See: John Carvel, 1984, p84.

³¹¹ See GLC, *A Socialist Policy for the GLC* (1981); Franco Bianchini, 1995, p.107.

³¹² Interview with Ken Livingstone, 1986, in Franco Bianchini, 1995, p.188.

³¹³ Ken Livingstone was not particularly involved in GLC cultural policy, and economic policy was more his interest.

³¹⁴ See Ken Livingstone, 1987.

³¹⁵ The 'Fares Fair' campaign for cheap transport fares was blocked by a legal challenge mounted by councillors in Bromley. 'What we'd really wanted to do was to build housing and modernise the transport system, and those we were blocked on.' Livingstone, interviewed in Andy Beckett, 2015, p.347.

³¹⁶ Nicholas Garnham, commenting on the removal of GLC responsibility for housing and transport, stated '...that was one of the reasons why cultural policy was important. It became grotesquely exaggerated as a policy objective.' Nicholas Garnham, interview with Franco Bianchini, 1985, in Franco Bianchini, 1995, p.238.

3.6 GLC Cultural Policy in Context

This thesis addresses the development of the GLC's arts sponsorship and cultural policy directions, undertaken by the GLC's Arts and Recreation Committee and its Community and Ethnic Arts Sub-Committees. It will also acknowledge the influence of policy ideas emerging from the better-documented Cultural Industries department of the GLC's Industry and Employment Branch. As previously stated, this thesis does not offer an all-encompassing narrative evaluation of the GLC's time in office, though provides case studies of particular departments and actions. Nor does it provide an account of all GLC community and voluntary organisation support initiatives, many of which, though significant, fall outside the remit of cultural policy.³¹⁷ The GLC's 1983 publication, *GLC Grant Aid to Voluntary and Community Organisations* was produced to publicise grants available and provide guidance to the voluntary sector on good practice.³¹⁸ This document clarifies that the Arts and Recreation Committee was only one of eleven committees with grant-allocating powers at the GLC to which groups could apply. This puts the role of the arts grants in the broader context of GLC aims to support of the voluntary sector, education and training in London.³¹⁹ Applications sent to the GLC by community organisations were frequently considered by a number of different committees or departments simultaneously, and departments were sometimes in contact with each other to clarify particular areas of policy, where their interest in a particular application or issue coincided. The policy study work of the GLC's Cultural Industries department of the Industry and Employment Branch was also frequently of relevance to the Arts and Recreation Committee's work, though were not always synchronous with its strategies of implementation. The GLC's archive of 'presented papers', which laid out policy proposals and recommendations to the Committees, provide, if a not full account of the debates that ensued, at least something of the ideological positions and perspectives amongst council officers and appointed advisors at that time, which were to feed into their practical policy action in the short space of five years. It is these papers that the next section will draw upon in an attempt to build a picture of the development of policy directions.

³¹⁷ A list of GLC committees and a guide to their grant-remit is as follows:

Arts and Recreation Committee: (Community Arts Sub-Committee, Ethnic Arts Sub-Committee, Sports Sub-Committee): Recreation, major capital grants, support for arts and media groups.

Ethnic Minorities Committee: general 'anti-racist' programmes, youth activities.

Finance and General Purposes Committee: (Grants Sub-Committee): legal advice centres, tenant's organisations, community assistance to elderly or disabled people, holiday schemes.

Greater London Training Board: supports training projects, of typically excluded social groups.

Housing Committee: grants to voluntary groups assisting the 'single homeless' women's refuges, hostels.

Industry and Employment Committee: Community/Trade Union campaigns against redundancies, unemployment centres, employment projects for women, ethnic minorities and disabled people and local community enterprises, Greater London Enterprise Board, Cultural Industries initiatives.

Planning Committee: grants to voluntary organisations involved in campaigns on local planning and environment issues-particularly those identified 'working class community areas', London Docklands, local ecology.

Police Committee: borough-based police monitoring groups and projects involving women and ethnic minorities.

Public Services and Fire Brigade Committee: community campaigning on waste, recycling and pollution.

Transport Committee: dial-a-ride and community transport services.

Women's Committee: childcare projects, women's training and skills centres, legal advice, counselling, transport, health, media, arts and recreation, women's campaigns and research, conferences and festivals, any women's projects that counter sex discrimination and racism.

See: GLC, *GLC Grant Aid to Voluntary and Community Organisations* (London: GLC, 1983). [LMA:GLC/publications F/U0256].

³¹⁸ Ibid.

³¹⁹ The range of organisations also identifies a delicate balance being pursued between the support of what might be seen as 'white working class' cultural organisations, and organisations championing new identities and identity politics.

A complex picture of these overlapping departmental committees emerges, with each contributing, or interjecting, on particular areas of new policy, as per their expertise, or on behalf of the constituents they represented- an internal network of working relationships between different GLC departments and staff, which had practical consequences for interrelated networks of cultural producers beyond County Hall. Despite this complexity, some understanding of how policies developed must be identified in order to contextualise the following chapters in this thesis which detail how those policies were enacted, through targeted cultural sponsorship decisions, and what those decisions meant for cultural organisations and cultural producers in London. The focus of the remainder of this chapter will therefore be on the initial policies presented and developed at the Arts and Recreation Committee, and the development of the Sub-Committees for ‘community’ and ‘ethnic’ arts- with a view to examining particular case studies of small organisations in the later chapters. It will not provide a detailed discussion of the Arts and Recreations’ major revenue commitments to large-scale public events and GLC-run museums and concert halls except by way of contextual information.

3.7 GLC Cultural Policy prior to 1981

Arts policies were not a priority for local government in the early 1980s, with councils generally making only modest contributions to the upkeep of local cultural amenities, which were to be funded in the main by the Arts Council. As Tony Banks indicated, arts committees were not prestigious at the GLC prior to his appointment,

It had always been a common feature of Arts Committees- including here [at the GLC] – that they tended to be full of people no one else wanted [...] Arts Committees were a sort of dumping ground for politicians [...] That of course was the difference we made [...]³²⁰

Before 1981, the GLC’s cultural policies for London were managed by the ‘Recreation and Community Services Policy Committee’, whose order of reference included the management of several London museums, the upkeep of the Southbank concert halls and Thames amenities, London’s open spaces, recreational activities in parks, and tourism.³²¹ Providing sponsorship to a selection of Greater London’s ‘cultural bodies’ also formed a modest part of its remit.³²² The GLC’s main annual commitment had been to its four major clients, The National Theatre, English National Opera, London Festival Ballet and London Orchestral Concert Board, as well as the ‘South Bank Concert halls’, which received £2.04 million from the Labour GLC in 1975-76, out of a total expenditure of £2.85 million. Smaller community arts organisations were awarded a total of £0.33 million from the GLC in 1975-76.³²³ Similarities can be drawn between the language of its policy remit and that of the Arts Council’s early commitment to

³²⁰ Tony Banks, Interview with Franco Bianchini, 1985, in Bianchini, 1995, p.179.

³²¹ Including the Iveagh Bequest at Kenwood House, Marble Hill House, Ranger’s House and the Museum of London.

³²² ‘To maintain and enhance the cultural traditions of the capital [...] To extend, by means of grants to cultural bodies, the availability and accessibility of the arts across the Greater London region and to reach the largest number of Londoners at moderate prices and to help, in particular, those areas away from the centre where there are few cultural opportunities.’ As Bianchini noted, the language of this statement reflects a ‘tradition of Labour welfarism’ present in early cultural policy, echoing the 1946 Arts Council motto, ‘The Best for the Most’, which was to undergo a radical challenge when the Labour Group took control of County Hall in 1981. GLC, *Report of the GLC Recreation and Community Services Policy Committee*, 21 June 1977, as quoted in Franco Bianchini, 1987, p.116.

³²³ See John P. Redcliffe-Maude, 1976, p.106-7.

providing the ‘best for the most’, maintaining professional ‘standards’ and seeking to ‘democratise’ culture, by increasing public access to it. It also appeared to adhere to the Arts Council’s ‘arm’s length’ policy to exclude any chance of ‘political’ interference in the arts.³²⁴

The GLC’s ‘Recreation and Community Services Policy Committee’ lacked its own expert art advisory panel and instead relied on the GLAA for advice on which London ‘community arts’ organisations were suitable for sponsorship, for which GLAA were paid a modest annual fee.³²⁵ The GLC’s Arts grants budget in 1979 was of comparable size to the GLAA’s, and its funds largely appear to follow the lead of the Arts Council’s choice of sponsored London theatre and performing arts organisations, although at a much lower level, typically between five and twenty percent of the Arts Council’s contributions. While previous GLC administrations had a collaborative relationship with the GLAA, Tony Banks’ Art and Recreation Committee had new ambitions for arts sponsorship, which, as archival evidence suggests, were to put this relationship under some strain initially. GLAA had also found it experienced particular problems in its repeated attempts to increase contributions from London local authorities from the mid 1970s onwards, stemming from the fact that the GLAA had a similar remit and an identical geographical area of responsibility to the GLC’s Arts and Recreations Committee.³²⁶ As Redcliffe-Maud later noted,

The Greater London Arts Association has special difficulties. Its area of action is identical with that of the Greater London Council whereas all other associations cover an area wider than any single authority and this is a powerful reason for their existence. Moreover, the GLC itself offers a considerable amount of grant-aid to artistic organisations which have a regional significance for London as a whole. [...] The GLAA had therefore to find a special role that was distinguishable from that of any other body, and which could be seen to be better performed by GLAA than by the bodies to which it looked for financial support. [...] The Association has determined its policy as follows: no continuing revenue grants, but short-term support for particular projects; persuasion of local authorities to take further action themselves in arts promotion and support; services such as publicity for the arts; grants to individual artists; emphasis on the needs of the outer London Boroughs; community festivals; community theatre; film and video projects; and advice (particularly to the GLC, the Arts Council and London Boroughs, but also more generally to artists and the public). However, GLAA has not yet achieved sufficiently close understanding with the local authorities to encourage them to make substantially higher grants to it.³²⁷

Regional Arts Associations (RAAs) had reported difficulty in convincing local government of their merit and efficiency, and there was also a suspicion amongst local authorities that specialist panels of advisors on the RAAs were able to effectively choose where to allocate public money, despite the fact that they

³²⁴ As stated by Redcliffe-Maud, ‘Clearly local governors must take the decision to grant aid, but artistic questions should be decided outside the normal procedures of local government.’ Redcliffe-Maud, 1976, p. 119. Bianchini notes, however, the GLC did have a representative on each of the boards of the four major recipients of GLC funding during these years, The National Theatre, English National Opera, London Festival Ballet and London Orchestral Concert Board, and did occasionally use its power to threaten institutions whose programmes proved too controversial, such as the National Theatre, following its staging of *The Romans in Britain* in 1980. Franco Bianchini, 1995, p.117.

³²⁵ ‘[The GLC] does not have specialist arts staff of its own, seeing its role as a financial one.’ John P. Redcliffe-Maud, 1976, p. 106. For these services, the GLC paid the GLAA a yearly sum, of around £17000 in 1975-6, about 6% of the GLAA’s total budget. John P. Redcliffe-Maud, p.95.

³²⁶ Arts Council of Great Britain Archive, Blythe House, Victoria & Albert Museum, London: hereafter [V&A:ACGB/...]. Letter from David Pratley to Chris Cooper, 10.10.1979, [V&A:ACGB/GLC 1977-1979].

³²⁷ John P. Redcliffe-Maud, 1976, p.94.

were not elected by ratepayers and so deemed not fully accountable.³²⁸ Evidence from the Arts Council archive would suggest that the relationship between the GLAA and GLC had become strained by 1979, with the GLAA director blaming a 'deep resentment' towards the GLAA amongst some of the GLC's Arts Committee, which resulted in conflict and threats of the withdrawal of Arts Council funding from London organisations altogether.³²⁹ Further friction would be caused by the GLC's new interest in the more radical applications of cultural policy, its declining emphasis on what it considered to be the 'mainstream' 'high arts' venues, and its new, highly politicised focus on minority communities and cultural practices that the Arts Council would never have considered funding.

³²⁸ Ibid.

³²⁹ In 1979, Frederick Weyer, then conservative Chair of the GLC's Arts Committee, had apparently been obstructive to any increases in GLC contributions to the GLAA. : [...] we have failed to win the campaign and have not succeeded in increasing that grant nor altering the basic relationship between the GLC and GLAA. Indeed the obduracy of the present Chairman of the Arts Committee has hardened into a bi-partisan caucus of deep resentment against the GLAA. [...] our present difficulties owe little or nothing to personality, but to a fundamental dichotomy in role that was built in to the GLAA from the moment a Regional Arts Association was formed with an area and responsibilities identical to the GLC. If the GLC wishes to become the principal source of long term funds for projects of "regional significance" (its own term) and will not give to GLAA funds to "duplicate" its own regional vote, then we are bound to question whether it is in the interests of anyone (including client organisations) to perpetuate that duplication. We have told the GLC in no uncertain terms that if it adopts a unilateral line, it can expect no direct financial involvement from ACGB; such involvement will come only through partnership with the GLAA to which we are jointly committed. The burden on London ratepayers will be substantially higher if the GLC goes it alone than if, through the GLAA its contribution was being matched by national funds. These arguments have been rejected. / We are therefore proposing to pull out all together from that area where the GLC wishes to fund itself and will not support the GLAA in funding. [...] If a project is eligible for GLC support, GLAA in future would turn that application towards County Hall. There would be no possibility of joint funding by the GLAA and the GLC. Their role would be distinct. If this proposal were accepted by the GLC... we would also transfer four current clients under this new demarcation: Greenwich festival, Riverside studios, Fairfield halls and Music Wembley. [...]Politically, I see no alternative to this proposal, The GLC must be made to realise that if it wants the power of regional patronage, it must also take on the whole responsibility.' Arts Council Internal Memo: Letter from Christopher Cooper (Assistant regional director ACGB) to David Pratley, Finance Director, GLAA, re: GLC/GLAA relationship to date and funding priorities, 10.10.1979, [V&A:ACGB/GLC 1977-1979].

3.8 The New Arts and Recreation Committee

[...] we had a dynamic committee, with people who were senior in the group, who had some political muscle [...] I had made it quite clear that we were going to make some major changes in the arts policy area [...] I discussed it with a number of colleagues and suggested they put themselves forward in order that we could make sure there were some pretty powerful political figures- in County Hall terms – on the Committee [...] I knew that I was going to have to face a number of major battles to win additional resources.³³⁰

Tony Banks was appointed to chair the Arts and Recreation Committee under the Livingstone administration in 1981.³³¹ The Committee was made up of eighteen members, ten of Labour, the majority of whom were supporters of Livingstone's leadership campaign, and represented Labour's new, young, left-of-centre coalition.³³² Banks and later two other Arts Committee members also sat on Livingstone's 'Policy Co-ordinating Committee', the GLC's 'Cabinet', demonstrating that cultural policy was not, as was the case in the past, to be treated as a political 'backwater' during the five year existence of the Livingstone GLC administration.³³³

Reading through the minutes of the Arts and Recreation Committee as 1981 progresses, one can see the committee's transaction of the usual business of the upkeep of public parks and modest contributions to twenty-two of London's theatres, five opera companies, ten music organisations, three dance companies, the BFI, Photographers gallery and London Filmmaker's Co-operative, as well as six public festivals, in the year 1980-1981. In an effort to assess how fairly Arts funds were distributed amongst London's population, at Tony Banks' request, reports were gathered to assess the audience and user profiles of GLC facilities.³³⁴ One report concluded that only five percent of Londoners ever used London's recreation and sports facilities, attend concerts or galleries, and that something must be done to 'broaden participation',

Users of public arts and sports facilities are a small minority of the population, and tend to be found among the young and affluent. Attempts to broaden participation among non-user groups - the working class, women, ethnic minorities, the elderly- have had limited impact. Better publicity, more creative management, planning with user needs in mind, more experimenting with community-based, 'popular' and minority-interest recreation are among the possible strategies.³³⁵

³³⁰ Tony Banks, interview, in Franco Bianchini, 1995, p.179.

³³¹ Banks had worked at the GLC since 1977, and was also an officer for the Association of Broadcasting Staffs (ABS) media union.

³³² Labour's members included Andrew McIntosh (only recently defeated by Livingstone for Council leadership), three of his supporters- Margaret Morgan, Sir Ashley Bramall, and Norman Howard. The remaining five represented the Labour Party's new, left-of-centre coalition, supporters of Livingstone's leadership campaign: Frances Morrell (deputy-leader, and leader of the ILEA from 1983), George Nicholson (Vice Chair of the Planning Committee, later Chair), Andy Harris (Chair of the Grants Sub-Committee), Peter Pitt (Banks's deputy successor as Chair of the Arts Sub-Committee from 1983), and Ken Little, (Pitt's deputy after 1983). For further information, see Franco Bianchini, 'The emergence of a new political class', in Bianchini, 1995, pp. 179-187.

³³³ As Bianchini notes, two thirds of Livingstone's core 'cabinet' of 18 members consisted of his allies, on the Left of the London Labour Party. Amongst them, Tony Banks was the oldest, aged 37, and Valerie Wise, who set up the new Women's Committee, the youngest, aged only 25. *Ibid.*

³³⁴ GLC ARC Committee Papers, 'Users of Arts and Recreation Facilities', 15.07.1981, [LMA:GLC/DG/PRE/006/34].

³³⁵ *Ibid.*, p.4. One significant omission of this was any report on disabled users of GLC arts facilities. Earlier in the year, in response to the United Nations 1981 'International Year of Disabled People', the GLC had written a report detailing awareness of the issue. GLC ARC Committee Papers 'International Year of Disabled People' report, 18.2.1981, [LMA:GLC/DG/PRE/006].

Audience surveys from major venues including The Royal Festival Hall, National Film Theatre and Institute of Contemporary Arts were also collated and presented to the committee, which confirmed the suspicion that these venues largely appealed to the middle class professional, and were failing to draw a broader audience.³³⁶

The Arts and Recreation Committee announced by press release in March 1981 a significant budget of £4 million arts funding for culture in London for 1981/82, and this was followed in August by a further announcement of 'GLC Cash for Community Groups'.³³⁷ New demands soon began to flood in for the 1981-82 grant allocation, and on 12th October 1981, a decision was taken to allocate £80,000 specifically for 'community arts' groups. Four weeks later, the Committee found it had over 60 applications from a variety of organisations, in total requesting £825,250, far in excess of the budget.³³⁸ A new system of priorities and criteria was required to distinguish between groups, but also a more robust definition of the terms, as to what 'community arts' or 'arts in the community' referred.³³⁹ While the GLC's initial position was to adopt the GLAA's definition of 'community arts', the contestation between the community arts movement's more and less radical practitioners and proponents became an important part of the criteria used to differentiate between applicants. Community arts were to be approached with caution,

"The GLC did not invent the community arts, nor did it wish to embrace all of its history [...] by the time the GLC undertook its community arts initiative [...] some critics saw the community arts as a middle class management and policing intervention into working class culture."³⁴⁰

As discussed in chapter two, the 'community arts' movement had, by the early 1980s, developed beyond its more radical and independent roots in the 1960s, which had seen artists seek to involve local communities in cultural activities, often predicated upon left-wing politics, consciousness-raising and affecting social and material change locally. The 'Association for Community Artists' had had some success in its campaign for more funds for community arts projects from the Arts Council in the 1970s, but as commentators such as Owen Kelly have attested, this was only achieved with a level of compromise of their radical purpose, theoretical concerns, and activist practices.³⁴¹ Community Arts had come to be seen by its more radical proponents, as dominated by middle class social-work 'do-gooders' whose aim, as defined by the Arts Council, was to guide the working classes towards the appreciation of 'high' culture.³⁴² Conservative Environment Minister Michael Heseltine and the Labour Party actually took a similar view of 'community arts' as a vehicle for promoting consensus and social cohesion, or 'harmonious neighbourhoods', particularly pertinent following the uprisings in Brixton in April 1981, and Toxteth in

³³⁶ GLC ARC Committee Papers, 'Some Audience Profiles', 02.12.1981, [LMA:GLC/DG/PRE/006/34].

³³⁷ Press Release, 06.03.1981, 'GLC Gives 4 Million Arts Grants', [LMA:GLC/DG/PRB/35/036/085]; Press Release, 05.08.1981, 'GLC Cash For Community Groups', [LMA:GLC/DG/PRB/35/037/290].

³³⁸ GLC ARC Committee Minutes on 12.10.1981, [LMA:GLC/DG/MIN/006].

³³⁹ GLC ARC Committee Papers 'Community Arts and Arts in the Community: Suggested Priorities', 11.11.1981, [LMA:GLC/DG/PRE/006].

³⁴⁰ GLC, Campaign for a Popular Culture (1986), p.15.

³⁴¹ Owen Kelly, 1984, pp.22-5.

³⁴² Ibid., p. 24.

July.³⁴³ There was little room for the expression of oppositional politics within these dominant interpretations of the purpose of community arts, and this the GLC sought to change through targeted funding.

The Arts Council were cautious in their response to this local authority's sudden munificence. It is easy to read a level of sarcasm in the first brief letter from (Sir) Roy Shaw, then the Arts Council's vice-chairman, to Tony Banks at the GLC which began, 'Dear Mr Banks, Welcome to the arts patronage business, where I see you are beginning with a flourish!' ³⁴⁴ An internal memo suggests that recent activities at the GLC had already awoken Roy Shaw's suspicions:

I'd like to be clear on something that has puzzled me for some time: do local authorities in making a grant make any attempt at artistic assessment, or do some do it and others not? My impression, for example, of the GLC recent grants is that they are made by political whim and not by any artistic judgement [...].'³⁴⁵

Shaw, although a former WEA lecturer and supporter of 'the arts' in their educational capacity, was, as Hewison notes, a 'cultural conservative', and 'no friend of community arts'.³⁴⁶ He clearly disagreed with Banks's assertion on the political nature of all culture, once writing,

I know that Tony Banks, the redoubtable chairman of the Greater London Council's Arts and Recreations Committee, says that all arts are political and only an idiot denies it; but I am an idiot in this matter.³⁴⁷

Banks's term as GLC Arts and Recreation Chair did begin with a characteristically controversial 'flourish' six days into his appointment, during an LBC radio interview on 13th May 1981. He stated his intention to withdraw a £1m index-linked GLC grant promised to the Royal Opera House Development appeal fund, on account of the opera being [...] a prestige enterprise with many rich patrons who had already guaranteed £8.5m of the £9m necessary.³⁴⁸ This was controversial ground and attracted criticism from Labour Party members as well as *The Daily Telegraph*, who accused Banks of a 'cloven hoof' plan to provide [...] less for the Opera-going snobs and more for the Trot on the Clapham omnibus.³⁴⁹ The proposal was not carried through, but as a political gesture, it indicated to the arts establishment that from this point on, no areas of the arts were 'sacred'.

³⁴³ See Labour Party, *The Arts and The People* (London: The Labour Party, 1977), p57; Alan Tomkins, 'Community Arts Revisited' in GLC, *Campaign for a Popular Culture*, 1986, p.140. This paper was written by Tomkins for Tony Banks, Chair of the Arts and Recreation Committee.

³⁴⁴ The letter continues, 'It has always been the practice that the GLC and arts Council meet to coordinate as far as possible their subsidies to London companies and I would welcome an early meeting with you to discuss the details of our approaches.' Letter from Roy Shaw to Tony Banks, 19.05.1981 [V&A:ACGB/1/4543: Greater London Council 1980-1981].

³⁴⁵ Continuing, '[...] and I wonder what the role of Lord Birkett and Michael Kaye is.' Roy Shaw, memo to Richard Pulford (ACGB Secretary-General) CC. Anthony Field (Finance Director), 30.04.1981. [V&A:ACGB/1/4543].

³⁴⁶ Robert Hewison, 1995, p.245.

³⁴⁷ Roy Shaw, 'Supplement to the Arts Council Bulletin', no.52, September 1982, in Robert Hewison, 1995, pp. 245-6.

³⁴⁸ Banks, LBC radio interview, 13 May 1981. Cited in Franco Bianchini, 1995, p.189.

³⁴⁹ *Daily Telegraph*, 15 May 1981; Franco Bianchini, 1995, p.189.

3.9 The GLC's Future Arts Policy

Soon after his appointment, Tony Banks and the Arts and Recreation Committee set about conducting the planned reappraisal of the GLC's long-term strategy on culture. The GLC had made an early commitment to opening up the process of arts sponsorship, in their words, 'Throwing aside the 'behind-closed-doors' school of politics', by publishing initial proposals and inviting public responses.³⁵⁰ Banks submitted an initial document to the committee, 'The GLC's Future Arts Policy- A Discussion Paper', and also circulated it more widely to elicit responses from 'representatives of the London arts world', who were due to attend a consultative conference in November 1981.³⁵¹ The discussion paper began to identify the new political aims and priorities for GLC cultural policy, as Peter Pitt, Chair of the Arts and Recreation Committee between 1984-6 summarises,

A major thrust of the Committee was to try and re-define the whole notion of cultural politics. To over-simplify, we wanted to change the notion of arts as 'high culture' to be enjoyed by the few on the South Bank or at Covent Garden. We wanted to increase participation which essentially meant breaking down those barriers [...].³⁵²

The document briefly laid out Labour's priorities for the arts and how the GLC might address these, and looked to redefine the inherited policy emphasis on cultural 'centres of excellence'.³⁵³ The Labour GLC aimed '[...] to give greater priority to arts policies which recognize: a. the need for community involvement of professional performers; b. the unemployment crisis in London; c. the need for closer links with the ILEA and Borough Councils; d. the multi-ethnic nature of London's culture.' Initial suggestions for ways to serve these priorities included to:

'Seek involvement of communities through encouragement of street theatre and entertainment in parks; attachment of performers and companies to housing estates and identifiable communities [...] organise far more of our own arts events rather than act as an agency for the disbursement of funds. [...] give less emphasis to capital expenditure and more to the revenue side, particularly in respect of the innovative arts [...] recognise the need to encourage and greatly expand the ethnic arts in London together with jazz, rock and popular music.'³⁵⁴

These early statements begin to evidence a change in attitudes towards valuing popular entertainment and organisations that were thought to encourage broader participation, in addition to those privileged few

³⁵⁰ GLC, *Campaign for a Popular Culture* (1986), p.6.

³⁵¹ GLC, *Conference on London and the Arts*, held at the NFT on 27th November 1981, see GLC, *Campaign for A Popular Culture*, p.7; GLC ARC Committee Papers, 15.06.1981, 'The GLC's Future Arts Policy: A Discussion Paper', [LMA:GLC/DG/PRE/06/34], See also [V&A, ACGB/1/5093, Greater London Council 1981-2].

³⁵² Foreword, GLC, *Campaign for A Popular Culture*, 1986, p.2.

³⁵³ As Franco Bianchini has noted, while the GLC Labour group's recognition of the exclusivity of cultural venues is important, their adherence at this early stage in planning to some of the rhetoric of the more traditional Labour cultural welfarism is apparent. It will become clear that aspects of this rhetoric were transformed as the GLC's broader strategy developed through consultation with cultural producers and organisations between 1981-2. 'Centres of excellence must not be allowed to remain the preserve of those who by good fortune or by privilege recognize the true value of such facilities. It would be complacent to state merely that such centres exist and all are free to use them and not recognize that if people are economically disadvantaged they are also inevitably culturally disadvantaged. London centres of excellence are not there simply for the advantaged citizen [...] they must represent the highest but not in a state of isolation. They must be based on a mass understanding of their value and this will only be achieved by far more activities at the community level where appreciation must be created and nurtured.' Tony Banks, *The GLC's Future Arts Policy: A Discussion Paper* [LMA:GLC/DG/PRE/06/34]

³⁵⁴ Tony Banks, *ibid*.

clients that the Arts Council deemed ‘centres of excellence’. Also in evidence is an aim to cater to what are vaguely described as ‘identifiable communities’ and their intention to recognize what they refer to as the ‘multi-ethnic nature’ of London in its cultural provision. Banks’s discussion document also sought a provocative overhaul of the GLC’s relationship to the Arts Council and GLAA, London’s government-appointed cultural sponsorship bodies:

I do not believe it to be desirable for the GLC to involve itself in minor partnerships with the Arts Council in such national institutions as the English National Opera or the National Theatre. They are national and we are a local authority albeit a large and powerful one. We should seek to re-define our relationship with the Arts Council and I offer the following suggestion: The GLC to cease contribution to the National Theatre and English National Opera which the Arts Council should wholly fund. In exchange the GLC should take over the entire responsibility for the London Festival Ballet and assume the present functions of the Greater London Arts Association [...]. If the GLC were to take over the role currently performed by the GLAA it would enable us to have GLC arts officers located in London who could maintain a more direct relationship with those sustaining arts activities in the boroughs.³⁵⁵

This proposal did not sit well with the GLAA, whose response to the GLC was defensive:

The Greater London Arts Association will resist any proposal which suggests that the Greater London Council could now, or indeed ever, assume its functions. [...] The Association further doubts the ability of a political body to act in the best interests of the development of the arts in London. GLAA’s uniquely democratic constitution by which local politicians, artists and members of the public directly elected by the membership, ultimately determine the broad policies followed in Greater London; its involvement of artists, community and ethnic interests, and the London Boroughs in the Advisory Panels which recommend grants, must be in no way sacrificed to a grant giving system based on an extreme and minority party political view, and subject to electoral change every four years.³⁵⁶

Although the GLC’s proposed ‘takeover’ of the GLAA did not occur,³⁵⁷ it is apparent that the GLC had moved decisively, quickly coming to dominate the discussion of cultural sponsorship in the public sphere in London between 1981 and 1986. This Arts and Recreation discussion paper was followed by GLC strategies to encourage an opening up of what were perceived by some at the GLC as ‘elite’ cultural organisations and venues which had been in receipt of considerable public funding for decades, though shown little commitment to broadening their audiences.

It should be the objective of the GLC to fund London’s arts activities across the spectrum and from the local community group to the great centres of excellence. We should seek to put sufficient resources into the south bank Concert Halls [...] but their identity as GLC centres [should] be made far more evident [...] It is a sad fact that probably a majority of Londoners have never set foot inside those halls which their rates have helped to build and sustain. It must be the intention of the GLC to do all we can to change this initiative.³⁵⁸

³⁵⁵ Tony Banks, *ibid*. He continued: ‘If such a change could be achieved it would mean a more direct involvement by the GLC in local arts activities in partnership with the Boroughs in a manner more appropriate to our functions as a local authority. It would also dispense with the present self-imposed restrictions on our grant funding by the regional and sub-regional criteria [...].’ [LMA:GLC/DG/PRE/06/34].

³⁵⁶ Anon., GLAA’s response to GLC’s discussion document, 23.06.1981, [V&A:ACGB/1/5093].

³⁵⁷ According to Bianchini, it was opposed by the Arts Council, the government, the GLAA and some Labour GLC councillors. Franco Bianchini, 1995, p.190.

³⁵⁸ Tony Banks, ‘The GLC’s Future Arts Policy: A Discussion Paper’, 15.06.1981, [LMA:GLC/DG/PRE/06/34]

The GLC was the landlord of the Southbank's Royal Festival Hall (now Southbank Centre) and the Hayward Gallery, which was run by the Arts Council. These venues were deemed 'bleak and impersonal' and in need of refurbishment and re-invigoration, in a GLC-commissioned report.³⁵⁹ In April 1983, the GLC opened the doors to the Royal Festival Hall in its 'open foyer' policy, to encourage the general public to use the building outside of performances. The RFH's former terrace restaurant was later transformed by the GLC into a literature centre, Bookspace, now the Poetry Library and the GLC initiated a changing programme of exhibitions organised for the RFH's public spaces, and improved catering facilities suitable for families helped to reverse the decline in public use of these buildings, originally designed and built for the Festival of Britain in 1951. The arches of the Hungerford Bridge nearby were also to be utilised, reopened as a craft centre. In September 1984 the GLC threatened to 'evict' the Arts Council from the Hayward Gallery, purportedly due to the predominance of white male artists in the Hayward's exhibition programme, in order to create a new 'municipal' art gallery for London. A court case ensued over the future of the Hayward, but this was dropped as the threat of the abolition of the GLC was confirmed.³⁶⁰ These cultural venues also had strategic importance, located in close proximity to the GLC's own base at County Hall, Jubilee Gardens and the riverside walk, an area which would host many GLC public festivals.

³⁵⁹ Richard Cork, Balraj Kanna and Shirely Read, *Art on the South Bank: An Independent Report Commissioned by the GLC*, (London: GLC, 1985), p.4.

³⁶⁰ Alan Tomkins reported at interview that the GLC's decision to 'evict' the Arts Council from the Hayward Gallery was in fact taken due to tensions caused when the Hayward locked its doors rather than open up to welcome Londoners during the GLC Thamesday Festival, 1984. Tomkins stated that the reasoning that the Hayward had 'never showed Black or Women artists' in its galleries was retrospectively used to justify the GLC's move. Alan Tomkins, interview with the author, December 2015. See also: Sir Roy Strong (Arts Council) and Peter Pitt (GLC) discussing the eviction, 'Hayward Gallery', Channel 4 News, ITN, 24.09.1984.

3.10 GLC Festivals, Pop Concerts and Political Communications



Figure 10: GLC 'Music in Factories and Shopping Centres', 1982. Left: Wood Green Shopping Centre; Right: Ford, Dagenham. [LMA:GLC/RA/E2/11/19: 91-94].

The Arts and Recreations Committee embarked upon an ambitious public programme to 'open up' cultural events to broader audiences. This began with a series of free public concerts, with the GLC bringing brass bands, steel bands, and classical ensembles in London factories and shopping centres [Figure 10]. It also increased its offering of public festivals in London parks, attracting large crowds such as 'Thamesday', an annual festival on the banks of the Thames, launched in September 1981, a 'South Bank Weekend' festival, a South Bank 'Spring Festival', an annual 'Easter Parade' in Battersea Park, and May Day celebrations. These events involved free concerts, outdoor exhibitions, children's entertainments, street theatre, refreshments and fireworks. [Figure 11] Public festivals and concerts were also used by the GLC to promote particular issues such as its anti-nuclear 'Peace Year' in 1983, 'London Against Racism' 1984, 'Jobs Year's 'Jobs For a Change' Festival in Battersea Park in 1985, and the 'GLC Farewell' celebration held prior to its abolition in March 1986.³⁶¹ It is likely, as Bianchini has argued, that these large scale public festivals and concerts on political themes were inspired by the successes of the Rock Against Racism in the UK in the late 1970s, and public festival events organised by European Socialist and Social Democratic parties in the 1970s.³⁶² These events and campaigns were widely advertised and the GLC archive is replete with posters and promotional materials for public events, produced by graphic artists in the GLC's own supplies department, as well as photographic records of GLC parades and festivals in parks. GLC sponsored cultural groups were often invited to perform or exhibit at these events.

³⁶¹ For documentation of some of these festivals, see UK Rock Festivals, <http://www.ukrockfestivals.com/glc-festivals-1984.html> [accessed 23.02.2017].

³⁶² Franco Bianchini, 1995, p.195.

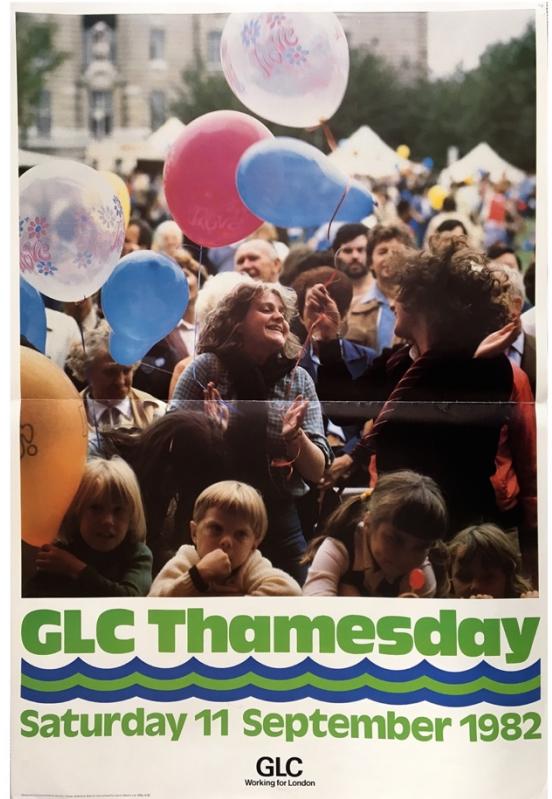
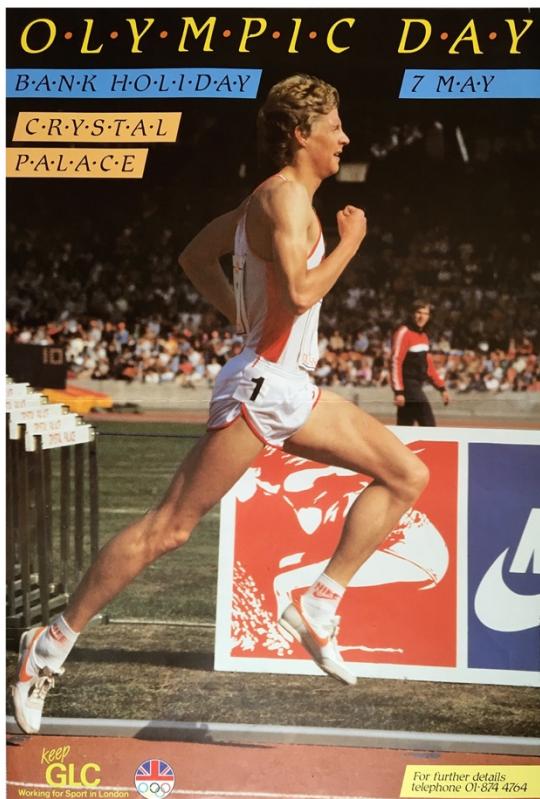


Figure 11: Posters advertising typical free GLC public events in London, many of which did not have an overt political theme. These include 'Summer Festival '83, Batersea Park', 'GLC Spring Festival' at the Southbank, 'Olympic Day at Crystal Palace', 'GLC Thames Day 1982'. Archive of Alan Tomkins.

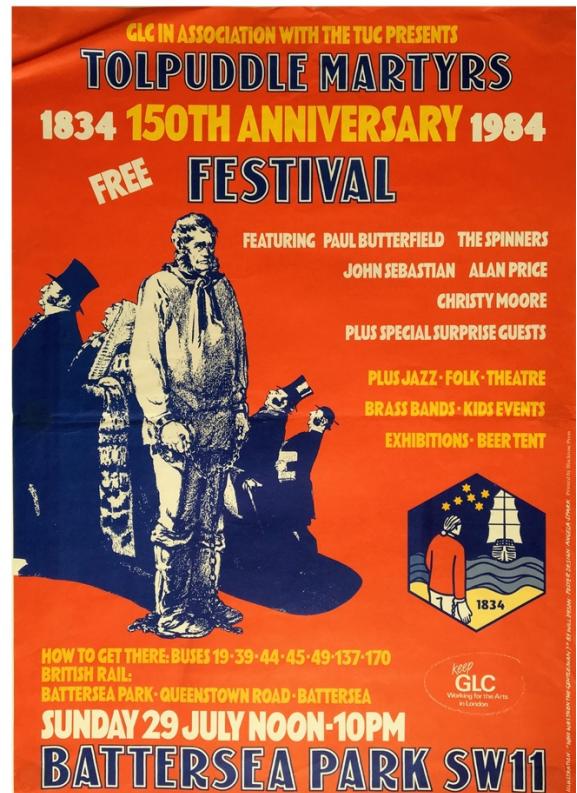
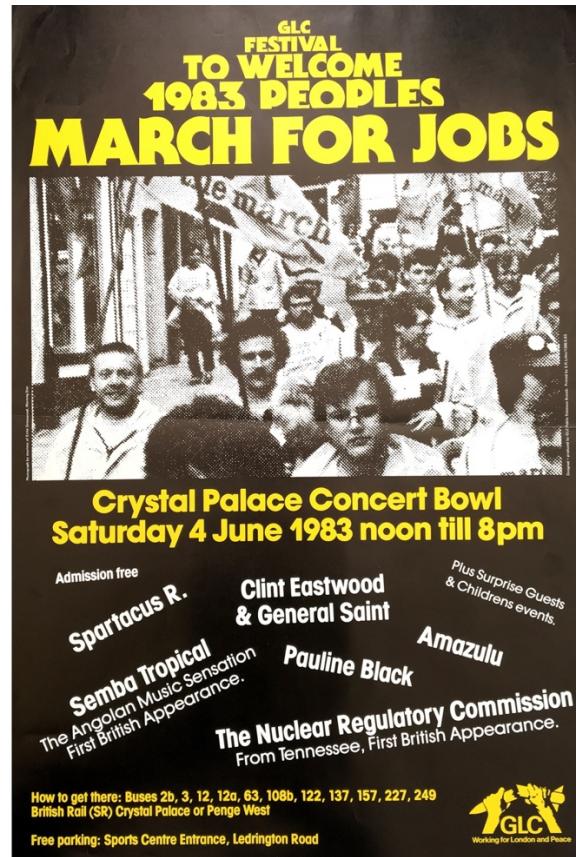
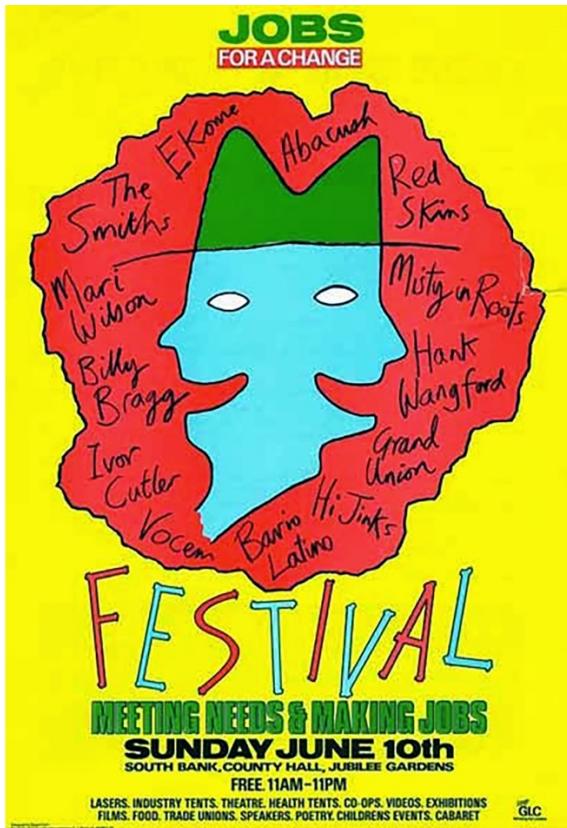


Figure 12: Posters for GLC Jobs Festivals and events in association with the TUC and CND, 1983-5. 'GLC Festival To Welcome 1983 Peoples March for Jobs' (4 June 1983); 'Jobs for a Change Festival' (June 1984); 'Festival for Jobs and Peace' (March 1985); 'Tolpuddle Martyrs 150th Anniversary Festival' (July 1984). Archive of Alan Tomkins.



Figure 13: Ken Livingstone addressing the crowd at a GLC festival, 1985.³⁶³

Music was a key component in many of these free festivals, and the GLC had amongst its staff Tony Hollingsworth and Ken Hulme who had experience working for Glastonbury Festival.³⁶⁴ The Jobs for a Change festivals organised by Hollingsworth reportedly attracted 150,000 and 250,000 attendees, many of them young and unemployed.³⁶⁵ The Arts and Recreation Committee was also involved in co-ordinating, sponsoring and promoting theatre seasons, film festivals and literary events. It organised annual photography, painting and literary prizes. Spaces at the Royal Festival Hall and within County Hall itself were given over to temporary exhibitions showcasing arts competition entries, exhibitions to promote the work of GLC supported cultural producers, conferences for cultural producers on issues pertaining to their sectors, and book fairs. While the GLC acquired a reputation for its more overtly political themed public events and certain politically controversial arts sponsorship decisions, it is worth noting that much of its work was not overtly political. As Tony Banks relayed in an interview with Franco Bianchini, 'Cultural activities that people enjoy are a good vehicle for projecting the Council's image as a progressive, caring socialist council.'³⁶⁶ Furthermore, public events were visible and had broad appeal, thereby, as Bianchini argues, 'helped to maintain [The GLC's] political presence even after most of its powers had been taken away from it in the fields of planning, housing and (after 1983) transport. This may help to explain why its budget for open-air entertainment quintupled from £480,000 in 1980 to £2,500,000 in 1985.'

³⁶³ Source: UK Rock Festivals, <http://www.ukrockfestivals.com/glc-festivals-1984.html> [accessed 23.05.2017].

³⁶⁴ Musicians including The Smiths, The Damned, The Fall, New Model Army, Billy Bragg, Misty in Roots, Ivor Cutler, Pauline Black, Smiley Culture, Spartacus R, Gil Scott Heron were amongst the many performers at various GLC festivals. See John Hoyland, *Reggae On The Rates: The 'Jobs for a Change Festivals'*, in Maureen Mackintosh, Hilary Wainwright eds. *A Taste of Power: The Politics of Local Economics* (London: Verso, 1987), p370.

³⁶⁵ See Tony Hollingsworth Biography, <http://tonyhollingsworth.com/?q=content/tony-hollingsworths-biography> [accessed 01.05.2017].

³⁶⁶ Tony Banks, Interview with Franco Bianchini, 1986, Bianchini, 1995, p.194.

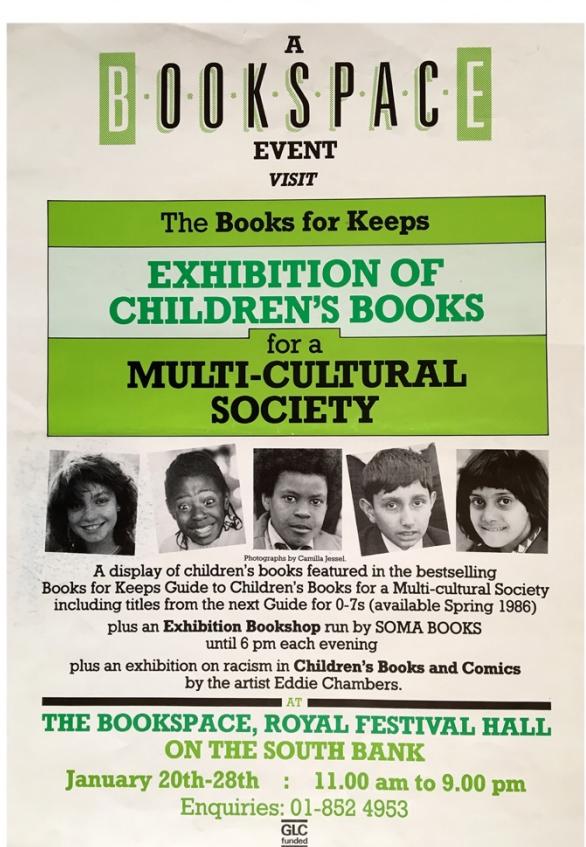
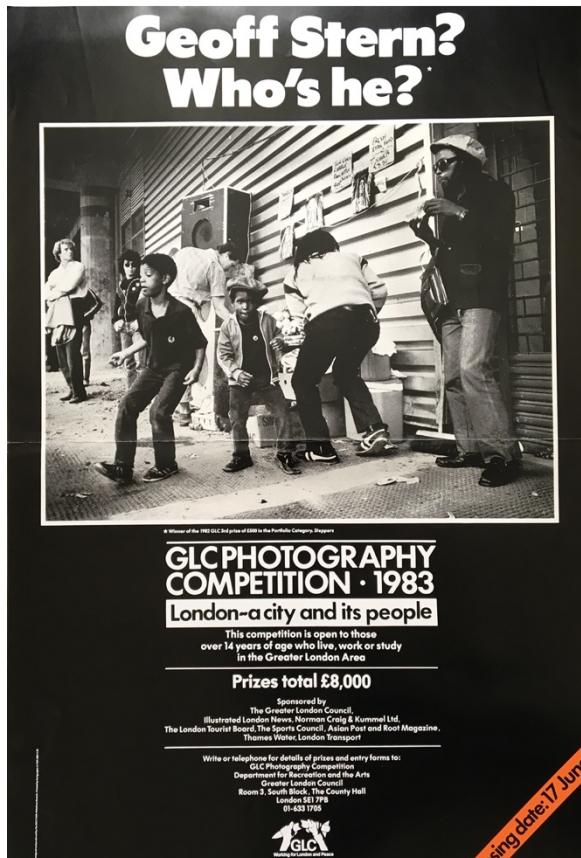
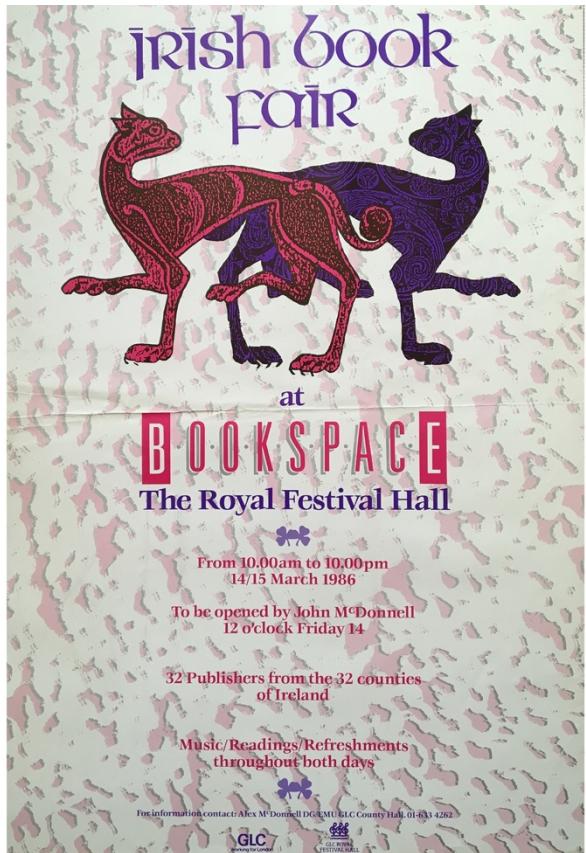


Figure 14: Posters of GLC funded literary events and competitions: '5 Days 5 Nights: London Young Playwrights Week'; Irish Book Fair at Booksplace, Royal Festival Hall; 'Exhibition of Children's Books for a Multi-Cultural Society featuring an exhibition by Eddie Chambers, Booksplace, RFH'; 'London- a city and its people: GLC Photography Competition 1983'. Archive of Alan Tomkins.

3.11 The 'London and the Arts' Conference

Following a diploma in arts education at Hornsey College, Alan Tomkins had taught on the 'Popular Culture' course at the Open University while completing a PhD thesis at the Institute of Education examining concepts of popular culture with reference to cartoons and caricature forms.³⁶⁷ Tomkins had also been working in the arts, for the ILEA's Cockpit Arts community theatre, and attended the GLC's *Conference on London and the Arts*, held at the National Film Theatre (NFT) on 27th November 1981, sitting at the back of the hall amongst representatives of smaller community arts groups, youth groups and black cultural organisations who were all seeking a share of funds from the GLC.³⁶⁸ Representatives of the well-funded 'centres of excellence' such as the National Theatre, English National Opera, and others, lined the front rows of the audience. As Tomkins noted, it was these professional organisations who were often first in line for 'community arts' grants, despite their exclusively white middle class audiences. The National Theatre, for one, was in attendance to request an additional £1 million from the GLC to fund such projects.

Intended as a public consultation, the conference, as Alan Tomkins lucidly recalled at an interview with the author, soon descended into 'almost a riot'.³⁶⁹ Anger rippled across the hall when a director from one major theatre, seated with the official cohort at the front, voiced, 'we know we are reaching community arts audiences because they all come in in duffle coats.'³⁷⁰ Tomkins reported that in an attempt to quieten the crowd, Hugh Jenkins asked from the stage if there was to be 'order or anarchy?', and there were shouts of 'anarchy?' in response from the back of the hall. Taking an opportunity to grab a passing microphone, Tomkins raised the 'elephant in the room' – that it was all very well that these major organisations at the front making noises in support of 'community' and 'ethnic arts', but 'what about the black organisations from Brixton at the back of the hall? They would be grateful for ten quid!' This remark was greeted with shouting and banging from the back of the audience, and brought Tomkins to Tony Banks's attention.³⁷¹

³⁶⁷ Cockpit Theatre was set up by the ILEA, in Marylebone. Tomkins worked there part-time, in the area of bringing performed arts into secondary schools. Tomkins also taught on the Open University 'U203 Popular Culture, Themes & Issues 1' course.

³⁶⁸ The influence of these concepts of popular culture on Tomkins's work at the GLC is clear. Alan Tomkins, *Art and Cultural Production: with Special Reference to Cartoons and Caricature*. (unpublished Doctoral Thesis, Institute of Education, 1983).

³⁶⁹ Alan Tomkins, interview with the author, 20th January 2015, London.

³⁷⁰ While it has not been possible to verify this particular statement by Alan Tomkins against other sources, the sentiment it expresses is of interest in itself. It reflects the idea that some cultural producers were critical of mainstream arts institutions, perceiving their class condescension towards certain arts audiences.

³⁷¹ This account is based on an interview with Alan Tomkins by the author, on 20th January 2015. An earlier interview was conducted in 1986 by Franco Bianchini, in which he quotes Tomkins as giving the following account of the event, 'The platform had Tony Banks, Lord Jenkins and Lord Birkett [the GLC Director of the Arts and Recreation] and the front rows had the National Theatre, English National Opera, etc. [...] The audience were all arts groups who had come along to ask the GLC to give them some more money [...] The National theatre had just said they needed an extra £1million [...] I was with a couple of youth groups and with some black groups, which were literally marginalised at the back of the hall [...] Lord Jenkins [The Chairman] couldn't see beyond the third row because of the spotlight, so he didn't know there was an audience at the back [...] at one point the microphone came near us heading for someone else, and I grabbed it and said: "This conference is not here to help the politicians develop a policy. All these people are doing is asking for money [...] it's special pleading on behalf of the rich. It's all very well you shouting the words 'community arts' and 'ethnic arts'. I bet you at the front are the first people who apply for community arts money [...] what about all the black groups at the back? They literally have no voice" [...] There was a riot; various people started shouting and banging at the back' Alan Tomkins, interview with Franco Bianchini, 1986.

Tony Banks's conference speech had attacked the Arts Council's claims for its 'non-political' arts sponsorship, proposing that this was inadequate,

Neither 'art for art's sake' nor 'few but roses' are acceptable concepts to a local authority such as the GLC confronting, as we do, massive social problems engendered by dole queues, public expenditure cuts and housing waiting lists [...] the link between arts and politics is for me an obvious one and I believe it to be naive and self-deluding to suggest that somehow art is above politics. [...] GLC arts policy in London must relate to these massive social problems whilst trying to fix our sights beyond the often brutalising conditions within a society we seek politically to change.³⁷²

Banks was of the view that as an elected body, the GLC did not need to simply replicate GLAA and Arts Council decisions as it had done in the past. Tomkins was invited by Banks to observe policy making at County Hall, and was soon seconded from his work with the ILEA to become Tony Banks's advisor in 1982. Tomkins was to become influential in the restructuring of the Arts and Recreation Committees and their new policies on grant allocation to London's diverse cultural organisations.

Alan Tomkins stated that the Association of Community Artists (ACA) were 'horrified' at his appointment to this significant position of power, knowing him to be one of their critics. It is also clear that GLAA were neither pleased with Tony Banks, nor his choice of advisor. Minutes from GLAA's Community Arts Advisory Panel and Arts Council reports suggest that it was clearly a disappointment to GLAA officers and to the Arts Council that the GLAA were unable to exert much influence over the new GLC administration's first foray into cultural sponsorship directed at community groups, despite repeated attempts to develop their existing advisory relationship with the GLC.³⁷³

GLAA's Executive Committee made attempts to advise the GLC on new structures for their Arts and Recreation Committee, including encouraging them to focus only on 'education, regeneration and unemployment', perhaps in an effort to distinguish the GLC's from the GLAA's work. It also advised that the GLC should take two GLAA executive members on to their new arts committee, as well as ten representatives of GLAA panels, thereby appearing to suggest that GLAA representatives ought to dominate the GLC's board, in terms of numbers.³⁷⁴ This GLAA advice was categorically rejected by

³⁷² Tony Banks 1981, quoted in Bianchini, 1995, p.203. 'Few but Roses' refers to the title of an Arts Council report.

³⁷³ See [V&A:ACGB/103/189: GLAA 1980-1985]. Bianchini asserted that '[Alan] Tomkins and [Tony] Banks were fiercely lobbied by the GLACA [Greater London Association of Community Artists], who wanted to hegemonize the new Community Arts Sub-Committee by placing it outside County Hall and electing its 17 advisory members. Tomkins resisted these pressures [...].' Franco Bianchini, 1995, pp. 205-7. It is unclear if in 'GLACA' Bianchini is referring to the London branch of the Association for Community Artists (ACA). It is likely that the personnel of the ACA and the community arts advisory panel of the Greater London Arts Association (GLAA) overlapped. GLAA was London's Regional Arts Association, funded by the Arts Council. According to records in the Arts Council archive, the pressure on the GLC was coming from GLAA, who already had an advisory relationship with the GLC's Arts panel. It appears it was the GLAA who now sought to fully 'take over' this aspect of the GLC's future work in Community Arts. In the end, Bianchini suggests that three representatives of the 'GLACA' were appointed as GLC advisors – namely Kate Kelly, Rod Brookes and Alan Rossiter. Greater clarification is needed here to discern exactly which of the different interest groups were attempting 'set the agenda' as it were, at for the GLC's future cultural policy directions.

³⁷⁴ GLAA Community Arts Advisory Panel (CAAP) minutes, 03.06.1982, [V&A:ACGB/103/189: GLAA]. 'GLAA PROPOSALS FOR GLC ARTS BOARD: a) Priorities for [GLC] funding would be: education; regeneration; support for the unwaged; training in the arts; revenue rather than capital funding. b) The Board should comprise: 3 GLC members including one from ILEA; 2 from the London Boroughs Association; 2 Members of the GLAA executive; 1 representative of the GLC Ethnic advisory subcommittee; 8 representatives of GLAA panels; 2 representatives of GLACA [CAAP] and 2 representatives of [grant] receivers'. 14.07.1982: The executive committee made this submission to the GLC without the

Alan Tomkins and Tony Banks, a point of contention, according to a strongly worded report by Sally Stote, ACGB officer:

GLC position is still unclear. It looks as though there may now be two sub-committees instead of two boards [at the GLC]. GLAA feels used and neglected by Tony Banks. [...] None of the GLAA's proposals has been accepted and GLAA feels let down by Tony Banks, who came to an Executive meeting, made lots of promises, milked them for ideas, used and is still using a great deal of officer time and expertise. Some members felt it was GLAA's fault, but GLAA could not have done more and is a victim of the Tony Banks power game.³⁷⁵

The so-called 'Tony Banks power game' was also felt by some in the GLAA to extend to dominance in the public arena. The prominent public profile of the GLC and its arts policies, driven by its generous and attention-grabbing cultural sponsorship strategies, well-resourced public relations department and further fanned by parliamentary and media controversy, also presented a challenge to the Arts Council and GLAA in terms of visibility. Statements from GLAA minutes suggest an awareness of the significance of GLC media coverage, if not always favourable, and a sense that the GLC was significantly 'upstaging' GLAA: 'The Association – and the Panel should seek higher public profile and a wider audience for its views', '[...] it was felt that the GLAA needed to exhibit a much bolder public face.'³⁷⁶ 'We feel that the executive must not allow its frustrations at being unable to provide a GLC type "boom" to erode its [GLAA's] existing achievements.'³⁷⁷ The GLC's 'arts boom' came at a time when the Arts Council, itself facing the inevitability of a decade of significant cuts from central government, began to drop clients, and devolve responsibility for 'community arts' type organisations and centres in London to GLAA, while also being unwilling to greatly increase GLAA's overall funding. Faced with limited resources, it became increasingly difficult for GLAA to take on many new clients without diminishing the resources of established clients. It was also contending with increased requests from newer cultural organizations, and particularly those run by ethnic minority groups, whose demands were only beginning to be heard beyond County Hall.³⁷⁸

broader consultation of GLAA panels, causing some upset, as the CAAP panel minutes suggest a dispute over low ethnic minority representation in the proposal (the GLAA were slower to adopt equal opportunities policies in comparison to the GLC), and lack of consultation on the dominance by GLAA representatives would have 'undermined GLAA's credibility in the eyes of the GLC.'

³⁷⁵ 'GLAA/ACGB Half-Yearly meeting, report to the Director by Sally Stote', 13.07.1983, [V&A:ACGB/103/189]

³⁷⁶ CAAP minutes, 15.04.1982. [V&A:ACGB/103/189: GLAA]; CAAP minutes, December 1982. By then, the GLC's Community Arts Sub-Committee had been established.

³⁷⁷ 05.11.1982: Sally Stote, 'Report on Special executive / staff meeting of GLAA' [V&A:ACGB/103/189: GLAA].

³⁷⁸ As Mark Saunders (founder of community video group *Despite TV* and one-time GLAA film and video panellist) discussed during an interview, the GLAA had elected panellists which Saunders considered more democratic an organisational structure, when compared to the Arts Council. Saunders reported that during the later 1980s, existing GLAA clients frequently accepted reductions in their grants, in order to make space for new women's and ethnic minority arts groups to be funded. Mark Saunders, interview with the author, August 2015.

3.12 The New 'Community Arts' and 'Ethnic Arts' Sub-Committees

In order to manage the flood of applications for community arts grants and expand the GLC's work in this area, the Arts and Recreation Committee was to create three Sub-Committees. These included a Sub-Committee for community arts, one for sport, and at the close of 1982, an 'Ethnic Arts Sub-Committee' (EAS) was formed with its own budget reserved for London's black cultural organisations.³⁷⁹ It is significant that the meaning of bureaucratic terminology such as 'community art' and 'ethnic art' were not taken for granted by the new administration, but rather were understood as contested terrain. Terms were adopted more as a matter of bureaucratic necessity, than as definitions or categories based on the historic uses of these terms in arts administration. As will be discussed in detail in chapter five of this thesis, the term 'ethnic arts' in particular was knowingly drawn from problematic Arts Council administrative terminology, but was not adopted uncritically by the personnel of the Ethnic Arts Sub-Committee (EAS), where attempts were made to 'reclaim' it from its racist subtext.³⁸⁰ The new arts sub-committees were also innovative in structure for Labour Party politics, bringing together a chairperson and vice chairperson from the Arts and Recreation Committee, two members of the majority Labour party, one of the minority Conservative party, and up to seventeen non-voting advisors, drawn from London's cultural workers.³⁸¹ Majority party members usually voted according to advisors' recommendations.³⁸² The appointment of non-voting advisors to the committees was significant as many of them were cultural producers themselves, selected from GLC's arts conference attendees for their expertise and involvement in under-represented art forms, or under-represented communities. Alan Tomkins stated that they were selected for their understanding that terms such as 'community arts' and 'ethnic arts' were ill-defined, and to be contested,

The criterion to choose them was to pick the organisations which would resist the title 'community arts' at all costs. I chose bodies which had fought *against* the community arts movement, like the Federation of Worker Writers and the community arts publishers, feminist film groups, and gay and feminist publishers like SisterWrite and Sheba.³⁸³

Tomkins also sought to move away from the consensus-based interpretation of 'harmonious' community activities, supported by middle class 'community arts' practitioners, with an advisory panel selected to represent minority voices and organised cultural activists, who had hitherto operated outside 'community arts' designations.³⁸⁴ As stated in the GLC's publication, *Campaign for a Popular Culture*,

³⁷⁹ The term 'black' (with a lower case 'b') is used here in preference to terms such as 'ethnic minority' to denote a 'black British' political identity, as used by Stuart Hall to encompass all migrant groups, see: Stuart Hall, 'Black Diaspora Artists in Britain: Three 'Moments' in Post-War History', *History Workshop Journal*, 61 (2006), p.2-3; and for further exploration of this idea, Chapter five of this thesis. The Sports Sub-Committee will not form part of this thesis's analysis, as space is limited.

³⁸⁰ In particular, from Naseem Khan, 1976, *The Arts Britain Ignores*, report commissioned by the Arts Council, Gulbenkian Foundation and the Community Relations Commission (later the Commission for Racial Equality). For a further discussion of this, see chapter five of this thesis.

³⁸¹ 'Chair' and 'Chairperson' were the new preferred terms at the GLC, breaking with the traditional 'Chairman', which was considered discriminatory.

³⁸² This view was expressed by Ken Little, Vice-Chair of the GLC arts Committee, during an interview with Franco Bianchini, 1985, see Bianchini, 1995, p. 204.

³⁸³ Alan Tomkins, Interview with Franco Bianchini, 1986. in Bianchini, 1995 p.207.

³⁸⁴ See Alan Tomkins, 'Community Arts Revisited' in GLC, *Campaign For A Popular Culture*. 1986, pp.140-146.

One of the most important ways that many of the groups whom the GLC most wished to address – feminists, gays and lesbians, members of the Black consciousness movement for example- had been operating outside the community arts movement for some years and had chosen to do so because they doubted the cultural campaigning intentions of many community arts groups. To them, the community arts dream had already turned sour. This had occurred even though these very groups were among the communities of interest and concern targeted by community arts groups themselves.³⁸⁵

Lis Rhodes, an independent film maker and advisor to the GLC Community Arts Sub-Committee, confirmed this at interview, stating that they were often working with groups who were ‘[...] coming from the perspective of rather not wanting public funding, seeing patronage as a problem.’³⁸⁶ Not only did the arts Sub-Committees seek to bring these most radical groups into the fold, it also sought to reach out to social groups who, for reasons of historic social or cultural exclusion, may have had no prior experience of seeking or receiving state sponsorship for cultural projects. The new Sub-Committees acted according to the idea that ‘the most successful events were those in which local people were in charge’, rather than dictating how resources were to be spent.³⁸⁷ While GLC Leader Ken Livingstone was not particularly involved in the formation of cultural policy himself, the GLC’s new organisational structure under Livingstone allowed the Arts and Recreation Committees to play more of an ‘enabling’ role in relation to culture at the local level than may have been the case had it been restricted to the top-down organisation of cultural events. As Livingstone confirmed in an interview with Franco Bianchini in 1986,

[...] basically the GLC enabled others to do the things we were prepared to fund. We merely gave the resources to the communities to say, this is the money we’ve got. Do what you can with it. We most probably generated four or five times the amount of activity that way than if we’d actually created a huge new GLC structure labelled ‘Community Arts’ with 350 staff who’d have to plan and do it all. It was basically enabling the community. And that’s very difficult for [...] a Labour Party which has grown up with a view you see at its most extreme in Liverpool, where the council basically won’t deal with anyone unless they are members of the Labour Party.³⁸⁸

The Community Arts Sub-Committee held its first meeting on 6th October 1982, with the terms of reference of the committee to advise the Arts and Recreation Committee on new community arts initiatives, as well as to ‘consider and determine community arts grants applications.’ Its new advisory panel consisted of a mixture of visual artists, filmmakers, theatre producers, community arts and publishing advocates.³⁸⁹ The new committee was to adopt a broader definition of ‘arts’ and ‘community

³⁸⁵ GLC, *Campaign for a Popular Culture*, 1986, p.16.

³⁸⁶ Lis Rhodes, interview with the author, October 2015, Whitechapel Gallery, London.

³⁸⁷ Quotation from Department of the Environment, ‘Recreation and Deprivation Report’ (1977), cited in GLC ARC Committee Papers, ‘Users of Arts and Recreation Facilities’, 10.07.1981, p.4, [LMA/GLC/DG/PRE/06/034]. A similar sentiment was expressed by GLC Community Arts advisor Loraine Leeson, interview with author, University of Westminster, 2015.

³⁸⁸ Ken Livingstone, quoted in Franco Bianchini, 1995, p.204.

³⁸⁹ The initial committee membership appointed October 1982 was as follows: Tony Banks (Chair), Labour Members: George Nicholson, Frances Morrel, Conservative Member, Mrs Jill Clack. A list of non-voting advisors appointed between 1982-1986 derived from the GLC’s publication, *Campaign for a Popular Culture*, (1986), pp.28-32, gives a sense of the breadth of expertise: Conrad Atkinson (Artist, GLC Visual Arts Advisor 1982-1986, also chair of GLAA Visual Arts Panel and the Artist’s Union), Malcolm Barry (GLC Music Advisor 1982-3, also Chair of GLAA Music Advisors Panel and Vice-Chair of Lewisham Arts Council), Kate Kelly (GLC Visual arts advisor, 1982-1986, elected advisor by the GLACA, worked at Inter-Action, Basement Community Arts, Chat’s Palace); Loraine Leeson (GLC Visual Arts Advisor 1982-1986, Community Artist, Docklands Community Poster Project); Alan Rossiter (GLC Mixed-Media/ Arts Centres advisor, originally elected by GLACA, founder member of Chat’s Palace); Ken Worpole (GLC literature advisor, 1982-1984,

arts' to encompass new approaches to issues that concerned the whole of the GLC, including anti-racist and anti-sexist policies, those directed towards London's unemployed population, and provision for people with disabilities. The politically appointed non-voting advisory panel were selected to identify and endorse those organisations that would previously not have been considered for GLC or Arts Council sponsorship.

The Community Arts Sub-Committee's minutes and presented papers in the GLC archive present a wealth of evidence for the radical renewal of GLC cultural policy between October 1982 and May 1986. To set the agenda for the new Community Arts Sub-Committee, Alan Tomkins wrote a discussion paper for Tony Banks, 'Community Arts Revisited: A Critical Discussion Document on Policy and Criteria' which reads as a strikingly theoretical policy proposal.³⁹⁰ Tomkins drew upon his background teaching on the Open University's Popular Culture course, and on the 1980 *Screen Education* journal edition on the 'Politics of Representation'. His paper also makes reference to discussions in Raymond Williams' *Communications* (1962), *The Long Revolution* (1965), and *Culture* (1981), Walter Benjamin's *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* (1936), ideas of 'distinction' and 'cultural capital' drawn from Pierre Bourdieu's *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (1977). In this communication to the arts Sub-Committees, Tomkins expressed his criticism of the use of community arts as a strategy deployed to paint over the cracks and disguise urban deprivation, but also in its imposition of a narrow interpretation of 'community', and of 'arts' which tended towards exclusion of minority voices and social division, and support for only certain forms of culture, and not others. Tomkins did support GLAA's sponsorship of some radical photography groups such as Camerawork, which had been able to fit into the traditional 'visual arts' category definition.³⁹¹ However, Tomkins now sought to urge the GLC to support more of

Centerprise publishing project, in 1984 became director of Cultural Industries unit at GLEB); Jill Hanscombe (GLC Literature and Radical Publishing advisor 1892-1984, 'expatriate Australian Lesbian writer'); Roger Mills (GLC Literature advisor 1982-1985, Federation of Worker-Writers, community publishing, GLC Bookspace); Bob Hills (Photography Advisor 1982, experience in photography and youth training schemes); Jill Posener (GLC Theatre and Photography advisor, 1983-84, 'feminist photojournalist', stage manager and writer of Gay Sweatshop's first women writer's play); Alfie Pritchard (GLC Drama/Arts Centre advisor, 1982-1984, senior youth worker and coordinator at Oval House); Jean Hart (GLC Drama Advisor, 1982-1985, Senior Lecturer in Community Theatre Arts, Rose Bruford College); Rod Brookes, (GLC Drama Advisor between 1982-1986, former community Artist at Freeform, and founder of Cultural Partnership, Hackney, also elected advisor by the Greater London Association of Community Arts (GLACA) and Gulbenkian Foundation); David Johnston (GLC Drama advisor 1982-1986, theatre director, playwright and reviewer); Madhav Sharma (Drama advisor, 1982, actor and director, founder of Actors Unlimited); Lis Weston (GLC drama advisor, 1983-5); Kate Heath (GLC Music Advisor 1982-1984, Musician, with experience working for the Association of Community Artists and WACAT); Yvonne Archer (Music advisor 1984-1986, Brent Black Music Co-Operative); Denise Stanley (music advisor, 1984-6, Lewisham Academy of Music, Common Lore and the Albany); Ken Hulme, (GLC music advisor, later coordinator of the GLC Peace Year and Jobs Year campaigns, also an organiser for the Chile Solidarity Campaign); Lis Rhodes (GLC Film and Video advisor, 1982-1986, Film maker and founder of Circles feminist film and video distribution, member of Four Corners Film Workshop); Sylvia Stevens (Film and video advisor, 1982-1986, director and producer, Poster Film Collective and Faction Films); Anna Sherbany (Film and Video advisor); Mary Hickman (GLC Irish cultural advisor 1984-1986, also Secretary of the Irish in Britain History Centre and doctoral student at the Institute of Education); Donald Magee (Advisor 1985-86, founder of Irish Video Project).

³⁹⁰ Theoretical even for the likely audience of policy makers, arts advisory panellists and GLC officers. Williams, Raymond, *The Long Revolution* (London: Hogarth Press, 1992 [1961]); *Communications* (London: Penguin, 1962). *Culture* (London: Fontana, 1981). Walter Benjamin, *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, James Amery Underwood transl., (London: Penguin Books, 2008 [1936]); Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (New ed.) (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1986 [1977]).

³⁹¹ Ibid., p.3.

these radical proponents of ‘community arts’ practice, and particularly those engaged in work related to the ‘politics of representation’ as he argued,

Representation is not just a matter of parliamentary democracy, it is one of the principal means through which the cultural and political configurations of a social formation are historically produced.³⁹²

The paper ends with a series of objectives, the first of which asserts the GLC’s independence from the existing community arts policies of GLAA. It identified work that would need to be done to ‘establish a communications and distribution infrastructure’ to support those involved in ‘progressive oppositional initiatives’ with buildings and resources. It identified priority social groups, in particular applications would be welcomed from groups for ‘the unemployed, youth sub-cultures (particularly girls), women’s groups and gay men’s groups, the elderly’, and proposals that ‘operate in relation to working class leisure interests that don’t necessarily contain an overt arts content’. Finally, it warned that some art forms, such as visual arts, had been ‘extensively hegemonised by a dominant class group’, and that therefore some practices were ‘more liberatory than others’.

While Tomkins and Banks began to invite a more politically active roster of community arts and leisure activity groups to apply for sponsorship, it took some time for GLC officers to adapt to the demands of this new system. There was disagreement between the GLC’s bureaucracy and the Committees over what legally constituted a ‘cultural activity’ when artistic content and social or political aims were so closely connected. Banks moved to clarify this, giving the elected committee the power to judge what constituted an ‘art’ activity, and power to process small grants without detailed audited accounts from the recipients.³⁹³ The new demand to sponsor ‘women only’ and ‘black only’ arts centres, events or competitions was also met with some resistance from within the GLC and questions of its legality arose, though these were also worked through.

A central ‘Ethnic Minorities Committee’ had been set up at County Hall, chaired by Livingstone himself, with Herman Ouseley as the Principal Race Relations advisor, and chair of a new Ethnic Minorities Unit. Livingstone had identified London’s ethnic minority populations as a key constituency and a focus of his political strategies. Kwesi Owusu has stated that there was at the time an atmosphere of imminent action, as institutions of the State were poised to respond to the recent uprisings in Brixton in 1981.³⁹⁴ The suspicion that the GLC’s motives were not entirely altruistic weighed heavily, as Paul Gilroy noted, during the 1980s black Labour votes could no longer be taken for granted, a fact that suggested there was another

³⁹² Ibid., p. 5.

³⁹³ GLC Community Arts Sub-Committee (CAS) Papers, ‘Legal powers in the Arts’, [LMA:GLC/DG/PRE/12/02].

³⁹⁴ [...] If politics of both Labour and Conservative parties had traded mere words for solutions to the problems of inner city decay, unemployment and racism, for crucial moments after the hot summer of 1981 they were left to pick up the pieces and rebuild from ashes and broken glass. The whole world was watching. The new mood called for action. Almost every institution tapped its feet with anxiety, poised to respond.’ Kwesi Owusu, ‘The Greater London Council: Suddenly a lame duck was ready to fly’ in Kwesi Owusu, *The Struggle for Black Arts in Britain: What Can We Consider Better than Freedom* (London: Comedia Publishing Group, 1986), p.84. See also Jim McGuigan, *Culture and the Public Sphere* (London: Routledge, 2012), pp.82-3.

aim for the GLC's 'strategic patronage'.³⁹⁵ The GLC's arts and recreation user surveys had demonstrated that London's black British constituents were not using GLC Arts and Recreation facilities, and had not therefore not been receiving a fair share of London's cultural sponsorship. On 28th May 1982, a GLC 'Conference on Ethnic Minority Arts' was held at County Hall, 'to consult with practising ethnic minority artists' with a view to defining the GLC cultural strategies that would benefit and support the 'ethnic arts'.³⁹⁶ Previous GLC administrations (or local and national government generally) had not given 'ethnic minority' constituents or cultural producers this level of positive attention before, and the conference represented an apprehensive beginning to this new relationship, which Errol Lloyd acknowledged was to be contingent upon the Livingstone Labour GLC's tenure. As Stuart Hall had commented in an interview, '[...] black people's willingness to come in was a very suspicious one. They expected to be ripped off daily.'³⁹⁷

The new 'Ethnic Arts Sub-Committee' was formed in September 1982, to give independence to 'ethnic arts' grant allocations at the GLC, with an advisory panel made up of black cultural producers initially drawn from attendees of the May conference, similar in structure to the Community Arts Sub-Committee. The Ethnic Arts Sub-Committee was charged with directing sponsorship specifically to cultural organisations 'with a non-Western European background [and to] advise the Arts and Recreation Committee on policies and programmes to promote multi-cultural arts in London.'³⁹⁸ The term 'ethnic arts' was not adopted lightly at the GLC. Parminder Vir, head of the Arts and Recreations Department's Race Equality Unit, differentiated their aims from established approaches to 'ethnic arts which focused on [...] racial harmony and multiculturalism [...] on people's attitudes rather than on relations of power; but racism is about power, political power, not about people's minds'.³⁹⁹ This awareness demonstrates the critical atmosphere and intention of the GLC Ethnic Arts Sub-Committee, as it began to call into question established policies, priorities and terms of reference. The GLC's foray into the sponsorship of black British culture attracted considerable criticism where it failed to meet understandably high expectations of London's black communities and cultural producers, as well as attracting considerable negative attention in the press. Its separatist strategy of creating a specific 'ethnic' budget was fraught with practical problems, not least from the pressures of deciding which groups should to be funded under 'community arts' and which from the 'ethnic arts' budget.⁴⁰⁰ Nevertheless, this committee represented a completely new structure and unprecedented level of financial commitment to black British cultural production, which will be examined in further detail in Chapter Five of this thesis.

³⁹⁵ Paul Gilroy saw this as 'anti-racism' used as a political strategy to incorporate those at the margins into the political system. Paul Gilroy, *'There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack': The Cultural Politics of Race and Nation* (London: Hutchinson, 1987), p.138.

³⁹⁶ GLC Ethnic Arts Sub-Committee (EAS) Papers, 'Report on the Conference on Ethnic Minority Arts, County Hall, 28.05.1982', 04.11.1982, [LMA:GLC/DG/PRE/14/01]. The GLC had earmarked £300,000 for 'ethnic arts' in 1982-3.

³⁹⁷ See Errol Lloyd, in GLC EAS Papers, 'Report on the Conference on Ethnic Minority Arts, County Hall, 28.05.1982' [LMA:GLC/DG/PRE/14/01]; Stuart Hall, Interview with Franco Bianchini, in Bianchini, 1995, p.210. See also Chapter 5 of this thesis.

³⁹⁸ GLC, *Campaign For A Popular Culture*, (1986) p.60.

³⁹⁹ Parminder Vir, interview with Franco Bianchini, 1985, in Bianchini, 1995, p. 209.

⁴⁰⁰ One problem arose over the question of which committee, the 'community' or 'ethnic' arts, should fund Irish arts from its budget, for instance. See GLC *Campaign for a Popular Culture*, 1986, pp.60-62.

The variety of cultural organisations and projects on the GLC's Community and Ethnic Arts Sub-Committees' books by the end of 1986 is a testament to the diverse approaches and concepts of culture to which they subscribed. An understanding of cultural venues such as libraries, archives, independent bookshops, video workshops, printshops, or photography facilities as a distribution network for cultural production, communication, local community activism, education and training, was developing at the GLC's arts committees, influencing the kinds of projects that were chosen for sponsorship.⁴⁰¹ This is in evidence in the many policy documents and proposals written by advisors to the committees. For example, Ken Worpole's initial policy proposals for the support of independent community based bookshops, which were struggling to compete with chains such as WH Smiths, detailed how the GLC's support would in turn nurture in-house community publishing endeavours, support their commitments to anti-racist and anti-sexist children's literature, provide meeting spaces for campaign groups, and sites for adult education, literacy and local history projects.⁴⁰² In addition to book shops, community 'print shops' and small radical publishers were another area in which the GLC sought to support development.⁴⁰³ These provided resources for the printing of community information, work by local writers, as well as the production of consciousness raising work.⁴⁰⁴



Figure 15: Young women record themselves editing their own video production at Albany Video, in Deptford. Still from the video project: '*MisTaken Identity*', directed by Karen Alexander and Helen Petts. Still image from VHS, BFI Archive.

⁴⁰¹ Alan Tomkins, 'Leisure Policy' in GLC, *The State of the Art or the Art of the State? Strategies for the Cultural Industries in London* (London: GLC Industry and Employment branch, 1985), pp.174-5.

⁴⁰² The paper lists examples such as Centerprise in Hackney, Peckham Bookplace, Tower Hamlets Arts Project (THAP) Bookshop, Reading Matters and Sisterwrite. The racist attack against the Walter Rodney Bookshop, whose archive is now at the LMA, is also mentioned in the paper. Green Ink, an Irish book shop, also received GLC support. GLC Community Arts Sub-Committee (CAS) Papers, Ken Worpole, 'Financial Support of Community Based Bookshops', 16.12.1982, [LMA:GLC/DG/PRE/12/02].

⁴⁰³ GLC sponsored community print shops and poster campaigns included the following groups: Docklands Community Poster Project in Newham/Tower Hamlets, See Red Women's Workshop in Southwark, Deptford Community Print Shop, Wandsworth Community Print Shop, Greenwich Mural Workshop, Community Copyart in Kings Cross, Poster-Film Collective, The Basement Community Arts Workshop, Lenthall Road Workshop.

⁴⁰⁴ For example, the See Red Women's Workshop, <<http://seeredwomensworkshop.wordpress.com/>> [accessed 01.05.2015].

Filmmaker and Community Arts Sub-Committee advisor Sylvia Stevens drafted a GLC policy for the support of independent film in relation to the ACTT's new Workshop Declaration,⁴⁰⁵ recommending the GLC support as yet unfranchised, new film companies to produce one-off productions, as well as funding small networks for the distribution and screening of independent film and video.⁴⁰⁶ The GLC funded a range of independent production companies on individual projects, sometimes commissioning factual documentary work to communicate their own messages, for instance, on police monitoring, or industrial issues such as women's health and safety at work.⁴⁰⁷ It also sponsored a number of black video collectives, such as Black Audio Film Collective, an organisation that both made its own video documentaries and ran training workshops. It supported the development of a number of video workshops that provided access to technology and resources which were used by smaller independent producers for community video production, including Albany Video in Deptford.⁴⁰⁸ Some of these workshops also provided distribution catalogues for community videos such as Albany Video, and organisations that specialised in the distribution of film and video made by and for women such as Circles and Cinema of Women.⁴⁰⁹

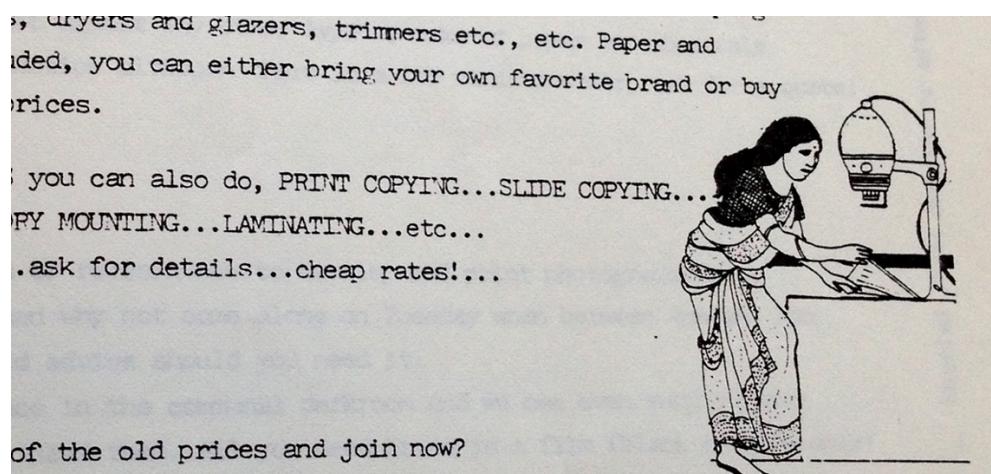


Figure 16: Detail from Camerawork Darkroom Newsletter, Spring 1982. [LMA:GLC/DG/PRE/12/01].

⁴⁰⁵ For the ACTT workshop declaration, see Margaret Dickinson, 1999, p.178.

⁴⁰⁶ 'The GLC is poised to become one of the single largest sources of non-commercial film funding, and a carefully developed policy for disbursing this money can make a uniquely positive contribution to the consolidation and furtherance of a socialist film culture in London and hence beyond.' GLC CAS Papers, Sylvia Stevens, 'Film Policy for Community Arts', 19.1.83, [LMA:GLC/DG/PRE/12/03].

⁴⁰⁷ For instance, Parallax Pictures (Maxim Ford (dir.) Sally Hibbin (producer) were commissioned to make a docu-drama, *Policing London*, (1984, 16 mm., 30 mins), based on the 1983 Policy Studies Report on policing, for schools and community groups. < <http://collections-search.bfi.org.uk/web/Details/ChoiceFilmWorks/150112848> > [accessed 01.02.2017]; Iriscope (Audrey Doisen, Caroline Spry and others), produced a training film, *Bitter Wages*, to examine women's health and safety issues in the workplace, commissioned by the GLC Women's Committee for distribution to women's workplaces. <http://explore.bfi.org.uk/4ce2b6f5b5a89> [accessed 01.02.2017].

⁴⁰⁸ Tony Downmunt, Senior Lecturer in Communications at Goldsmiths and former Albany Video worker, is currently working on a research project to archive and digitize tapes from the Albany's community video distribution catalogue.

⁴⁰⁹ A list of some of the GLC Sponsored Film and Video Workshops, between 1982-86, drawn from the GLC archive include: Albany Video & Distribution (Lewisham); Aphra Video (Camden); Black Audio Film Collective (Hackney); CEDDO Film & Video Workshop (Haringey); Kuumba; Cinema Action (Camden); Cinema of Women (distribution, Islington (1977-); Circles (distribution, Tower Hamlets); Contrast Film and Video Workshop (Tower Hamlets); Despite TV (Hackney); Faction Films (Camden); Fantasy Factory (Camden); Film work group (Kensington & Chelsea); Four Corners (Film, Tower Hamlets); Independent Film & Video Association (Westminster); Island Arts Centre); Island Women's Video (Tower Hamlets); Liberation Films; London History Workshop Centre (Camden); London Video Arts (Westminster); Moonshine Community Arts Workshop (Brent); Newsreel Collective (Camden); North Paddington Farm Film Group (Westminster); The Other Cinema (Westminster); Oval House (Lambeth); Parallax Pictures (Camden); Pimlico Arts & Media Scheme (Westminster); Retake Film & Video Collective (Camden); Sankofa (Camden); West London Media Workshop (Notting Hill); Women in Sync (Islington); Women's Media Resource Project (WEFT) (Hackney).

Formal training projects were another strategic area for the GLC's support of cultural production, aimed particularly at targeting the absence of black people and women within mainstream arts and media industries. These ranged from the development of courses in arts administration and management at the Polytechnic of Central London (PCL) aimed at people already working in black cultural organisations, or short courses in production at the National Film and Television School and radio and print journalism courses sponsored through the Black Media Workers Association at the PCL. Many unaccredited courses were also organised informally across community centres, community video workshops, photographic darkrooms, community theatres and music centres. Forming part of the public offering of these local centres, these are detailed in the archive of group applications remaining amongst the presented papers of the arts committees at the LMA. These include the Lewisham Academy of Music in Deptford, which ran informal popular music courses for young people, or the Camerawork darkroom at the Half Moon Photography Workshop in Bethnal Green, which provided women-only photography and printing courses, alongside its public access darkroom. The illustration in its newsletter would suggest that it also sought to include Bethnal Green's local Bangladeshi community and women in particular in its photography facilities, though how far these organisations were successful in attracting particular adjacent communities to participate in their workshops is a question that would require further research.⁴¹⁰

Grants to these organisations ranged from capital investment to purchase technical equipment for film, video photography and printing, musical instruments and lighting rigs, office equipment and even vans. Grants also were allocated for the rental, renovation, and in some cases the purchase or alteration of premises. These resources provided secure bases allowing groups to focus on cultural production, as opposed to financial survival. GLC sponsorship also covered wages and running costs to support community media workers to provide training courses or to run drama workshops or performances in public spaces. Of interest in relation to contemporary debates on the fair payment of workers in the cultural sector, the GLC set a 'minimum wage' for full time and part time arts workers being paid through GLC grants, so that 'they would for the first time ever be paid proper salaries.'⁴¹¹ Franco Bianchini recorded that the money available to arts organisations expanded greatly between 1981 and 1986,

Grants to arts organisations, which totalled £2.5 m in 1981, had reached £10.5 m by 1985. The fastest growing areas were community and ethnic arts, whose budgets in 1981 totalled only £10,000. By 1985 they were allocated £2.9 m and £2.5 m respectively. Grants to the 'centres of excellence' were also increased[...].⁴¹²

⁴¹⁰ GLC sponsored community photography workshops and independent agencies included: Axis Photo Co-op (Camden); Independent Photography Project (Greenwich); Chat's Palace (Homerton, Hackney); Cockpit Arts; Format Photographers (Islington); Monochrome Photography Collective (Lambeth); Blackfriars Photography Project (Southwark); Camerawork; at Half Moon Photography Workshop (Tower Hamlets); Photographer's Co-op (Wandsworth, which later became Photofusion, Brixton); North Paddington Community Darkroom (Westminster).

⁴¹¹ GLC CAS Paper, 'Wages Element in Grants', 08.12.82 [LMA:GLC/DG/PRE/12/02]; See also GLC, *Campaign for a Popular Culture* (1986), p.19.

⁴¹² Franco Bianchini, 1995, p.283.

This increase was due in part to Central Government's removal of the GLC's responsibilities in the areas of housing and planning to the London boroughs, and the collapse of the 'Fares Fair' transport plan, which made further funds available.⁴¹³

3.13 Summary

The subsidising of popular entertainment and public occasions on the open access principle: the use of its [GLC] sites and hoardings in the city to publicise radical themes and demands, [...] the use of parks as active centres linked with the general renovation of cultural life, the free concerts, even the diversity of music sponsored [...] classical music, jazz, advanced rock, black gospel music - these and many other examples could be quoted of how cultural life can be reconstructed as a site of politics. ⁴¹⁴

This chapter has begun to outline how new cultural policy objectives and committee structures were developed at the GLC between 1981-1986, emerging from open-forum public consultations on cultural sponsorship, and drawing on the expertise of newly appointed advisors, selected from London's more radical cultural producers and community art workers. These profound changes to the perception of cultural policy at the level of London's local government represented a drastic shift from the former reputation of Arts and Recreation as a 'political backwater'. This intervention of the Left into strategic state sponsorship of cultural production was partly facilitated by the rise of a new generation of political actors who sought to renew local government by incorporating some of the ideals of new social movements, cultural studies and popular culture influences, into new policy directions. It also represented a drastic departure from the ingrained 'arm's length' and supposedly 'a-political' cultural policies that the Arts Council sought to uphold, during a period of increasingly overt central government intervention and budget cuts by Thatcher's monetarists. The purpose of this chapter has been to lay the foundation for a more detailed examination of GLC cultural policy in action, in relation to two social movement influenced London-wide GLC awareness campaigns on issues of anti-nuclear peace and anti-racism. The following chapters will look to the deployment of GLC cultural policies, what they meant for London's cultural producers and audiences, viewed through examples of their sponsored practices and the relationship of this work to GLC campaigns.

⁴¹³ See John Carvel, *Citizen Ken*, 200-206. In 1982 the GLC's rates were raised significantly in order to cover a £125 million London Transport deficit (caused by the collapse of Fares Fair) in one payment: 'This is the point at which Livingstone reaped the political reward for pushing up the GLC rate so high in 1982. By paying off the whole £125 million Fares Fair deficit in 1982, the GLC Labour group had £125 million to play with in 1983 without a further increase in the rate. [...] The result was that even after inflation and the loss of the last vestiges of Government rate support grant, the GLC rate in 1983 went up only by fourteen percent. This was enough to finance a phenomenal growth in planned spending on subsidies and services of twenty-eight percent at a time when every other council in the land was being squeezed by the Government to make cuts. So Livingstone's GLC drove a coach and horses through Heseltine's controls [...] by February 1984 Livingstone was able to forecast that the GLC's 1984 rate could be cut by 6 per cent without any important sacrifices [...] So the Livingstone administration escaped the difficult political decisions which faced almost every other Labour authority during the period of the Thatcher governments.' p.204-5. This attests to the exceptional financial position that the GLC was in, relative to other councils across the country during the Thatcher years. It was in part upon this financial base that the GLC's cultural policy expansion experiment was built.

⁴¹⁴ Stuart Hall, in Franco Bianchini, 1995, p.200.

Chapter Four: 'What gift is life if the world must die?' Emotional Politics, Nuclear Culture and GLC Peace Year, 1983



Figure 17: GLC logo detail from mural, Brian Barnes, *Riders of the Apocalypse* (1984). Image: Alice Bell.

4.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the role of cultural policy in the GLC's promotion of 'unofficial' narratives of the British Nuclear State and civil defence during its 'GLC Peace Year 1983' campaign. It draws together and records some of the poster campaigns and banners, murals, exhibitions, public concerts, theatre productions and documentary videos commissioned by the GLC from London's cultural producers and activists to promote its anti-nuclear message to the public. Examining the work of cultural producers the GLC sponsored to support Peace Year, this chapter considers the contribution the GLC made to what Jonathan Hogg has termed the 'nuclear cultures' of 1980s Britain.⁴¹⁵ Following Stephen Brooke's recent call to look to 'the work emotions do politically', this chapter considers how cultural policy elements of the GLC's campaign against nuclear weapons may have amplified Londoners' existing 'nuclear anxieties'. It considers this attempt to co-opt a coalition of support from London's activist milieu and further galvanise popular democratic participation in the disarmament movement as a counter-hegemonic component of the GLC's broader 'war of position' against the politics and policies of the Thatcher administration. It examines the possible broader electoral consequences for the Labour Party of this appeal to London's nuclear fears. Finally, this chapter considers what evidence the cultural production

⁴¹⁵ See Jonathan Hogg, *British Nuclear Culture: Official and Unofficial Narratives in the Long 20th Century* (London; New York: Bloomsbury, 2016).

of GLC Peace Year can offer to historians seeking to investigate the role of emotions in political agency and participatory democracy. It examines examples of London women's participation in peace movement activism, and the politics of their representation, as viewed through the films of GLC-sponsored documentary-makers. These provide rich information about which emotions really drove London women to take action for peace, bringing issues of international politics into dialogue with domestic experiences.

4.2 CND, the 'Cold War' and the British Nuclear State in the 1980s

Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) and the Committee of 100, the organisations whose founding in 1958 and 1960 heralded the arrival in Britain of a new kind of social movement activism with a more radical edge than previous generations of moderate lobbyist organisations, had seen a period of significant decline in membership between 1962 and 1976.⁴¹⁶ The détente between the superpowers following the peaceful settlement of the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962 and the signing of various nuclear test bans and non-proliferation treaties between the US and USSR during the 1960s and 1970s temporarily allayed fears of imminent nuclear war. In the decade following 1965, many peace activists had shifted their attention and campaigning efforts to the more urgent issue of the disastrous United States military actions and deployment of chemical weapons in Vietnam.⁴¹⁷ Young activists who went on to form the core of the new generation of the Labour-Left at the Greater London Council in the 1980s spent their formative years in the CND, or opposing the Vietnam War.⁴¹⁸ During this period they had experienced disillusionment with party politics, brought about by the successive failures of Labour Party and in particular Harold Wilson's refusal to condemn US actions in Vietnam or to halt the development of the UK's Polaris nuclear submarine programme, as pledged prior to his re-election.⁴¹⁹ Despite the temporary cooling of tension in the 1970s, and various agreements signed during what the UN declared the 'Decade of Disarmament', neither the US nor the Soviet Union had halted their development and stockpiling of nuclear weapons. Older weapons were replaced with more powerful ones of increasing accuracy, with the testing of 'neutron' bombs supposedly designed to kill people but preserve property, and from 1976, with the development of US 'Cruise' and 'Pershing II', and the Soviet 'SS-20' intermediate range missiles, intended for 'controlled' nuclear warfare between the superpowers, which could be conducted on European territory- nuclear war seemed closer to home than ever before.⁴²⁰ December 1979 saw

⁴¹⁶ Adam Lent, *British Social Movements since 1945: Sex, Colour, Peace and Power* (New York: Palgrave, 2001), p.43-5.

⁴¹⁷ As Kate Hudson notes, CND campaigns did continue throughout this period on a reduced scale, against the launch of the UK's four Polaris submarines between 1966-1968 (a project continued by Howard Wilson in 1964 despite Labour's pre-election promises), local protests at nuclear bases, campaigns against French and Chinese nuclear testing, and objection to the flying of nuclear missiles over the UK due to the hazard of nuclear accidents such as the 1975 US bomber accident at Palomares in Spain. Kate Hudson, *CND - Now More than Ever: The Story of a Peace Movement* (London: Vision Paperbacks, 2005) p.92; pp.102-4.

⁴¹⁸ See Adam Lent, p.173; John Gyford, 1985.

⁴¹⁹ The revolutionary socialist values held by radical peace activists and student movements, as well as limited progress made by women and anti-racist activists in the face of the largely white male structure and bureaucracies of Labour Party politics at this time, were also factors in the frustration social movement activists felt with the Labour Party of the 60s and 70s. See Adam Lent, 2001, Chapter 3.

⁴²⁰ This gruesome perspective on the neutron bomb that returned the Cold War tensions to media and public attention across Europe, with CND collecting a 250,000 signature petition against the neutron bomb in 1978. See Adam Lent, p.124; Kate Hudson, 2005, p116-7. 'By 1979, strategic warhead levels had reached 9,200 for the US and 5,000 for the Soviet Union ('strategic' nuclear weapons meaning those that the US and Soviet Union could deliver directly on each other). Both sides also had large numbers of tactical nuclear weapons (those for use in a 'controlled' nuclear war, in other words not

Thatcher's new government announce that 160 US Cruise and Pershing II Missiles were to be sited in the UK, with five other NATO members in Europe to host sites for further US short-range missiles.⁴²¹ This decision, made without public consultation, compounded with the fact that the superpowers had only made concessions on the limitation of long range weapons production, was 'giving the inescapable impression that the US and USSR had been negotiating to protect themselves from nuclear conflict while shifting any ensuing holocaust to European territory.'⁴²²

A further announcement in early 1980 that civil defence spending would rise, with the new cost of updating Britain's Chevaline-Polaris deterrent put at £1 billion, the significant cost of this programme generated some opposition to the Government's defence plans. This came at a time when many public sector services were anticipating dramatic reductions in government spending under the new Conservative government. CND had begun to gain some support both within Parliament, and in 1981 at the Labour Party conferences and at the trade union congresses, some of which also took interest in the anti-nuclear issue from the perspective of the rejection of nuclear power in defence of the coal mining industry, the future of which was looking increasingly insecure.⁴²³ Following a period of press leaks, pressure from the media, speculation and government refusals, on March 10th 1980, the BBC *Panorama* programme featured the government's 'restricted' *Protect and Survive* civil defence pamphlet, which had only been intended for distribution if a nuclear attack was imminent.⁴²⁴ [Figure 18] Animated government public information films also surfaced, intended for television broadcast.⁴²⁵ The *Panorama* programme exemplified a new rebelliousness on the part of some of the British media, who had until this point 'largely colluded with government to restrict public discussion of the realities of nuclear conflict.'⁴²⁶ The advice

targeted between the US and Soviet Union, but Europe, for example). The new weapons developed by both sides marked a further escalation.' Kate Hudson, 2005, p.114.

⁴²¹ Adam Lent, 2001, p.125.

⁴²² *Ibid.*, p.125.

⁴²³ As Jonathan Hogg notes, it is significant to note that Michael Foot, who was to lead Labour in the 1983 general election, was a founding member of CND. See Jonathan Hogg, 2016, p.135. Anthony Messina identified further parliamentary support for disarmament: 'Moreover, in contrast to its first wave, the rejuvenated Campaign enjoys extensive parliamentary support; 135 Labour, 2 Scottish Nationalist, 2 Welsh Nationalist, and 5 Liberal M.P.'s are currently affiliated to Parliamentary CND. The Campaign's trade union links too are far stronger than previously, as demonstrated by the unilateral disarmament motions passed by the Trades Union Congress in 1981 and 1982 and by the 1980, 1981 and 1982 Labour Party annual conferences.' Anthony Messina, 'Postwar Protest Movements in Britain: A Challenge to Parties', *The Review of Politics*, 49, 3, (1987), p.424. As Hogg states, CND affiliation also became common amongst national trade unions, 'By 1985, around 28 national trade unions were affiliated to CND.' Jonathan Hogg, 2016, p.135. See also, Daisy Payling, 'Socialist Republic Of South Yorkshire: Activism in Sheffield in the 1970s and 1980s', (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Birmingham, 2015), p.50.

⁴²⁴ British Film Institute, 'Panorama: If the Bomb Drops...' BBC1, 10 March 1980; Peter Evans, 'Mr Whitelaw considers public demand for information on how to prepare homes for attack.' *Times*, 7 February 1980, p 4. The booklet had been drafted between 1974-1976.

⁴²⁵ For the animated film *Protect and Survive*, see: Central Office of Information (COI), *Protect and Survive* video series, (1976), <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m6U9T3R3EQg>> [accessed 15.03.2016]. The 'nuclear family' portrayed in the video animation were advised to were to stay at home and listen out for air-raid like sirens that would announce imminent attack. In preparation for armageddon, the family was to build a makeshift fallout shelter from household items in an internal room, stocked with radio, store cupboard food and tin opener, as if for an 'elaborate children's den', as Andy Beckett has noted. This was to be the family's shelter from radiation for two weeks, until an 'all clear' signal was sounded-though what was to follow this was ominously unclear. If you were 'caught in the open' during a nuclear attack, the advice was to simply 'lie down'. See Andy Beckett, *Promised You a Miracle: UK 80-82*. (London: Allen Lane, 2015), pp. 82-3.

⁴²⁶ 'In the 1980s, by contrast, establishment media organizations, notably The Times and the BBC, led the way in criticizing government plans.' James Stafford, 'Stay at Home: The Politics of Nuclear Civil Defence, 1968-83', *Twentieth Century British History*, 23 (2012), 383-407, p.385 <<http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/tcbh/hwr034>> . See also Tony Shaw, 'The BBC, the State and Cold War Culture: The Case of The War Game', *English Historical Review*, 494 (2006), pp.1351-84.

centred upon a chilling narrative of self-reliance that belied '[...] the extent to which the state was unwilling or unable to make serious attempts to protect its citizens from nuclear attack.⁴²⁷ E. P. Thompson's polemical response called upon his readers to *Protest and Survive*: 'We must throw whatever resources still exist in human culture across the path of this degenerative logic. We must protest if we are to survive. Protest is the only realistic form of civil defence.'⁴²⁸ [Figure 19] Over 80,000 CND supporters gathered at Trafalgar Square on 26 October 1980, under E. P. Thompson's slogan, 'Protest and Survive', and 1981's Hyde Park rally saw an estimated 150,000 participants.⁴²⁹ This was an impressive turnout for an organisation that had dwindled to only 3000 members in 1979. By 1982, it had 40,000 members, not counting the membership of a multitude of affiliated groups, and by 1983, this reached 100,000. The CND magazine *Sanity* was stocked by W.H. Smiths, and button badges bearing the CND logo once again became a common signifier on young people's clothes.⁴³⁰ The sense of urgency to act, and the emotional burden felt by those who perceived themselves as living on this precipice of total nuclear destruction, whether it was to be triggered by State aggression or accident, one can speculate, formed part of the 'structures of feeling' in early 1980s Britain.⁴³¹

As Anthony Messina and Daisy Payling have noted, the nuclear issue galvanised a significant minority into action across the country, for a cause that was also able to cut across class and party political lines. In a 1984 poll, 23 percent of British people surveyed supported unilateral disarmament, of which only 30 percent were middle class.⁴³² Another 23 percent of early 1980s CND supporters overall identified as members of the Christian church.⁴³³ These factors built this 'second wave' of CND activity between 1979-1987, the swift rise in local and national CND membership, as well as the founding of smaller groups organising however they could in support of anti-nuclear peace, including many women's groups.⁴³⁴ Women played a leading role in direct action against nuclear weapons during the 1980s.⁴³⁵ In August 1981, the 'Women for Life On Earth', a group from South Wales who were not directly affiliated to CND,

⁴²⁷ James Stafford, 2012, p.386.

⁴²⁸ E. P. Thompson, *Protest and Survive*, 2nd ed. (London: CND: Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation, 1980).

⁴²⁹ This was followed by large rallies across the country, and across Europe, the following year. See: Kate Hudson, p.135; See also Tony Samstag and David Cross, 'Protests grow in CND campaign.' *Times*, 26 Oct. 1981.

⁴³⁰ Graham Stewart, *Bang! A History of Britain in the 1980s* (London: Atlantic Books, 2013), Chapter 8.

⁴³¹ Accounts of 1980s Britain frequently note a general sense of impending doom conjured by the nuclear issue. See Andy Beckett, Chapter 5 'Doom City', p.81. For a discussion of 'structure of feeling', see Raymond Williams, *The Long Revolution* (London: Hogarth Press, 1992 [1961]); see also Raymond Williams, *Marxism And Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), pp.128-135, '[...] in effect, a saturation of the whole process of living – not only of political and economic activity, but of the whole substance of lived identities and relationships, to such a depth that pressures and limits of what can ultimately be seen as specific economic, political and cultural system seem to most of us the pressures and limits of simple experience and common sense.' *Ibid.* p.110.

⁴³² Anthony Messina, 1987, p.412; Bruce George and Jonathan Marcus, 'Unilateralism's Second Wave: The 1983 General Election and After', *The Political Quarterly* 55, No. 1 (January-March 1984) pp. 60-71; Daisy Payling, 2015, pp.49-50.

⁴³³ Kate Hudson, 2005, p.141.

⁴³⁴ Anthony Messina, 1987, p.424. Messina stated that '1200 local CND groups now exist'.

⁴³⁵ Many local women's peace groups are featured in contemporaneous Women's 'peace directories', see: Margot Miller et al., *Many Visions Many Hands: Women's Peace Directory* (Shilton: Solid Women, 1986); Lynne Jones, *Keeping the Peace* (London: Women's Press, 1983). An internet archive resource for the Greenham Common Women's Peace Camp has been collected by Lindsay Poultan and Amanda Richardson, <www.yourgreenham.com>, [accessed 01.03.2015]. They also made the film *Carry Greenham Home* (1983) <<http://www.screenonline.org.uk/film/id/577179/index.html>>. Women's actions at Greenham undoubtedly had an impact on the perception of women's roles in social movements on the Left during this period. See also, Kate Hudson, 2005, p.137; Jonathan Hogg, 2016, p.134.

captured the public and press attention in their actions against the scheduled 1983 siting of US Cruise missiles on UK soil, by setting up their staunchly feminist women-only peace camp at RAF Greenham Common, their stated aim to ‘take the toys away from the boys’ through their occupation of the site, and their creative acts of non-violent direct action. Women’s personal and collective gestures, such as ornamenting the miles of perimeter fencing with tokens of childhood to represent life or weaving webs of wool linking women’s bodies to the land took on political resonance in the context of the military base. As art historian Guy Brett described, these actions were ‘crossing the barrier between life and art’ and revealing ‘[...] the striking and paradoxical way in which the small-scale goings-on and concerns of a locality today are connected with the global operations of the superpowers.⁴³⁶

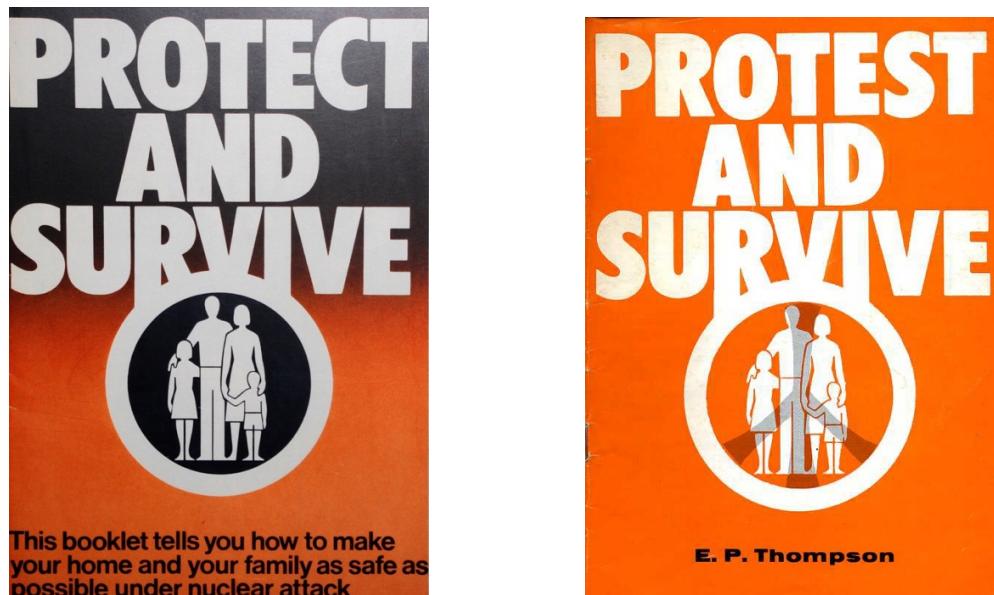


Figure 18: *Protect And Survive*, Central Office of Information (COI).

Figure 19: E.P. Thompson, *Protest and Survive*, CND and Bertrand Russel Peace Foundation, 1980.

4.3 ‘The work emotions do politically’

To reiterate, historian Stephen Brooke has noted the importance of bringing ‘emotion’ into discussions of cultures of democracy to identify ‘the work emotions do politically’, stating that ‘emotion is crucial to political agency and democratic culture, both in terms of experience and in terms of language.⁴³⁷ Drawing upon historical approaches to emotions, Brooke analysed the raw and emotional language used in meetings of the GLC’s Women’s Committee that provoked the Council into action to support ‘material and emotional refuges for women’. ⁴³⁸ Brooke notes that gender disadvantage was expressed in emotional

⁴³⁶ Guy Brett, ‘To rid the world of Nuclear Weapons: Greenham Common.’ *Through Our Own Eyes: Popular Art and Modern History* (London: GMP, 1986), pp. 131-157.

⁴³⁷ Stephen Brooke, ‘Spaces, Emotions and Bodies: The Everyday Cultures of Democracy in 1980s London’, Conference Paper, University of Birmingham, Modern British Studies Conference, 2015. Video recording available at Youtube <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=03pN3P7hbcY>> [accessed 05.11.2015].

⁴³⁸ Brooke cites, amongst others, what Barbara Rosenwein has called ‘Emotional communities’, which ‘...are precisely the same as social communities [...] the researcher looking at them seeks above all to uncover systems of feeling: what these communities (and the individuals within them) define and assess as valuable or harmful to them; the evaluations that they make about others’ emotions; the nature of the affective bonds between people that they recognize; and the modes of emotional expression that they expect, encourage, tolerate, and deplore.[...]The new narrative will recognize various emotional styles, emotional communities, emotional outlets, and emotional restraints in every period, and it will consider how and why these have changed over time.’ Barbara H Rosenwein, ‘Worrying About Emotions in History’, *The American*

terms, women in London were described as ‘isolated’ and ‘burdened by constant childcare’, or found themselves ‘abused’ by racist neighbours or discriminated against by social services. Valerie Wise’s formation of the new Women’s Committee at the GLC dragged the once ‘male, pale and stale’ local government bureaucracy in line with discourses drawn from the women’s movement, and was able to inspire a new compassion at the GLC for women’s everyday struggles.⁴³⁹ In accordance with ideas of socialised childcare provision generated in the women’s movement and social democratic thought, the GLC’s Women’s Committee secured funds to support a network of material spaces, allocated for women’s centres, nurseries and crèches, childcare groups, and even women’s training schemes to improve employment opportunities.⁴⁴⁰

Many of these community based organisations received simultaneous support from other GLC committees such as the Community and Ethnic Arts Sub-Committees, which were keen to work within these networks to secure women their share of London’s cultural sponsorship. Working with the Women’s Committee, other committees sought to ensure that gender disadvantage did not preclude women from having their say on and participating in London’s cultural landscape, or securing employment in London’s burgeoning ‘creative industries’. The use of taxpayers’ money to fund crèches or women’s centres or facilities remained a controversial idea for some Conservative members in the GLC and in central government, with certain organisations reported on with particular disdain in the right-wing press, held up as examples of the so-called ‘Loony Left’ playing fast and loose with public money.⁴⁴¹

One such group was a North London based peace organisation for mothers, ‘Babies Against the Bomb’, whose name had itself proven incendiary enough to provoke press outrage, providing journalists and politicians alike with a useful shorthand for narratives of GLC overspending on minority interests.⁴⁴² Indeed, its name appears in Hansard records on at least eight occasions between 1983 and 1993.⁴⁴³

Historical Review (2002) 107 (3) 821-845, <<https://doi.org/10.1086/ahr/107.3.821>>. See also: Jeff Goodwin et al., *Passionate Politics: Emotions and Social Movements* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001).

⁴³⁹ Linda Bellos, a lawyer who is a black lesbian, and is also half-Jewish, had worked on grants and equality monitoring at the GLC Women’s Committee from 1983, after leaving her job at the feminist *Spare Rib* magazine collective following the internal dispute over the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982, see Andy Beckett, 2015, pp. 358-9. Speaking at a public event in 2016, Bellos described the GLC prior to the Livingstone administration and the new Women’s Committee as ‘male, pale and stale’. Linda Bellos, at ‘A Greater London: The GLC Story’ event at the Rag Factory, London, 02.12.2016.

⁴⁴⁰ As Brooke notes, ‘Space was fundamental to what the Labour GLC did between 1981 and 1986 [...] much of the funding given out to local groups by the GLC went towards the purchase, upkeep and rent of material property [...] The politics of space in 1980s London had particularly sharp edges because GLC funded centres were competing with an emerging neoliberal landscape [...] space was a site of ideological conflict.’ Stephen Brooke, ‘Spaces, Emotions and Bodies’, conference paper, 2015.

⁴⁴¹ GLC supported lesbian and gay men’s organisations were amongst those who received the most negative attention. See James Curran et. al., *Culture Wars* (2005); Stephen Brooke, *Sexual Politics: Sexuality, Family Planning, and the British Left from the 1880s to the Present Day* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013); Lucy Robinson, *Gay Men and the Left in Post-War Britain: How the Personal Got Political* (Manchester; Manchester University Press, 2011).

⁴⁴² John Carvel records Richard Brew, Tory leader of the GLC in 1982, listing [...] feminists and the gay activists [...] ethnic groups and the Irish [...] CND, Babies Against the Bomb’ as part of the roll call of ‘nutters’ whose votes Livingstone was seeking to attract, by way of grant aid. John Carvel, 1984, p.208. James Curran noted that ‘Babies Against the Bomb’ was soon caricatured as ‘Black Lesbians against the Bomb’ in some press reports, see James Curran, 2013, p.119. Andrew Hosken asserted that Babies Against the Bomb was the most contentious of GLC grants. Andrew Hosken, *Ken: The Ups and Downs* (London: Arcadia Books, 2008), p. 151.

⁴⁴³ See for instance: John Wheeler, ‘Local Government and Community Services’ HC Deb 26 April 1983 vol. 41 cc737-823, 770; ‘Local Government (Prevention of Political Corruption)’ HC Deb 23 July 1985 vol. 83 cc886-92; 887; ‘The Defence Estimates 1984’ HL Deb 14 June 1984 vol. 452 cc1256-336, 1314. In 1993, The Parliamentary Under-Secretary



Figure 20: Photograph of Babies Against The Bomb founder Tamar Swade (right), in Lynne Jones, *Keeping the Peace* (London: Women's Press, 1983). p.66.

4.4 Babies Against the Bomb

When one sees the babies against the bomb and the women of Greenham Common, and all these other well-meaning people led astray in this way, then one feels that to some extent our responsibility in giving a leadership has not been fully maintained. The CND and its associates - the whole of the so-called peace movement - are orchestrated from Moscow.⁴⁴⁴

of State for the Environment, Mr. Tony Baldry stated, in a riposte to Ken Livingstone 'Of course, the Labour party in London valued the GLC because it was prepared to finance lunatic left-wing activity. That source of funds for bizarre extremist groups has dried up and no longer is the hon. Gentleman able to lavish money on such bodies as the Marx Memorial library and Babies Against the Bomb [...]. This suggests that the very name 'Babies against the Bomb' could continue to be used to 'explosive' effect in the House of Commons. See: 'District Auditor' HC Deb 27 July 1993 vol. 229 cc1051-8.

⁴⁴⁴ Baron Max Beloff, 'The Defence Estimates 1984', HL Deb 14 June 1984 vol. 452 cc1256-336, 1314. Accusations that links existed between CND, Moscow, the Communist Party of Great Britain and the far left generally were publicised widely by then Defence Secretary, Michael Heseltine. Despite MI5 telephone tapping John Cox, a CND vice chairman, no evidence CPGB manipulation of CND was found. Christopher Andrew, *The Defence of the Realm: The Authorized History of MI5* (London: Allen Lane, 2009), pp.675-6.

Baron Beloff's statement in a House of Lords debate in 1984 was an allusion characteristically disproportionate to the threat posed by a group of mothers who undertook 'sponsored pushchair walks', picketed embassies with prams and held informal coffee morning meetings in Kentish Town and Harlesden. Over coffee, the mothers planned their anti-nuclear consciousness-raising work, gaining some relief from the daytime isolation of motherhood while their children played together. Tamar Swade founded Babies Against The Bomb (BAB) on discovering that 'the pressures of coping with a new-born baby clashed with the needs of an ordinary [peace movement] group'.⁴⁴⁵ It attracted a variety of women, many of whom were completely new to politics, motherhood and feminist ideas, hardly a dangerous faction 'orchestrated from Moscow'.⁴⁴⁶ As BAB founder Tamar Swade recalled, the women were brought together by their common nuclear anxiety: that the greatest threat to their new babies in 1983 was the very real prospect that the world was on the brink of nuclear war,

One woman told me that the mention of nuclear war conjures up the waking nightmare of her children burning. Another pictures kissing her children goodbye for the last time. A third said her particular nightmare was that the four-minute warning would come while she was at work and she wouldn't be able to cross town in time to get to them.⁴⁴⁷

Babies Against the Bomb was one of many women's organisations in receipt of modest financial support from the GLC's Women's Committee to conduct their childcare-friendly meetings, direct actions and consciousness-raising work.⁴⁴⁸ Despite their modest objectives and equally modest draw on public funds, Beloff's statement is illustrative of how BAB and small women's organisations became emblematic of a sensationalised, dangerous radicalism that the GLC were seen to promote. The misrepresentation of this women's group was no doubt a factor in the GLC's sponsorship of a documentary film: *Born 1981: Babies Against The Bomb*, which was to be promoted as part of the GLC's Peace Year 'Films for Peace' initiative in 1983. The film records some of the non-violent direct actions they initiated and participated in, often with their children in tow. A copy of a second edit of this film, entitled 'Child's Play', has been traced in the course of this research.⁴⁴⁹ It will form, in conjunction with an examination of other outputs by cultural producers during GLC Peace Year, the basis for a discussion of what the GLC were attempting to achieve by promoting alternative narratives about the nuclear state, and following Stephen Brooke, what the cultural products of this GLC intervention can reveal about the 'work emotions do politically'.

⁴⁴⁵ Lynne Jones, 1983, p.64.

⁴⁴⁶ Tamar Swade recalled during an interview with the author that Patrick Cormack, then MP for South Staffordshire, referring to Babies Against the Bomb as 'a hotbed of communist subversion' in Parliament, though the author has been unable to verify this statement.

⁴⁴⁷ Tamar Swade, founder of Babies Against The Bomb, discusses the fears expressed by mothers in her group. See Tamar Swade, 'Babies Against the Bomb- A Statement by Tamar Swade' in Lynne Jones, 1983, pp.64-67.

⁴⁴⁸ The GLC Women's Committee contributed only £800 to Babies against the Bomb in 1983/4, which also supported the collection of their petition and local organising. Tamar Swade, interview with the author, London, February 2016.

⁴⁴⁹ *Born 1981: Babies Against the Bomb (Child's Play)*, VHS, dir. Joram Ten Brink and Jini Rawlins, (London: Moonshine Community Arts Workshop, 1983). Following unsuccessful enquiries with the filmmakers, and at the BFI and Concord Films, a copy of a second edit of the film, entitled 'Child's Play', was located by Tamar Swade, founding member of 'Babies Against the Bomb'. I wish to thank Frankie Armstrong whose music provides the film's soundtrack for introducing me to Tamar Swade, and to Tamar, for kindly lending me the tape. 'Community video' productions distributed on obsolete formats have proven vulnerable to archival culling as tapes decay and archives transition to digital. The recovery and analysis of this tape may present a valuable addition to knowledge of participation in the peace movement beyond Greenham Common Women's peace camp, supporting the peace movement's assertion that 'Greenham Women [were] everywhere'.

4.5 ‘Nuclear Cultures’: Unofficial Narratives and Nuclear Anxieties

The anti-nuclear cultural production sponsored during GLC Peace Year 1983 could be understood as a facet of what historians of the British Nuclear State have been broadly termed ‘nuclear cultures’. A contested analytical category, ‘nuclear cultures’ refers to the diverse cultural responses of a population to discourses drawn from nuclear science and the nuclear State, as Jonathan Hogg identifies,

[...] the distinct corner of British culture characterised by the development of the nuclear state and the complex and varied ways in which people controlled, responded to, or represented the complex influence of nuclear science and technology, the official nuclear state and the threat of nuclear war.⁴⁵⁰

Within this, Hogg identifies the presence of ‘official’ and ‘unofficial’ narratives about the nuclear State which circulated in various cultural forms.⁴⁵¹ Significantly, Jeff Hughes has argued that these various nuclear discourses should be considered ‘collectively constitutive of the nuclear condition rather than passive reflections on it’.⁴⁵² Bryan C. Taylor’s concept of ‘nuclear subjectivities’ relates to the ‘physical and psychological impact the nuclear state can have on individual lives’, which often surface in ‘unofficial’ nuclear narratives, and amongst theoretical texts of ‘nuclear criticism’ which emerged in the 1980s.⁴⁵³ Through the circulation of these competing nuclear narratives, Hogg has argued that languages of permanent ‘deterrence’ and of ‘nuclear anxiety’ came to play an important role in how individual British citizens would come to imagine, and ‘feel an intimate connection to’ the nuclear technologies that were otherwise reliant upon abstract scientific ideas somewhat remote from everyday life,⁴⁵⁴

[...] to understand the psychosocial pressures at the heart of the nuclear age we must be sensitive to the powerful role played by diverse nuclear narratives, the knowledge they created, and the individuals involved in their production, dissemination and reception. Only then can we convincingly capture histories of everyday life that reflect the full impact of the nuclear arms race.⁴⁵⁵

The Labour GLC took office in April 1981, a year after the *Protect and Survive* revelations, during a period described by Daniel Cordle as one in which ‘people’s sense of vulnerability’ to nuclear dangers had significantly intensified.⁴⁵⁶ Fear of annihilation, fuelled by renewed academic and media interest in scientifically debunking *Protect and Survive*, gave way to anger at the Thatcher government’s keen participation in US defence plans, and its failure to plan to protect British citizens. This provoked a civil

⁴⁵⁰ Jonathan Hogg, 2016, p.7.

⁴⁵¹ Hogg’s explanation of his use of these terms is as follows: [...] ‘official’ narratives are understood to be those source materials known to have state institutional origin and are linked directly to political and military policy making, civil defence and foreign policy. These were normally pro-nuclear though [...] there were examples of anti-nuclear thought in local and national government. [...] ‘Unofficial’ narratives are taken to mean those source materials created by individuals with no vested interest in the nuclear state but act as a commentary on the nuclear state. [...] terms ‘official’ and ‘unofficial’ should not be taken as definitive.’ Jonathan Hogg, 2016, pp. 8-9.

⁴⁵² Jonathan Hogg, 2016, pp. 1-18; Jonathan Hogg and Christoph Laucht, ‘Introduction: British Nuclear Culture’, *British Journal for the History of Science*, 45(4): 479–493, (December 2012), pp. 490-493; Jeff Hughes, ‘What is British nuclear culture? Understanding Uranium 235’ *British Journal for the History of Science*, 45, 4 (2012), pp. 495-518.

⁴⁵³ From Taylor’s writing on the photography of Carole Gallagher: Bryan C. Taylor ‘Nuclear Pictures and Metapictures’, *American Literary History*, 9 (1997), pp. 567–97; See also Jonathan Hogg, 2016, p. 9.

⁴⁵⁴ Jonathan Hogg, 2016, p.8.

⁴⁵⁵ Ibid. p.11.

⁴⁵⁶ Daniel Cordle, ‘Protect/Protest: British Nuclear Fiction of the 1980s’ *British Journal for the History of Science*, 45, 4, 2012, 653–69, p. 655.

defence rebellion in regional local government, initiated by Manchester City Council, which was the first to declare itself a ‘Nuclear-Free Zone’ in November 1980. By 1982, 140 councils had followed suit and were refusing to comply with the government’s ‘Hard Rock’ nuclear civil defence exercises.⁴⁵⁷ As recent accounts of 1980s Liverpool and Sheffield attest, ‘alternative’ narratives about the nuclear State were emerging in some cases at the level of local government during this period, which were simultaneously ‘official’, given their state-institutional origin, and ‘unofficial’, in their propensity towards nuclear critique, contradicting Central Government narratives.⁴⁵⁸

The GLC’s own secretive Civil Defence Unit at County Hall co-operated with the Ministry of Defence and the Home Office on civil defence strategy, which involved planning for the consequences of a nuclear attack on the capital. Officers in this unit were, perhaps unsurprisingly, uncooperative with the new Livingstone GLC administration’s sudden inquisitiveness on the subject of London’s nuclear war plans, and it took the employment of journalist Duncan Campbell to extract the information, culminating in the publishing of his *War Plan UK: The Secret Truth about Britain’s ‘Civil Defence’*, in 1982.⁴⁵⁹ The uncovered files demonstrated that the Government had neither the ability nor the intention to protect the lives of Londoners in the aftermath of a nuclear attack, let alone assist them should they survive, thereby confirming the official advice in *Protect and Survive* a bleak farce. A few senior Council officials, to be charged with advising the military, would be whisked away to the safety of nuclear bunkers when an attack was imminent, though as Livingstone wryly recounted, ‘The thought of spending my last days locked in a bunker with Mrs Thatcher’s Cabinet while all my friends died held little appeal.’⁴⁶⁰ Livingstone recalled that ‘The Government’s projections were that six out of the seven million inhabitants of London would be dead from blast, radiation and disease within 12 weeks.’⁴⁶¹ As it was believed that Britain might only be able to support a much reduced rural population after the radiation had done its work, Livingstone recounts that official policy involved simply ring-fencing London with troops to prevent anyone still

⁴⁵⁷ See Kate Hudson, p.134.

⁴⁵⁸ Jonathan Hogg, 2016, pp. 9-10; Jonathan Hogg, ‘Cultures of Nuclear Resistance in 1980s Liverpool’, *Urban History*, 42 (2015), p.602; Daisy Payling, 2015.

⁴⁵⁹ Ken Livingstone reported that ‘[...] the civil defence department inside the GLC was filled almost completely with people [civil servants] who had come from the ministry of defence and were completely hostile.’ Ken Livingstone et. al., *Being Red: A Politics for the Future* (London: Pluto Press, 2016), p.13. Elsewhere, he states that they probably ‘considered the new administration to be quite mad and probably Russian agents.’ Ken Livingstone, (1988 [1987]), p.231. On Duncan Campbell’s appointment to the post, see *ibid.*, p.213. See also Ken Livingstone, *You Can’t Say That: Memoirs* (London: Faber and Faber, 2011), p.214; Campbell, Duncan, *War Plan UK: The Truth about Civil Defence in Britain* (London: Burnett, 1982). Campbell’s publication was one of several academic, popular science and popular educational titles on the subject that brought nuclear defence issues and concerns to a wider audience. As Jonathan Hogg noted, ‘Journalism in this period contributed to a sharper popular scientific understanding of what a nuclear attack on our cities would mean.’ Jonathan Hogg, 2016, pp. 139-40. See also British Medical Association, *Report of the Board of Science and Education Inquiry into the Medical Effects of Nuclear War* (London: BMA, 1983); Owen Greene, *London after the Bomb: What a Nuclear Attack Really Means* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982). Indeed, as Jonathan Hogg has identified, the *Daily Express* reflected on this as a ‘[...] boom in “Nuke” books’ in a June 1982 report. Jonathan Hogg, 2016, p. 137. See also Duncan Campbell interviewed on LBC radio on this research, ‘Duncan Campbell on GLC Anti-Nuclear Conflict, 1982’, [audio recording], <http://bufvc.ac.uk/tvandradio/lbc/index.php/segment/0019200128004> [accessed 01.02.2016].

⁴⁶⁰ Ken Livingstone, 1988 [1987], p.231. Quotation preceded by: ‘In each area the military command structure would be advised by three local councillors. This meant that as soon as a war looked likely, I would select two other members of the GLC and together we would be whisked to safety in a massive bunker in Essex, which was also designated for use by the Cabinet and the Royal family.’

⁴⁶¹ *Ibid.* pp. 232-233.

standing from escaping.⁴⁶² This abhorrent revelation went some way towards answering the many questions the euphemistic *Protect and Survive* had left unanswered. There was of course a rational, logical justification for the ‘stay at home’ message of *Protect and Survive*, to allow the State to act to preserve limited resources and plan to retain some semblance of governmental control and ability to retaliate, in the event of a nuclear attack.

This cold, hard logic was of very little consolation to vulnerable urban populations who would be instructed to simply ‘stay at home’ and wait to die, in their millions.⁴⁶³ Jonathan Hogg has stated that *Protect and Survive*, as an ‘icon of nuclear madness’, had ‘significant cultural impact’.⁴⁶⁴ Hogg recounts that early 1980s Britain saw a renewed ‘nuclear anxiety’ and “[...] ‘politics of vulnerability’ [that] saturated popular culture [...] a normative anti-nuclear vocabulary became a component of many pop songs, plays and other works of fiction.’⁴⁶⁵ The tone of cultural responses to nuclear anxieties ranged from the harrowing to the humorous. Jacques Derrida asserted in 1984 that the idea of total nuclear war is ‘fabulously textual’ due to the reliance upon simulations and the discourses and conflicting interests, circulating their interpretations amongst various competing interest groups.⁴⁶⁶ In the early 1980s, tensions arose between competing ‘official’ government narratives of civil defence and the nuclear state, and the ‘unofficial’ nuclear narratives that emerged, circulating within popular culture and in journalism, beyond peace activist networks. These tensions ‘gave rise to more extreme forms of unofficial nuclear expression’, in which anti-nuclear sentiment in cultural responses to the nuclear state became the norm.⁴⁶⁷ Hogg suggests that examination of these examples of nuclear culture in post war Britain could offer historians ‘[...] a new way we can conceptualize cities in an era where nuclear attack was imagined, by some, as a real possibility.’⁴⁶⁸

A significant contribution to Britain’s ‘imagination of nuclear disaster’ also came from the array of TV documentaries and docudramas broadcast in the early 1980s, which also made a particularly terrifying impression on young viewers, as Daniel Cordle and David Seed have identified, programmes such as BBC the *Q.E.D.* documentary on London’s civil defence plans, *A Guide to Armageddon* (1982); or the docudrama

⁴⁶² As Andy Beckett notes, Duncan Campbell was able to uncover diaries of official civil defence exercises, one of which referred to London’s irradiated, post-nuclear-holocaust refugees as ‘zombies’ who were to be prevented from escaping to the surrounding unspoilt countryside. Andy Beckett, 2015, p.91.

⁴⁶³ See James Stafford, 2012.

⁴⁶⁴ Jonathan Hogg, 2016, p. 137.

⁴⁶⁵ Ibid., p.134. See also Daniel Cordle, 2012.

⁴⁶⁶ Jacques Derrida, et al. ‘No Apocalypse, Not Now (Full Speed Ahead, Seven Missiles, Seven Missives)’. *Diacritics* 14, no. 2 (1984): 20–31. Derrida continues, [...] a phenomenon whose essential feature is that of being *fabulously textual*, through and through. Nuclear weaponry depends, more than any weaponry in the past, it seems, upon structures of information and communication, structures of language, including non-vocalizable language, structures of codes and graphic decoding.’ See also Bryan C. Taylor, 1997.

⁴⁶⁷ These were part of a much longer cultural trajectory, in which nuclear debates became normalised in society, as Jonathan Hogg has identified: ‘By January 1980, imagining the effect of nuclear attack on urban centres was a normalized aspect of British culture.’ Jonathan Hogg, 2015, p. 584. Hogg’s recent analysis of the shaping of nuclear narratives, nuclear policy, perceptions of nuclear danger and local nuclear resistances by Liverpool’s local government and urban population during the early 80s, see Jonathan Hogg, 2016, pp.155-6.

⁴⁶⁸ As opposed to only regarding historical accounts of nuclear infrastructure or public opinion polls, Hogg is suggesting ‘nuclear culture’ offers new insight. Jonathan Hogg, 2015, p.586.

imagining a nuclear attack on Sheffield, the ‘most harrowing BBC drama ever’, *Threads* (1984), both of which were directed by Mick Jackson.⁴⁶⁹ In literature, Raymond Briggs’ bestselling 1982 graphic novel, *When the Wind Blows*, [Figure 21] hauntingly rendered in watercolours, depicts an elderly couple’s ordeal as they die slowly from radiation poisoning alone in their homemade shelter, in the aftermath of a nuclear attack.⁴⁷⁰ Nuclear themes had touched pop music’s social conscience across all genres, from the electronic echoes of Hiroshima in Orchestral Manoeuvres In The Dark’s *Enola Gay* (1980),⁴⁷¹ Birmingham’s UB40 in an uncharacteristically sinister, slow reggae number *The Earth Dies Screaming*,⁴⁷² or the ‘Warning, warning, nuclear attack!’ announcement in the first bars of Coventry’s The Specials apocalyptic ska track, *Man at C&A*.⁴⁷³ Nuclear anxieties, and overt themes of resistance against the politics and actions of nuclear states, were a common theme amongst early 1980s anarcho-punk bands. Crass released *Nagasaki Nightmare* (1980) [Figure 22] which featured a fold-out sleeve detailing locations of Britain’s nuclear infrastructure, and also infamously made a spoof cut up tape recording of the voices of Prime Minister Thatcher and President Regan, supposedly discussing the Falklands and Europe as targets for nuclear weapons.⁴⁷⁴

⁴⁶⁹ Paul Whitelaw, quoted in Daniel Cordle, 2013, p.90. Others include *On The Eighth Day* (1984) a documentary that introduced the ‘nuclear winter’ theory, *The War Game* (1965, a banned film screened by peace groups privately to national audiences, but only broadcast in 1985). As David Seed has noted, these broadcasts were often framed by televised debates with politicians and scientists, in the UK and abroad. David Seed, ‘TV docudrama and the nuclear subject: The War Game, The Day After and Threads’ *British Science Fiction Television: A Hitchhiker’s Guide* John R. Cook and Peter Wright eds., (London: I. B. Tauris, 2005), pp. 154-173. Nuclear issues also featured in political satire, including the comedy *Whoops Apocalypse* (LWT for ITV, 1982). See Daniel Cordle, 2013, p.80.

⁴⁷⁰ Raymond Briggs, *When the Wind Blows* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1982). This book features in the Imperial War Museum’s display on the Cold War. In another example, on perhaps a more humorous note, Sue Townsend’s popular fictional teenage diarist, Adrian Mole, 13 and ¾ declared in 1982, ‘Wednesday January 6th: I keep having nightmares about the bomb. I hope it isn’t dropped before I get my GCE results in August 1982. I wouldn’t like to die an unqualified virgin.’ Sue Townsend, *The Secret Diary of Adrian Mole Aged 13 3/4* (London: Methuen, 1982), p.156. For further consideration of the presence of nuclear politics in the Adrian Mole series, see Jonathan Hogg, 2016, pp. 151-2.

⁴⁷¹ OMD, *Enola Gay*, 1980. Virgin Records.

⁴⁷² UB40, *The Earth Dies Screaming*, 1980, Virgin Records.

⁴⁷³ The Specials, *Man at C&A*, Two Tone, 1980. See Andy Beckett, p.89.

⁴⁷⁴ Crass edited this into a spoof ‘telephone conversation’ and posted it to US State Department with a note in 1984, saying it was a ‘crossed telephone line’, which the CIA reportedly mistook for a KGB action. Crass, ‘Thatcherite Tape’, 1983. <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QmfLP1IOip8>>; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tWs_cMrdifl>, [accessed 01.03.2016]. The hoax was covered in early 1984 in *The Sunday Times* and *The Observer*, amongst others. See also reproduced archive material on the hoax from the *KILL YOUR PET PUPPY* blog, (named after the fanzine of the same name by Tony D.) <http://killyourpetpuppy.co.uk/news/crass-capital-radio-reagan-thatcher-tape-new-broadcast-270184/> [accessed 01.03.2016]. See also: Ian Glasper, *The Day the Country Died: A History of Anarcho Punk, 1980 to 1984* (London : Cherry Red, 2006), p.29. Amongst others on Crass’s record label, Flux of Pink Indians’ *They Lie We Die* (1982), had a sleeve which featured nuclear fallout shelter details, and the Poison Girls *I’m Not a Real Woman* (1984), featured a Greenham-inspired feminist anti-nuclear b-side, *Take the Toys Away from the Boys*. This was a different take on a song of the same name by the Fallout Marching Band, documented in the *The Greenham Songbook*, 2007, p.50 <http://www.aldermaston.net/sites/default/files/Greenham%20Songbook1.pdf>, [accessed 25.02.2017].

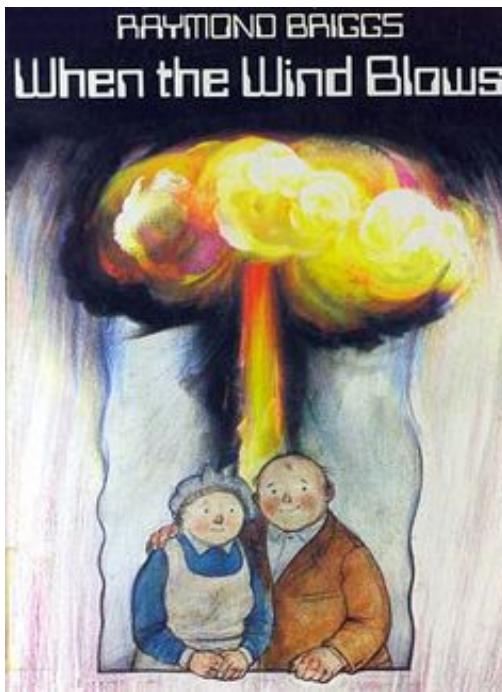


Figure 21: Raymond Briggs, *When the Wind Blows*, 1982.



Figure 22: Crass, *Nagasaki Nightmare*, 1980. Sleeve details.

As Bryan C. Taylor has described, ‘nuclear criticism’ forms a part of the ‘ongoing narrativisation of nuclear reality’, through which nuclear weapons ‘acquire their value and utility’. The roles of the ‘nuclear critic’ within nuclear discourses between state and citizen,

[...] include historicizing the production and accommodation of nuclear hegemony, exposing its ambiguities and contradictions, restoring to public consciousness what it has repressed, providing alternative narratives of the nuclear future, and energizing democratic participation in nuclear policymaking.⁴⁷⁵

The Greater London Council were certainly interested in ‘energizing democratic participation’ in local government policy making more broadly, as well as in rallying the support of popular opposition to central government nuclear policy and London’s civil defence planning, as part of their wider counter-hegemonic project against policies of the Thatcher government. What follows is an analysis of the cultural sponsorship element of the GLC’s participation in British nuclear culture of the 1980s, and its part in the production and promotion of alternative, ‘unofficial’ nuclear and civil defence narratives in London and beyond.

⁴⁷⁵ Bryan C. Taylor, 1997, p.568.

4.6 London: GLC Nuclear-Free Zone

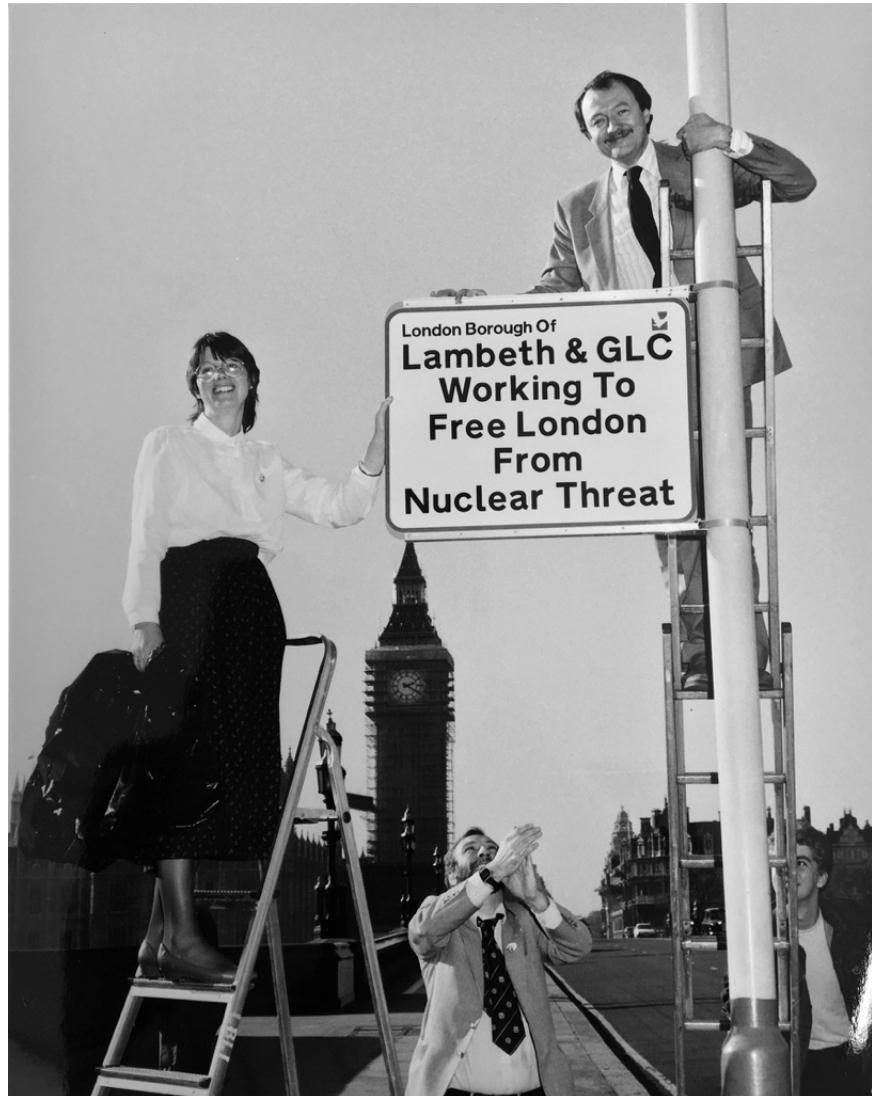


Figure 23: GLC photograph of Ken Livingstone, Valerie Wise and Illtyd Harrington revealing a sign on Westminster Bridge, 'London Borough of Lambeth & GLC working to free London from nuclear threat', 1983. [LMA:GLC/PRB/5].

Resolved to refuse to co-operate with central government, the GLC found new uses for its considerable civil defence budget, in keeping with E. P. Thompson's instruction to *Protest and Survive*, as Livingstone noted,

The idea that the GLC should continue co-operating in the planned genocide of six million Londoners was hard to reconcile with our election manifesto, so we started working with CND and switched the government funds we received for war preparations into the campaign for unilateral nuclear disarmament. [...] we declared 1983 to be 'Peace Year' and organised a series of cultural events and posters throughout the city to reveal to Londoners the Government's secret plans for their sacrifice in the event of war.⁴⁷⁶

The GLC waited until 4th June 1982, in the final weeks of the Falklands conflict and days before President Reagan's visit to Europe, to declared London 'Nuclear-Free Zone', as part of a 'anti-nuclear weekend' of events which included a reception for '500 peace representatives' at County Hall.⁴⁷⁷ An LBC radio

⁴⁷⁶ Ken Livingstone, 1988, pp. 232-233.

⁴⁷⁷ 'GLC to have Nuclear Weekend', *Times*, 3 June 1982.

broadcast reported a GLC ceremony on the balcony of County Hall, marked by the hoisting of the United Nations flag,⁴⁷⁸ a children's choir from peace group 'Hornsey Families against the Bomb' and Illtyd Harrington's firm announcement,

We are saying: we do not want nuclear weapons in or near London: and we are making it abundantly clear that the transportation of nuclear waste is unacceptable to us and we are trying to change the law and increase public awareness of what's going on.⁴⁷⁹

As Livingstone confirmed to LBC, 'we are committed to using the Council to do what we can to advance the cause for peace. We don't believe there is any place for nuclear weapons here in London.'⁴⁸⁰ From this point forward, part of the GLC's civil defence resources were to be redirected into research around nuclear issues pertinent to Londoners, and further resources were put into an explosive public relations campaign to alert Londoners to the threats posed by nuclear war, the exposure of Westminster's ineffectual civil defence procedures, and the transportation of nuclear waste through London by rail, intended to drown out central government's pro-nuclear position.⁴⁸¹ In July 1982, the GLC announced by press release that rather than comply with the Government's planned 'Hard Rock' civil defence exercises, in October it would open up its three intact 'wartime group control centres', concrete communications bunkers intended to protect a handful of council officials in the event of a nuclear attack, inviting the public to 'judge for itself if London could survive the bomb.'⁴⁸² By the GLC's estimate, 4,800 people visited these 'secret' bunkers in six days, and response to the simultaneous planned seminars was 'far greater than expected'.⁴⁸³

⁴⁷⁸ Discussed in the GLC ARC Committee minutes, 20.05.1982. Four members of the committee were opposed to the decision to hold public entertainments and raise the UN flag for the weekend, to announce the nuclear-free zone. See [LMA:GLC/DG/MIN/006/p. 228].

⁴⁷⁹ See LBC/IRN, 'London Declared a Nuclear-Free Zone by GLC', 04.06.1982, audio recording, <<http://bufvc.ac.uk/tvandradio/lbc/index.php/segment/0014300116001>> [accessed 26.02.2017].

⁴⁸⁰ A statement was broadcast on LBC from County Hall's Conservative members, criticising the event as ' [...] nothing more than hypocritical freeloading for party political purposes.' *Ibid*.

⁴⁸¹ In addition to civil defence concerns, the GLC came out against the regular transport of Bradwell, Sizewell and Dungeness's nuclear waste by rail through central London on its way to Cumbria, about which the GLC staged a three-day conference in April 1983, bringing together 600 people, including scientific experts. See John Surrey, *Urban Transportation of Irradiated Fuel* (London: Macmillan, 1984), p.4. The GLC also came out in support of the significant 1983 public enquiry questioning the newly proposed Sizewell B pressurised water reactor in Suffolk. In reality, there was little action the GLC could take against the 'nuclear trains', beyond increasing public awareness of them. For discussion of what the GLC were legally required to do with respect to civil defence, see David Walker, 'GLC to wind down capital's civil defence.' *Times*, 8 September 1982, p. 2.

⁴⁸² The 'Hard Rock' civil defence exercise was postponed from October 1982, due to lack of cooperation from 24 out of the 52 local councils in England and Wales. See Kate Hudson, 2005, p. 136-7. See also [LMA:GLC/DG/PRB/039/347]. These 'area control centres' were located at Pear Tree House, Lunham Road, West Norwood; Church Hill Road, North Cheam and Northumberland Avenue, Wanstead. A further WWII control centre beneath a school in Southall was, and remains, in a state of disrepair. According to an account on the *Subterranea Britannica* website, Pear Tree House became a focus for CND protests during this period, 'Because of its location Pear Tree House received a lot of attention in the 1980s. It was a focus of local CND marches, its blast doors were fly posted and it was open to the public for a week in 1982 for CND's 'Hard Luck' campaign which coincided with the dates of the [government's] cancelled 'Hard Rock' [civil defence] exercise. Speakers during that week included Duncan Campbell and Bruce Kent [of CND].' See Nick Catford. 'Subterranea Britannica: Research Study Group: Sites: Pear Tree House', (2001), http://www.subbrit.org.uk/rsg/sites/p/pear_tree_house/ [accessed 26.05.2017]. [LMA:GLC/DG/PRB/039/nos. 430; 347].

⁴⁸³ [LMA:GLC/DG/PRB/039/no. 454].



Figure 24: Photograph caption from set: 'Leaders of the Inner London Boroughs of Tower Hamlets, Lewisham, Hackney, Brent, Hounslow, Islington, Haringey and Lambeth [...] help Ken Livingstone, Leader of the GLC and Illtyd Harrington, Deputy Leader, to raise the GLC Peace Year Flag. The raising coincided with the visit of Vice President George Bush from America to talk about nuclear weapons.' (dated 1984) The flag bears Peter Kennard's GLC Peace Year Logo. [LMA:GLC/DG / PRB/05/310]

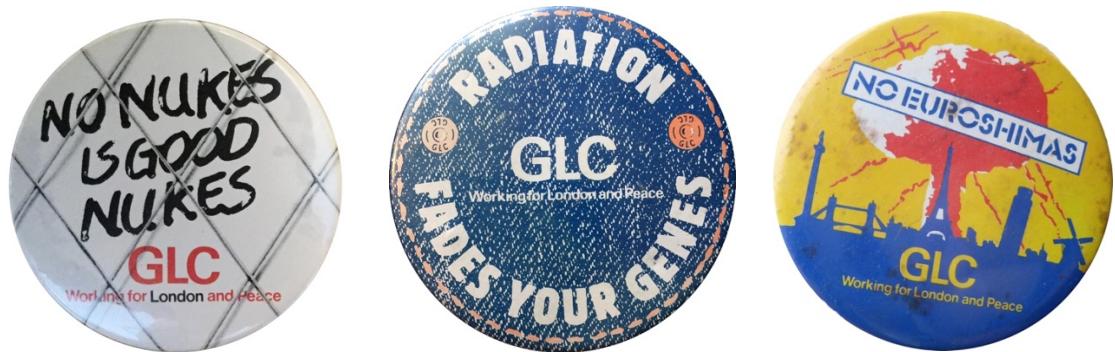


Figure 25: GLC Peace Year Promotional pin badges, 'No Nukes is Good Nukes'; 'Radiation Fades Your Genes'; 'No Euroshimas'. (GLC Public Relations Branch Creative Unit, 1893-84).

4.7 1983: GLC Peace Year

A fortnight after 30,000 women activists famously gathered to 'embrace the base' in a day of action at RAF Greenham Common in late December 1982, the GLC announced by press release that 1983 was to be 'GLC Peace Year', inviting Londoners to participate in peace themed cultural activities.⁴⁸⁴ Peace Year would coincide with Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament's twenty fifth anniversary.⁴⁸⁵ This signalled that culture was to become a key means by which the Council's anti-nuclear message could be communicated to the public.⁴⁸⁶ Sponsored peace-themed events and public arts and recreation commissions were to complement the GLC's 'GLAWARS' research and public relations campaign on the nuclear civil defence issues facing London. This strategy, inviting cultural producers to support a political cause in defiance of central government's position on its nuclear deterrents, would have been unthinkable amongst the apolitical 'arm's length' arts funding bodies like the Arts Council.⁴⁸⁷ 'Peace Year' was an early indicator of the Arts and Recreation Committee's possibilities for expanding the support of popular culture, and the possibility of its strategic deployment of cultural forms, as a vehicle for conveying a political message and generating further popular support.⁴⁸⁸ It was also a foray into the strategy of reaching beyond the Council's own bureaucracy by outsourcing expertise from various interest groups. As Tony Hollingsworth was to relate, in reference to the GLC's later Jobs Year pop music festivals,

We broke the mould in lots of ways, blowing the lid off how a metropolitan authority might campaign on issues and developing what is now called 'cause-related entertainment marketing'.⁴⁸⁹

Tony Banks's advisor, Alan Tomkins, was approached to organise a visual arts programme for peace year.⁴⁹⁰ Admitting that his own knowledge of the peace movement was limited, he recalled inviting Peter Kennard to muster a group of activists interested in the GLC's anti-nuclear message to attend County Hall for a day to draft proposals for cultural activities for 1983.⁴⁹¹ This resulted in a series of new arts

⁴⁸⁴ Kate Hudson, 2005, p.138.

⁴⁸⁵ See CND, *Sanity Magazine*, (London, March 1983).

⁴⁸⁶ Tony Banks stated, 'There can be no better way to convey this message through the length and breadth of London than through the arts.' Press Release, 'What Londoners can do towards Peace Year.' [LMA:GLC/DG/PRB/039/635].

⁴⁸⁷ It was also distasteful to some GLC members, whose objections to various motions are noted throughout the Council minutes.

⁴⁸⁸ Franco Bianchini has suggested that the hugely popular public campaigns that were to follow Peace Year, particularly for 'Jobs Year' 1985, with its very well attended jobs pop music festivals in 1984 and 1985, may have been indebted to strategies deployed in the to 'urban populist' festival approaches of Italian communist local government, as well as the 'Rock Against Racism' campaigning tours by pop musicians in Britain in the late 70s. See Franco Bianchini, 1995; 1987. However, these later festivals were organised by Tony Hollingsworth, whose experience running Glastonbury CND festivals would suggest that the Anti-Nazi League and Socialist Workers Party's 'Rock Against Racism' gigs of the 1970s might also be a fitting reference point for these GLC pop festivals. Alan Tomkins, at interview with the author, thought the Italian connection unlikely, and suggested that there were other traditions, such as wartime morale-boosting concerts and entertainments in UK factories, that were more likely sources of inspiration. The 1984 'Jobs for a Change' festival and 1985 GLC Jobs festival were also organised with the help of Tony Hollingsworth. Hollingsworth's appointment marked a break from the Council's habit of organising everything 'in-house', using only GLC workers, as he was able to subcontract those with expertise to manage large scale public concerts and events.

⁴⁸⁹ See Tony Hollingsworth, 'GLC Festivals and Concerts', n.d., <<http://tonyhollingsworth.com/index.php?q=content/glc-festivals-and-concerts>> [accessed: 20.05.2016].

⁴⁹⁰ GLC ARC, 'Peace Year Committee Report to the Nuclear Policy Group', 16.11.1982, [LMA:GLC/ RA/GR/02/102]. Ken Hulme is named in the archive as the overall 'Peace Year Co-ordinator', which was confirmed by John Dugger in an interview with the author, February 2017.

⁴⁹¹ Interview with Alan Tomkins, Ealing, January 2016.

proposals, by cultural practitioners and various peace organisations, some affiliated to the CND, some independent, in addition to the Arts and Recreation Committee's existing commitment of annual events, into which was to be incorporated the new broad theme of 'Peace'.⁴⁹² The proposals in this initial report indicate the breadth of cultural activities which were to be included under the banner of Peace Year. The remainder of this chapter will attempt to collate some of the scattered archival evidence to document the cultural production sponsored for Peace Year and the GLC's continuing commitment to the anti-nuclear cause until its abolition.

4.8 Publicity for Peace

The GLC launched a very 'successful and expensive' Peace Year poster campaign that was largely responsible for boosting the public profile of the Council's anti-nuclear stance, as John Hoyland has recalled.⁴⁹³ This took the form of a corporate publicity campaign, a series of posters plastered onto advertising hoardings across London in 1983, amongst other free printed publicity materials. The GLC's 'Working for London' slogan was to be amended to 'Working for Peace' for 1983. Contributions to this GLC publicity campaign came from across its various departments, as the implications of declaring London a 'nuclear-free zone' were considered from the perspectives of industry and employment, public health, transportation, and London's public services and fire brigade committees. Newer committees were also consulted, including the Women's and Ethnic Minorities Committees.⁴⁹⁴ While issues such as opposition to the transportation of nuclear waste by rail and the new Sizewell B proposals formed another focus for GLC nuclear investigations and publicity campaigns, it was particularly the perceived threat of nuclear war that became the central focus for both the design of the anti-nuclear campaign, and for the cultural expressions of the Arts Committee's Peace Year proposals, which effectively tapped into the public imagination and anxieties about the possibility of a nuclear attack on London [Figures 26-29].

⁴⁹² Amongst the peace groups who contributed proposals were London Peace Action, Youth CND, Christian CND, International Fellowship for Reconciliation (Netherlands), Japanese Friendship Association, The Chile Solidarity Campaign, and the Quakers. [LMA:GLC/RA/GR/02/102]. Existing annual events such as the annual painting and photography competitions, Thames Day and May Day festivals, and Easter parades also took on a 'peace' theme.

⁴⁹³ As Hoyland notes, 'Peace Year (1983) and Anti-Racist Year (1984) had both been very successful. Largely because of a series of brilliant and expensive poster campaigns, both these 'theme years' had been very visible to the public and had undoubtedly created a considerable awareness of the issues involved.' John Hoyland, 'Reggae on the Rates: The Jobs for a Change Festivals' in Maureen Macintosh and Hilary Wainwright eds., *A Taste of Power* (1987), p.374.

⁴⁹⁴ See GLC ARC Committee, 'Main Programme of Events' 01.02.1983, 'Peace Year Committee Report[...]', 16.11.1982. [LMA:GLC/RA/GR/02/102].



Figure 26: GLC Publicity photograph, Ken Livingstone and Illtyd Harrington, Streatham Common, 1983. 'Don't Litter London's Parks: London's parks could become mass graves in the event of a nuclear strike.' [LMA].



Figure 27: GLC poster campaign, 'Spot the Nuclear Train: and help make London nuclear free.' Billboard showing a 'nuclear train' crossing a bridge over Mare Street, Hackney, 1983. [source: Alamy.com/A0M8GG].

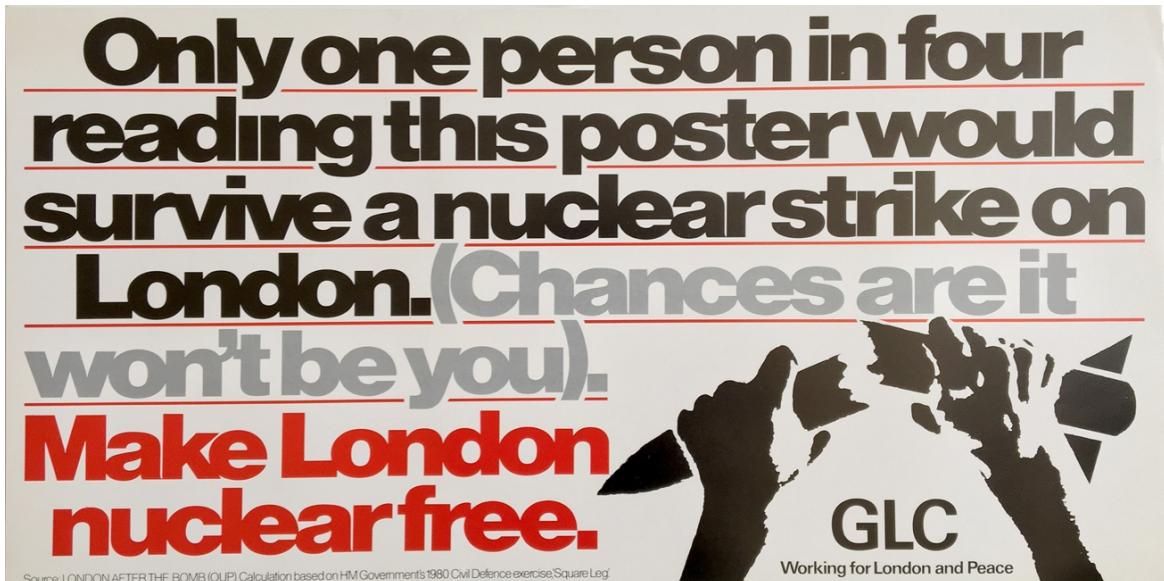


Figure 28: GLC Peace Year poster: 'Only one person in four reading this poster would survive a nuclear strike on London. (Chances are it won't be you).' 1983. Archive of Alan Tomkins.

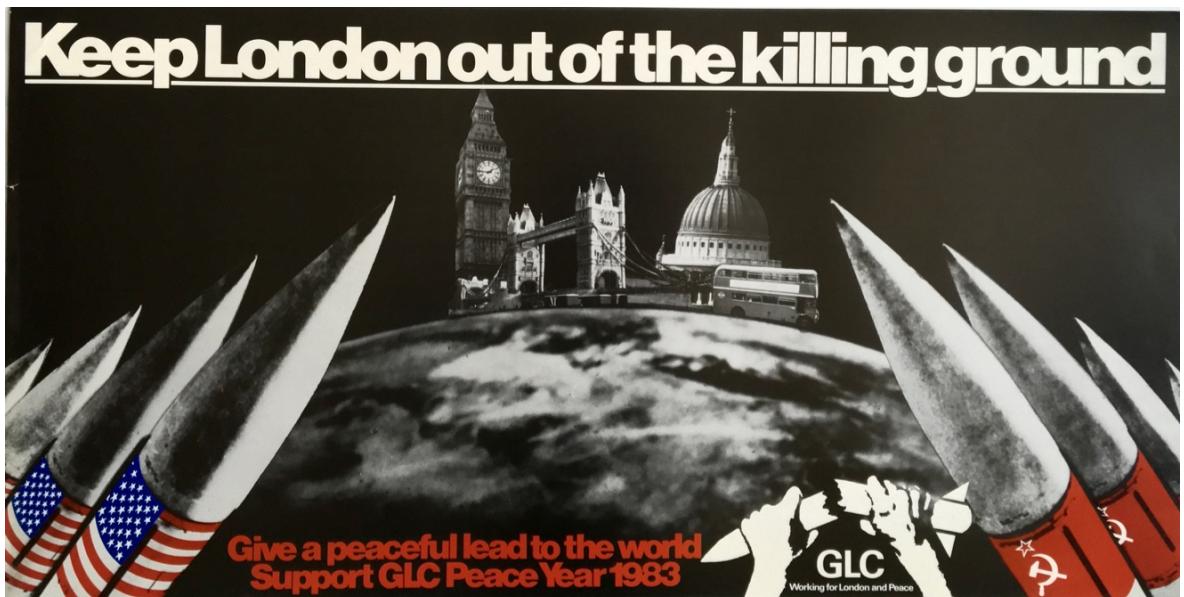


Figure 29: Peter Kennard, *Keep London Out of the Killing Ground*, GLC Peace Year, Poster, 1983. Archive of Alan Tomkins.

4.9 The GLC's (Un)Official War Artists

Peter Kennard, an artist and designer already well known amongst CND campaigners for his political photo-montage work, won with his 'pitch' to design promotional materials for GLC Peace Year against professional advertising agencies, whose suggestions, as Kennard recalls, were largely confined to 'uncontroversial' images of doves.⁴⁹⁵ Kennard's Peace Year logo consisted of a silhouette of two hands snapping a nuclear missile in half, deploying similar imagery to that which he had used previously in CND

⁴⁹⁵ Peter Kennard, interview with the author, 3 September 2015, London Fields. The dove of peace symbol, famously deployed by Picasso, was not 'uncontroversial', see Jonathan Harris and Richard Coeck, *Picasso and the Politics of Visual Representation: War and Peace in the Era of the Cold War and Since*, (Liverpool: Liverpool UP, 2013).

campaigns. Kennard won the pitch on a Friday and made the collages for the billboard poster campaign hurriedly over the weekend, which were printed and plastered across London just three days later. The image was subsequently used to publicise the GLC's activities in the CND magazine, *Sanity*.⁴⁹⁶ One of the most arresting of these images, *Keep London out of the Killing Ground*, is a black and white collage of major London landmarks, including St Paul's Cathedral, The Houses of Parliament, Tower Bridge, and a Routemaster bus, all perched atop the northern hemisphere of the globe [Figure 29]. The cluster of buildings appears in the firing line, flanked by two phalanxes of grey nuclear missiles, those to the west marked by the US Stars and Stripes, to the East, by the USSR's hammer, sickle and star. In an interview with the author, Kennard regrets that the hurried nature of the project caused him to choose to use London landmarks in the image, suggesting during a recent interview that images of places people actually lived, such as a tower block, would have made more impact.⁴⁹⁷

Peter Kennard's *Killing Ground* poster image was also to form the cover of the first of two widely distributed, GLC 'peace poster packs' that Kennard made the first set produced in 1983.⁴⁹⁸ The packs included eleven small posters, each printed in up to three colours, depicting various aspects of the arms race, nuclear war and civil defence, as it related to the British context, with a short foreword written by E. P. Thompson.⁴⁹⁹ These were sent out free of charge to peace groups, community groups, schools and nuclear-free local authorities across the country, with hundreds of organisations and individuals answering newspaper advertisements to request them.⁵⁰⁰ A report from mid-October 1983 reveals that demand for the posters, commissioned in February, had far exceeded the initial print run of eight hundred packs, in the run up to the major London CND demonstration on 22nd October.⁵⁰¹ With the Council receiving about fifty new requests daily, and a backlog of a thousand requests to fulfil, a further 2000 of the 1983 Peace Year packs were produced in 1983.⁵⁰²

⁴⁹⁶ See CND, *Sanity Magazine*, (London: CND, April 1983).

⁴⁹⁷ Peter Kennard, interview with the author, 3 September 2015, London Fields.

⁴⁹⁸ Kennard discusses this work for the GLC further in: Peter Kennard, Amanda Hopkins and Peter Brawne, *Dispatches from an Unofficial War Artist* (Aldershot, Hampshire: Lund Humphries, 2000), pp.85-88. 'I got involved in a number of projects, firstly GLC Peace Posters Pack. I remember collating thousands of my anti-nuclear posters into the packs with a group of sympathisers in an enormous wood-panelled room in County Hall. The pack, which consisted of 12 posters, was ordered by schools, youth clubs, community centres and trade unions. They were designed and printed by Peter Gladwin who I'd begun working with at Camerawork.' Peter Kennard et.al., p. 86. Peter Kennard, 'GLC Peace Posters Pack' 1983, [V&A: E.1511-2004] <http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O1024189/poster-peter-kennard/> [accessed 25.05.2017].

⁴⁹⁹ E.P. Thompson, quoted in Kennard's *GLC Peace Posters Pack*, *Keep London out of the Killing Ground*, 1983: 'Shelley once wrote: 'We must imagine what we know.' The facts about nuclear war are now more readily available thanks to all the work of writers and researchers in the peace movement. But even these stop short of the full human truth, because that human truth can never be understood in terms of the statistics of the dead and the destruction alone. Moreover, the truth is not only about that terrible possible future, it is also about the hypocrisy and the evasion in the discourse of our own times- the great cover-up which is hiding this from the truth of our imagination now. It is only when a gifted artist such as Peter Kennard exposes this to full view that we are able to imagine what we know.'

⁵⁰⁰ At interview, Peter Kennard recalled the GLC's placing of an advertisement for the free posters in the Women's page of *The Guardian*, and receiving many letters from across the country from groups requesting the posters, which he has kept in his personal archive. Peter Kennard, interview with the author, 3 September 2015.

⁵⁰¹ See GLC ARC Committee, report dated 20.10.1983, [LMA:GLC/RA/GR/02/102].

⁵⁰² The second run of 2000 poster packs, which were made and collated by Peter Kennard himself, cost £7000.



Figure 30: Peter Kennard, *Keep London out of the Killing Ground*, GLC Peace Year poster, 1983. GLC Public Relations department photograph, archive of Peter Kennard.

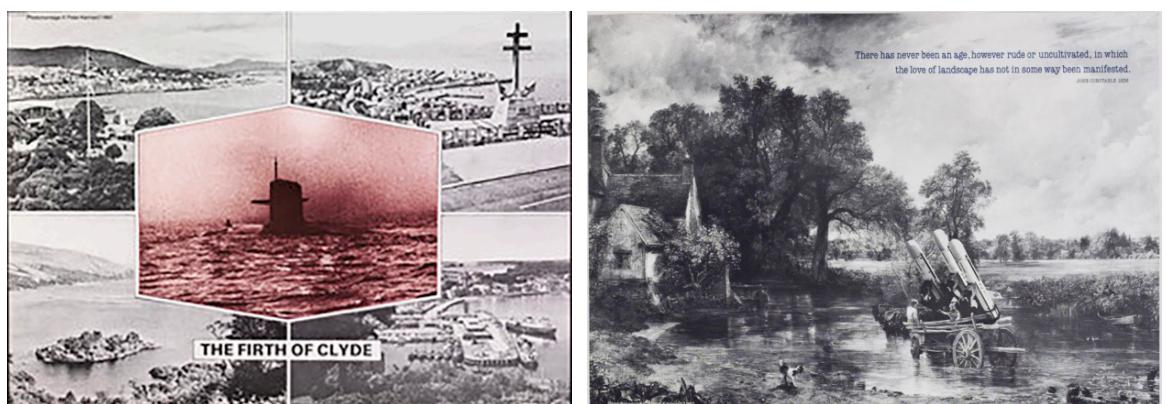


Figure 31: Peter Kennard, *The Firth of Clyde* and *Haywain with Cruise Missiles*, GLC Peace Poster Pack, 1983, A3 colour offset lithograph, V&A.

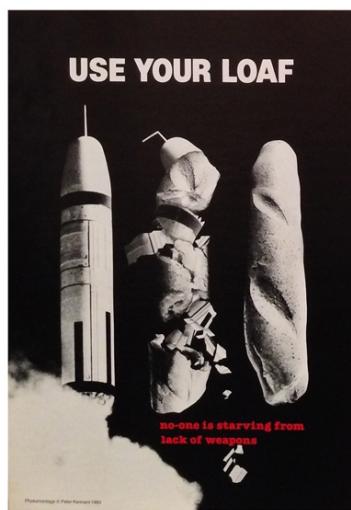
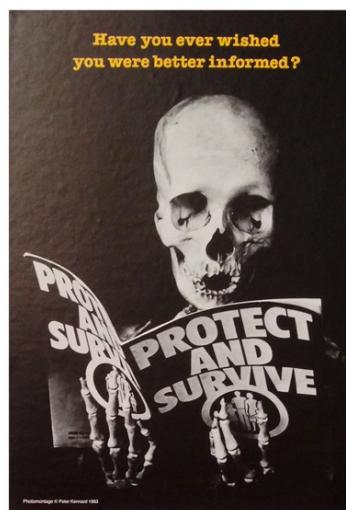
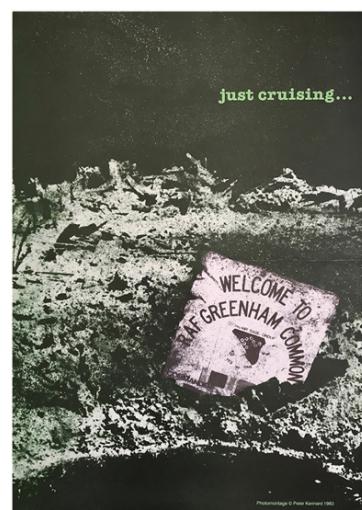


Figure 32: Peter Kennard, GLC Peace Year Posters, A3 colour offset lithograph, 1983. V&A.

The posters included prints of Kennard's well known satirical take on John Constable's painting *The Haywain* (1821), *Haywain with Cruise Missiles*; ⁵⁰³ *The Firth of Clyde* photomontage laid out in the style of a holiday postcard, featuring shadowy images of UK nuclear naval installations in the landscape; ⁵⁰⁴ *Defended To Death*, featuring the Earth wearing a gas mask spewing piercing missiles; ⁵⁰⁵ a photomontage featuring Margaret Thatcher as the Queen of England, holding a toy-sized US Airforce fighter plane; ⁵⁰⁶ *Never Again*, featuring a skeleton torso with an atomic mushroom cloud in place of its skull, alongside the dates of the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki; ⁵⁰⁷ *Stop – Children*, featuring the familiar image of a road crossing guard's sign being brandished against the less familiar, a cluster of nine incoming missiles; ⁵⁰⁸ *Live in a Nuclear Free Zone*, slogan in bold text above a peace symbol embracing a silhouette of the British Isles; ⁵⁰⁹ *Just Cruising*, a poster suggesting a destroyed RAF Greenham Common, in protest at its Cruise missiles store; ⁵¹⁰ *Have you ever wished you were better informed?*, a satirical poster featuring a skeleton reading the government's *Protect and Survive* civil defence pamphlet; ⁵¹¹ *Use your loaf - no-one is starving from lack of weapons*; ⁵¹² *Could You Stomach This?* In which a soldier wears a gas mask, its mouth crammed full of nuclear weapons. ⁵¹³ [Figure 31] [Figure 32]

Following the popularity of the first set, Kennard, with the assistance of graphic designer Peter Gladwin, was given complete control by the GLC to design and produce a second GLC-published peace poster pack in 1985, *Target London. A Set of Photomontage Posters on Civil Defence in London* ⁵¹⁴ this time with a view to including more information on the posters, as Kennard recalled,

The only way to get the anti-nuclear message past the GLC's Tories was to have information on the posters from reputable sources, not just subjective statements. So I researched publications by the British Medical Association for quotations.⁵¹⁵

The new posters featured Kennard's photomontages, this time including information publicising the GLC's Nuclear-Free Zone, the GLC's commissioned GLAWARS study ⁵¹⁶ debunking various aspects of official government civil defence public advice and narratives with quotations from experts, as well as

⁵⁰³ Peter Kennard, *Haywain with Cruise Missiles*, 1983, [V&A: E.1501-2004].

⁵⁰⁴ Peter Kennard, *Firth of Clyde*, 1983, [V&A: E.1493-2004].

⁵⁰⁵ Peter Kennard, *Defended To Death*, 1983, [V&A: E.1507-2004].

⁵⁰⁶ Peter Kennard, Margaret Thatcher as the Queen of England, holding a USAF fighter, 1983, [V&A: E.1500-2004].

⁵⁰⁷ Peter Kennard, *Never Again*, 1983, [V&A: E.1496-2004].

⁵⁰⁸ Peter Kennard, *Stop- Children*, 1983, [V&A: E.1504-2004].

⁵⁰⁹ Peter Kennard, *Live in a Nuclear Free Zone*, 1983, [V&A: E.1502-2004].

⁵¹⁰ Peter Kennard, *Just Cruising*, 1983, [V&A: E.1506-2004].

⁵¹¹ Peter Kennard, *Have you ever wished you were better informed?*, 1983, [V&A: E.1510-2004].

⁵¹² Peter Kennard, *Use your loaf - no-one is starving from lack of weapons*, 1983, [V&A: E.1498-2004]

⁵¹³ Peter Kennard, *Could You Stomach This?*, 1983, [V&A: E.1495-2004].

⁵¹⁴ Victoria and Albert Museum, Summary Catalogue of British Posters to 1988 in the Victoria & Albert Museum in the Department of Design, Prints & Drawing (Haslemere: Emmett, 1990) p.129. These are also mentioned in Richard Cork, *New Spirit, New Sculpture, New Money: Art in the 1980s* (Yale University Press, 2003), pp. 176-179. Cork writes, 'Nor does Kennard let us off the hook in his other Target London posters, commissioned by the GLC to promote its policy of making the city a Nuclear Free Zone.' Richard Cork, 2003, p.177.

⁵¹⁵ Peter Kennard, Interview with the author, 3 September 2015.

⁵¹⁶ The Greater London Area War Risk Study (GLAWARS) was set up in April 1984, commissioned by the GLC to examine the nuclear war risk to London. Its findings were published in 1986, in Robin Clarke, Anne H. Ehrlich, and Robin Clarke. eds. *London under Attack: The Report of the Greater London Area War Risk Study Commission*, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986). The archive of the study resides at the London South Bank University.

discussion of disarmament and the conversion of the nuclear arms industry from the GLC Industry and Employment Branch's research. One poster combined an anti-nuclear message with a statement on the impending abolition of the GLC, in a photomontage entitled *Your Voice?* depicting the action of a disembodied hand placing a vote for the GLC into a ballot box, simultaneously smashing a nuclear missile in half: reminding viewers that a vote in favour of retaining the GLC was a vote of support for unilateral disarmament.⁵¹⁷ [Figure 34] This second set of eighteen boxed posters [Figure 33] were made at a higher quality than the first set, and were sold in shops for £3.95, distributed by Left distributor, *Turnaround*, as Kennard recalled,

It was distributed to alternative bookshops and headshops and the like- there were lots of independent shops at that time, so that was possible, unlike now. In one sense, they are the best thing I ever did – they went out to so many people for under a fiver.⁵¹⁸

Kennard's imagery featured in several other GLC publications on the theme of civil defence, including *London and Civil Defence, A GLC Fact Pack*, a catalogue for an informative public exhibition on civil defence at County Hall, *Blackout to Whitewash: Civil Defence since 1937*, [Figure 36]⁵¹⁹ *The Effects of a Nuclear Bomb Attack on London*,⁵²⁰ and a publication which explored the arms industry conversion plan made by Lucas Aerospace shop stewards in the 1970s, *About Turn: The Alternative Use of Defence Worker's Skills*.⁵²¹ The GLC also hired Peter Kennard's 'Dispatches from an unofficial war artist' photomontage poster exhibition to open Peace Year 1983, at County Hall in 14th January 1983, which was to tour a number of venues in London that year.⁵²² E.P. Thompson, who was well known for his long term commitment to the disarmament campaign and regular *Guardian* column on nuclear issues, was present to open the exhibition. [Figure 35] [Figure 36]

⁵¹⁷ Peter Kennard and Peter Gladwin, *Your Voice?* poster from 'Target London Poster Pack', 1985. [V&A: E.785-1985].

⁵¹⁸ A company that made card boxes for vinyl records was commissioned to make similar A3 portfolios for the new poster set, and Kennard and Gladwin worked with a colour lithographic printing company to perfect the posters' contrast. Peter Kennard, interview with the author, 3 September 2015.

⁵¹⁹ Photographs of the exhibition available at: [LMA:GLC/DG/PRB/5/310].

⁵²⁰ Peter Kennard and Peter Gladwin, *The Effects of a Nuclear Bomb Attack on London* (London: GLC, 1985). Lithographs in this publication are by Peter Kennard and Peter Gladwin.

⁵²¹ GLC, London and Civil Defence: A GLC Fact Pack (London: GLC, 1985); GLC, Blackout to Whitewash: Civil Defence since 1937: A GLC Exhibition (London: GLC, 1985); Bill Evans and Peter Kennard, *About Turn: The Alternative Use of Defence Workers' Skills* (London: Pluto, 1986). Kennard's skills were also drawn upon by the GLC's Popular Planning Unit to create the photomontages for an illustrated book on employment, see GLC, *Jobs for a Change* (London: GLC, 1983).

⁵²² The initial cost of the exhibition at County Hall, was £500, £250 of which was to be spent on publicity. GLC ARC Committee Minutes, [LMA:GLC/DG/MIN/006/05]. In 2016, Peter Kennard exhibited some of this material at the Imperial War Museum in Lambeth, see Peter Kennard and Richard Slocum, *Unofficial War Artist* (London: IWM, 2015).



Figure 33: Peter Kennard, 'Target London' Poster Pack, 1985;



Figure 34: Peter Kennard, *Your Voice*, Target London Poster Pack, 1985.



Figure 35: 'Despatches from an Unofficial War Artist' exhibition poster, 1983. (Archive of Alan Tomkins).



Figure 36: *Blackout to Whitewash, Civil Defence since 1937: A GLC Exhibition*, Catalogue, 1983.



Figure 37: Edward Barber, *Bomb Disposal: Peace Camps and Direct Action*, photography exhibition poster, GLC, 1983. (Archive of Alan Tomkins).

Peter Kennard's opening exhibition was followed by *Bomb Disposal: Peace Camps and Direct Action: A photographic exhibition by Ed Barber* (7-21 March 1983) [Figure 37] which featured Edward Barber's photography, collected over three years from the Greenham Common and Molesworth Peace Camps, placed alongside interviews and statements from Greenham women.⁵²³ Barber's photographs of CND supporters differed from the negative representation more often chosen by newspaper editors of protestors appearing to convey extreme behaviour, such as shouting at police. Instead, they sensitively convey the variety of self-expression, creativity and performativity of demonstrators participating in non-violent direct action against nuclear weapons. The exhibition toured a number of venues including *Camerawork* in E2, and was made available on loan to peace groups.⁵²⁴ The photograph on the poster also featured on the February 1983 issue of *Marxism Today*.

⁵²³ Edward Barber, (1949-2017). See: Sean O'Hagan, 'Edward Barber Obituary', *Guardian*, 23 February 2017.

⁵²⁴ The exhibition was joint sponsored by the GLAA and GLC. GLC press release, 'GLC Focus on Peace Camps, 02.03.1983, [LMA:GLC/DG/PRB/35/040 no. 123]. Images from Edward Barber's exhibition at County Hall were recently displayed at the Imperial War Museum in Lambeth in May 2016: IWM Contemporary, 'Edward Barber: Peace Signs', 26 May-4 September 2016, Imperial War Museum, London.



Figure 38: Edward Barber, 'Babies Against The Bomb' picket the Royal Institute of International Affairs, Chatham House, St. James. October 1981'. Image from IWM exhibition, 2016.



Figure 39: Edward Barber, 'A protestor from the Women's Peace Camp is arrested for obstructing building work outside the Main Gate at RAF/USAF Greenham Common, Berkshire (1982)'. Image from IWM exhibition, 2016.

Ken Hulme, the co-ordinator of GLC Peace Year, had encountered John Dugger's banners while an organiser for the Chile Solidarity Campaign and invited the artist to work for the GLC as an artist and banner-maker in residence, to produce march banners for the GLC and publicity banners for County Hall.⁵²⁵ The first of a series of peace banners commissioned by the GLC from John Dugger's Banner Arts Studio was put on display at County Hall in January 1983 [Figure 40] [Figure 41]. John Dugger, an artist known for his 'People's Participation Pavilion' at Documenta 5, (Kassel, 1972) began Banner Arts in 1978, as studio for the production of screen-print and applique cloth banners. Dugger considers the medium of the banner a form of participatory art. By undertaking commercial banner-making work, Dugger was able to subsidise his own art work, and produce banners for community interest groups, political campaigns and trade unions.⁵²⁶ Dugger proposed that Banner Arts would create a series of banners for GLC Peace year, of 'symbolic or educational' designs, that could be displayed at 'rallies and marches [...] exhibitions and temporary displays in schools, factories and community centres [...] and musical theatre performances'.⁵²⁷ Amongst these were a banner to state the GLC Women's Committee's support for the women's peace movement, in the form of a white peace flag, featuring a map of London and the Thames, at the centre of the spider's web symbols of the women's peace movement [Figure 42]. The web is made in Suffragette green and purple colours, making creative use of metal eyelets, rope and ribbon. Perhaps the more 'symbolic', to use Dugger's description, of the three banner images this research has uncovered in the GLC archive, is one entitled 'Nuclear Time Bomb', which has stylistic resonances with Dugger's earlier *Sports Banner* series.⁵²⁸ [Figure 43] On a red flag, a black rectangular box of explosives, marked 'Nuclear Overkill' and branded with a Peter Kennard collage of nuclear weapons stuffed into a broken image of planet earth, appears to be attached by two orange wires to the positive and negative terminals of a battery marked 'Superpower'. Beside this, a doomsday clock face marking minutes to midnight, suggesting a detonation is imminent. Rather than conveying the dehumanised technological authority and military might of the nuclear state by employing images of their advanced weapons, Dugger has caricatured the machinery of nuclear states as no more sound than a haphazardly home-made time-bomb, a weapon more fitting for the arsenal of Hollywood depictions of terrorists. These banners were carried at various marches and hung at GLC events throughout Peace Year 1983.

⁵²⁵ John Dugger, interview with the author, 21 February 2017.

⁵²⁶ John Dugger, well known amongst art historians for participatory art works, exhibiting alongside David Medalla Lygia Clark and Helio Oiticica, founding the Artists Liberation Front, and for his work at Documenta 5 in 1972, had begun Banner Arts Workshop as a centre for the production of banners for 'community and interest groups'. During the 1980s Banner Arts received support from the Arts Council, GLAA and Gulbenkian Foundation. Dugger wrote a proposal to create a series of ten handmade banners for GLC peace year, at a cost of £1000 each.

⁵²⁷ 'From 1983 to 1985, Dugger was employed as a banner maker for the Greater London Council [...]' John A. Walker, *Left Shift: Radical Art in the 1970s* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2001) p. 204.

⁵²⁸ See: Richard Cork 'Sport and Art: 20 September 1980' in Richard Cork, *New Spirit, New Sculpture, New Money: Art in the 1980s* (Yale University Press, 2003). John Dugger and Banner Arts Workshop, *Sports Banner*, 1980, [Tate: T03166]. This work was recently featured in *Keywords*, Tate Liverpool, 2014.



Figure 40: Ken Livingstone standing in front of GLC Peace Year banner made by John Dugger's Banner Arts, in the lobby of County Hall, 1983. Archive of John Dugger.



Figure 41: John Dugger, Peace Year strip banner, Banner Arts, 1983. Features Peter Kennard's GLC Peace Year logo. Photograph: [LMA:GLC/PRB/05/308].



Figure 42: John Dugger, GLC Peace Year Banner, 'GLC Women's Committee Supports Women for Peace.' *Banner Arts*, 1983. (dimensions unknown). Photograph: [LMA:GLC/PRB/05/308].



Figure 43: John Dugger, GLC Peace Year Banner 'Nuclear Overkill', *Banner Arts*, 1983, dimensions unknown. Photograph: [LMA:GLC/PRB/05/308].

4.10 Films for Peace

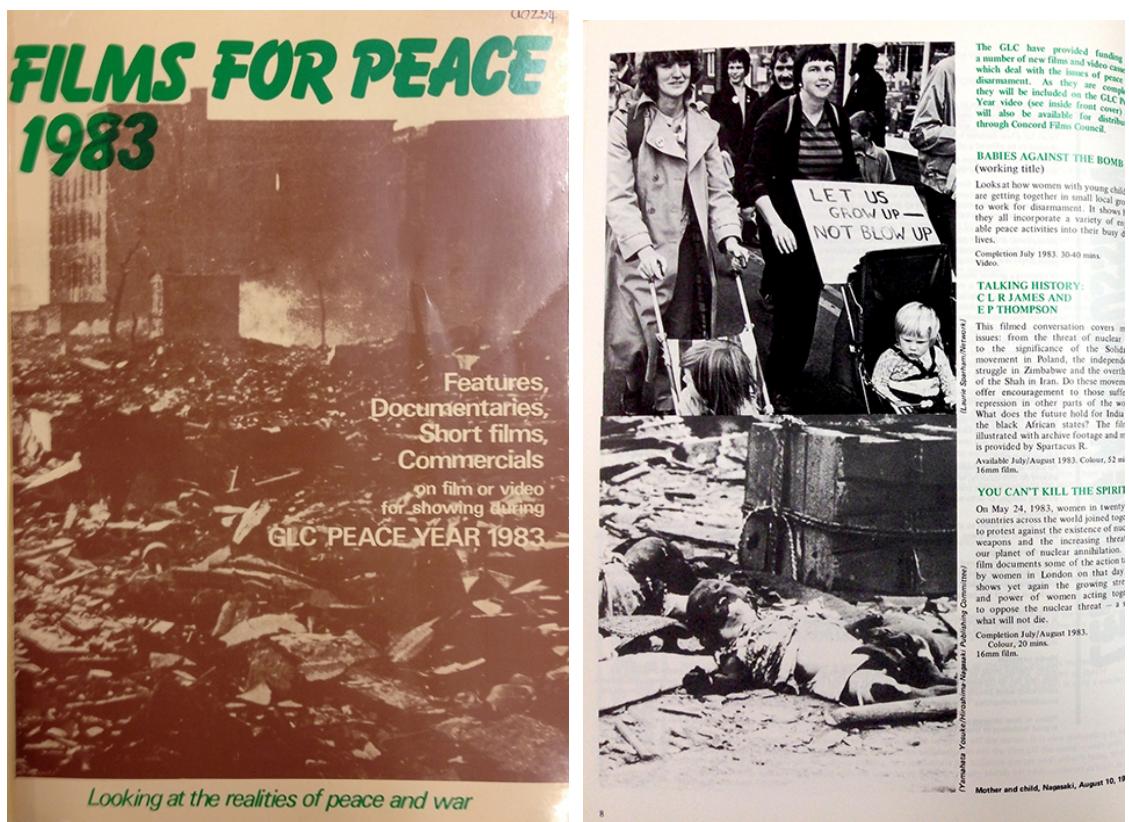


Figure 44: *Films For Peace 1983*, (London: GLC, 1983). [LMA:GLC/DG/PUB/1/158/U0254].

A number of films and documentaries, including several titles by independent and community film makers, received sponsorship from the GLC Peace Year budget in 1983. This took the form of assisting the production or completion of new peace films, funding their exhibition and promotion through a hire catalogue.⁵²⁹ Films were promoted by the GLC in a 10-page catalogue published in May 1983, bearing an image of destruction from Hiroshima on its' cover, *Films For Peace 1983* [Figure 44]. It included a list of suggested viewing on nuclear issues as video tapes available for loan from various libraries and archives to 'community workers, teachers, trade unions and church workers', as well as instructions for holding screenings and discussion sessions.⁵³⁰ The GLC's sponsorship of independent producers to make educational films on nuclear disarmament and peace movement activism, and its participation in the promotion of alternative channels of distribution for independent video documentaries was of significance. Prior to the 1980s, the media in Britain, including the BBC, had had a track record of complying with central government policy on limiting the communication of unofficial nuclear narratives, though by the early 1980s this was changing.⁵³¹ Furthermore, disarmament activism, particularly by women, did not attract much positive media coverage and many within the women's peace movement

⁵²⁹ GLC ARC Committee, 'Peace Year Committee Report [...]', 16.11.1982, [LMA:GLC/ RA/GR/02/102].

⁵³⁰ GLC, *Films for Peace 1983* (London: GLC, 1983), [LMA:GLC/DG/PUB/1/158/U0254].

⁵³¹ The BBC had chosen, for instance, not to broadcast its controversial 1965 drama about a nuclear attack on Kent, *The War Game*, until 1985. Prior to this broadcast, the British media had, according to James Stafford, 'largely colluded with government to restrict public discussion of the realities of nuclear conflict. In the 1980s, by contrast, establishment media organizations, notably The Times and the BBC, led the way in criticizing government plans.' See: James Stafford, 2012, p.385; see also Tony Shaw, 2006.

were motivated to document events as they happened using portable video technology to portray their side of the story. During this period, private screenings of films by peace groups nationally had provided a space where unofficial narratives of Britain's nuclear policy and anti-nuclear activists could be communicated and discussed. The GLC sought to participate in this area to encourage the communication of alternative and unofficial nuclear narratives to promote its own nuclear-free zone message to Londoners, and to act as a corrective to perceived media bias against peace activists.⁵³²

GLC Peace Year organisers presumably saw the proposal for the completion of a documentary film about Babies Against the Bomb (BAB) as an opportunity to set the record straight regarding the unwarranted attention that had been paid to a modest £800 Women's Committee grant in 1983/4 in support of a group of North London mothers running a crèche, albeit one with anti-nuclear leanings. The film records both the performative direct actions against nuclear weapons undertaken by BAB, and more everyday domestic scenes.⁵³³ The opening and closing sequences of the film make dramatic use of the solo voice of English folk singer Frankie Armstrong, performing a peace song she had written for BAB members to sing in the form of an *a capella* call and response, with the Armstrong leading the strident 'call' 'Listen hear the mothers cry ...' and the chorus of mothers respond;

The missiles sleep in concrete tombs,
Shall there be womanly times, or shall we die?
Born of the head, and not the womb,
There will be womanly times, we will not die.

Listen hear the mothers cry,
Shall there be womanly times, or shall we die?
What gift is life if the world must die?
There will be womanly times, we will not die.⁵³⁴

⁵³² A proposal was also made to fund copies of disarmament-themed cinema shorts screened as 'adverts' prior to main features, to promote Peace Year in London's independent cinemas. The two five-minute shorts had already prepared by an independent film maker for the World Disarmament Campaign, one, entitled *Blash*, 1982 featured well-known actors and the singer Ian Dury, talking about their support for disarmament. Another, *Meanwhile on a Distant Planet* (1982), described as 'similar to the Cadbury's 'Smash' advertisement' showed aliens discussing human's nuclear foolishness.' GLC ARC Committee, 'Peace Year Committee Report [...]', 16.11.1982, [LMA:GLC/ RA/GR/02/102].

⁵³³ Joram Ten Brink, and Jini Rawlins (directors), *Born 1981: Babies Against the Bomb/ Child's Play*, VHS, (London: Moonshine Community Arts Workshop, 1983).

⁵³⁴ The song itself was later released as a charity single. Frankie Armstrong and Women from 'Babies Against the Bomb'. 'Shall There Be Womanly Times Or Shall We Die?' (B) /'Message from Mother Earth' (A). Vinyl, 7", Single, 45 RPM. Gateway Studio, London, UK: The Plane Label TPLS 03, 1983. <<https://mainlynorfolk.info/frankie.armstrong/records/mysongismyown.html>> [accessed 16.03.16]. Musical composition and Lyrics by Frankie Armstrong, with title line adapted from the libretto of 'Or Shall We Die?' by Ian McEwan and Michael Berkeley, 1983. Berkeley and McEwan's 1983 'Or Shall We Die?' took as its central theme a mother discovering her daughter dying in the aftermath of the Hiroshima nuclear attack, 'The piece is an assault on unfettered scientific rationality [...] which poses the question "shall we change, shall there be womanly times, or shall we die?"' See Dominic Head, Ian McEwan (Manchester: Manchester UP, 2007), Chapter 4.



Figure 45: Banner reads: 'These pushchairs are empty in memory of thousands of children killed by one small nuclear bomb [...]' Film still of the Babies Against The Bomb sponsored pushchair walk in October 1982.

Accompanied by Armstrong's emotive song, a group of women are filmed staging a sombre march on Whitehall in October 1982, dressed in mourning black and wheeling empty pushchairs upon which rest makeshift tombstones bearing the names of children killed in the nuclear attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.⁵³⁵ [Figure 45] A jarring jump cut follows to monochrome newsreel of Hiroshima's children, suffering from radiation sickness, being tended to by the hands and instruments of unseen doctors. Returning to the protest, the film follows a group of BAB's main organisers passing through police cordons with pushchairs decorated with colourful balloons, to deliver a petition to Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher reportedly bearing 10,000 signatures they had collected from women's organisations across the country in support of disarmament.⁵³⁶

The BAB documentary is exemplary of how 'nuclear cultures' can index particular 'nuclear subjectivities', and in this case, a particular 'emotional community' to use Rosenwein's phrase, built upon the sometimes uneasy relationship between feminism, peace activism and motherhood.⁵³⁷ While motherhood provided

⁵³⁵ 'Yesterday [...] 2,500 "Babies against the Bomb" marchers went from Hyde Park to Downing Street and County Hall. The march was headed by women wheeling empty push chairs representing children killed in Hiroshima and Nagasaki.' *Times*, October 15, 1982.

⁵³⁶ Tamar Swade explained this was a petition collected by Babies Against the Bomb of around 10,000 signatures from women's groups across the country in support of disarmament, delivered to Downing Street in October 1982. Tamar Swade, interview with the author, Kentish Town, February 2016.

⁵³⁷ Barbara H Rosenwein, 'Worrying About Emotions in History', *The American Historical Review*, 107, 3 (2002) 821-845; Stephen Brooke, 2016.

the particular focus of BAB participants' nuclear anxieties, this position was not universally accepted by feminists, as Swade recounted,

There are some feminists who frown upon this attitude and I would like to answer to them. [...] Does it make me any less of a person if my immediate, instinctive reaction to nuclear war is that of a mother? [...] Let's be tolerant, supportive, sisterly.⁵³⁸

The women's statements in the film provide an insight into the role that emotions play in their commitment to disarmament activism, and a record of women's activism beyond the Greenham and Molesworth epicentres during this period. The mothers address the camera directly as they talk as a group and while they work on household chores, intermittently interrupted by their toddlers at play. These scenes of everyday domestic labour take place in their homes, but any suggestion of the insularity of their domestic lives is disrupted by the global reach of their discussions. One mother, while changing a nappy, explains clearly, 'The enemy to my child's future is the presence of nuclear weapons and the arms race. [...] Our country is going to have cruise missiles [...] It is a direct threat to his life to have those weapons here.'⁵³⁹ This threat motivated BAB to organise a coach of London women to join the 'embrace the base' day at RAF Greenham Common in December 1982, where they are filmed forming part of the human chain around the base, as military vehicles drive by inside the fence. One woman speaks of her elation on alighting from the coach at Greenham,

There were just vast amounts of people there. And when we had the link up, to be linking hands with people that you don't know because they believe in what you believe in. I couldn't get over the feeling for days, I felt like a mother seeing her baby for the first time.⁵⁴⁰

Later, she describes the feeling of participating in a BAB demonstration in London:

We went to the Russian embassy and the American embassy, that was just off the top of our heads as there was a guy on the telly saying you should be protesting right outside the embassies rather than Greenham Common, so we said ok, we'll do it! And we done it! Which was a lot to do for just people, a small group of people.⁵⁴¹

Others describe how joining this activist group had given them confidence and purpose. One mother stated, 'I have become more energised in fighting for what I want, as before I was very timid. I was apathetic before.' Another suggests the group relieves the boredom of motherhood,

'[The group is] essential for me [...] It can get so lonely as a mother looking after one baby all day. It's really important to have some mind stimulus.'⁵⁴²

Babies Against the Bomb gave these London women an opportunity to participate in disarmament activism and demonstrations that they perceived to be more sympathetic to their caring responsibilities, also acting more broadly as a source of social and emotional support for these new mothers.

⁵³⁸ Tamar Swade in Lynne Jones, 1983, pp. 64- 67.

⁵³⁹ *Born 1981: Babies Against the Bomb/ Child's Play*, dir. Joram Ten Brink and Jini Rawlins, VHS, (London: Moonshine Community Arts Workshop, 1983).

⁵⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁵⁴¹ Ibid.

⁵⁴² Ibid.



Figure 46: Stills selected from: *Born 1981: Babies Against the Bomb (Child's Play edit)*, dir. Joram Ten Brink and Moonshine Community Arts Workshop, 1982-3.

Produced by
Babies Against the Bomb
 and
Moonshine Community Arts Workshop, London

In a speech to the Conservative Party Conference in October 1982, Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher had dismissed the views of unilateralist parents,

I understand the anxieties of parents with children growing up in the nuclear age. But the question, the fundamental question for all of us is whether unilateral nuclear disarmament would make war *less likely*. I have to tell you it would not.⁵⁴³

While parents anxieties for their own families may have presented a starting point for Babies Against the Bomb participants, their words and actions would suggest that their empathy extended far beyond their personal fears. For these young mothers, Hiroshima's lost children were *their* children, and the children suffering in famines as countries wasted money on weapons were equally *their* children. In the film, Swade passionately reiterates,

Millions of children in the Third World die of starvation, when billions of our money is being put into arms: what sort of a world is it! Even if we blow up tomorrow we must speak out against that. How can we stomach it? How can we live in that sort of world? [...] There are children starving in the gutter [...] The world is now a smaller place and those children starving – they are *our* children starving in *our* gutter.⁵⁴⁴

Babies Against the Bomb's participants claimed in their film that the world in 1982 was 'becoming a smaller place', a felt consequence of both globalisation and the international scale of nuclear capabilities, which not only brought the danger of nuclear war closer to their own homes, but also, they perceived, brought the suffering of mothers across the world to their doorsteps.

⁵⁴³ Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, *Speech to the Conservative Party Conference*, 8 October 1982, Brighton, <<http://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/105032>> [accessed 25.02.2017].

⁵⁴⁴ Tamar Swade in *Born 1981: Babies Against the Bomb/ Child's Play*, (London: Moonshine Community Arts Workshop, 1983). Tamar Swade wrote elsewhere: 'It is my responsibility to and my urgent desire to secure [my child's] survival, to speak for its rights since it can't do so for itself. It is not only for my child that I feel thus. The same feeling now extends to all children.' Tamar Swade, in Lynne Jones, 1983, p.66.



Figure 47: *A Day In May*, Sue Sudbury, Red Pictures, 1983. Concord Media. From left to right: Title sequence; International Women's day co-ordinating office, decorated peace truck, decorated open-top bus, women planting crosses on Streatham Common, participant at a die-in at Camden Town.

A Day In May, [Figure 47] directed by Sue Sudbury⁵⁴⁵ was commissioned and funded by the GLC to document the non-violent direct action taken by women's peace groups in London, and internationally, on 'International Women's Day for Peace', held on 24th May 1983.⁵⁴⁶ The GLC Women's Committee had given a grant of £5000 towards a women's co-ordinating committee, which according to *The Times* was based at the offices of the *New Statesman*.⁵⁴⁷ This committee also featured in the film, acting as the central organiser, monitoring and promoting the day's events. The film shows women decorating London

⁵⁴⁵ Sue Sudbury later worked as a producer and director for BBC, Channel 4 and ITV, continues to produce documentaries and is also a senior lecturer in Television and Film production at Bournemouth University.

⁵⁴⁶ *A Day In May*, Red Pictures, dir. Sue Sudbury, 1984, 23 minutes. See also: 'A Day in May', *British National Film and Video Catalogue*, Volume 22, 1984, p.5. Available to view at Concord Media. <<http://www.concordmedia.org.uk/products/a-day-in-may-2289>> [accessed 09.05.2017].

⁵⁴⁷ Nicholas Timmins, 'Thousands join women's day of missile protest' *Times*, 25 May 1983, p. 2. See also: GLC press release, 'London Women Demonstrate for Peace', 17.05.1983, [LMA:GLC/DG/PRB/35/40, no. 300].

buses and truck ‘floats’ with peace banners and posters, which may have been the buses and floats, ‘equipped with information and video equipment’, that the GLC Women’s Committee press release announced would be touring the capital to promote and record events.⁵⁴⁸ A selection of the six hundred co-ordinated actions taken by women’s groups on this single day in May are recorded in the film, including a final rally at Trafalgar Square in which women formed a human chain stretching to the Ministry of Defence buildings, ‘keened’ at civil servants, and sang ‘You Can’t Kill the Spirit’ and other Greenham peace camp songs.⁵⁴⁹ Another group are recorded enacting a ‘four-minute attack warning’ die-in stopping traffic in Camden Town, others are filmed gathering in a park in Peckham to plant a field of wooden crosses, drawing attention to the site as one of London’s planned ‘mass graves’ for nuclear attack victims, and in each case, women are interviewed for their views. Also described is the story of a doctor in North London who turned all of her patients away for the day, to symbolise that should an attack occur, she would be powerless to help them. Women of the co-ordinating committee are filmed presenting to the press, discussing the importance of women’s self-organised direct action in drawing public attention the peace movement, and the difficulty of achieving media coverage.⁵⁵⁰

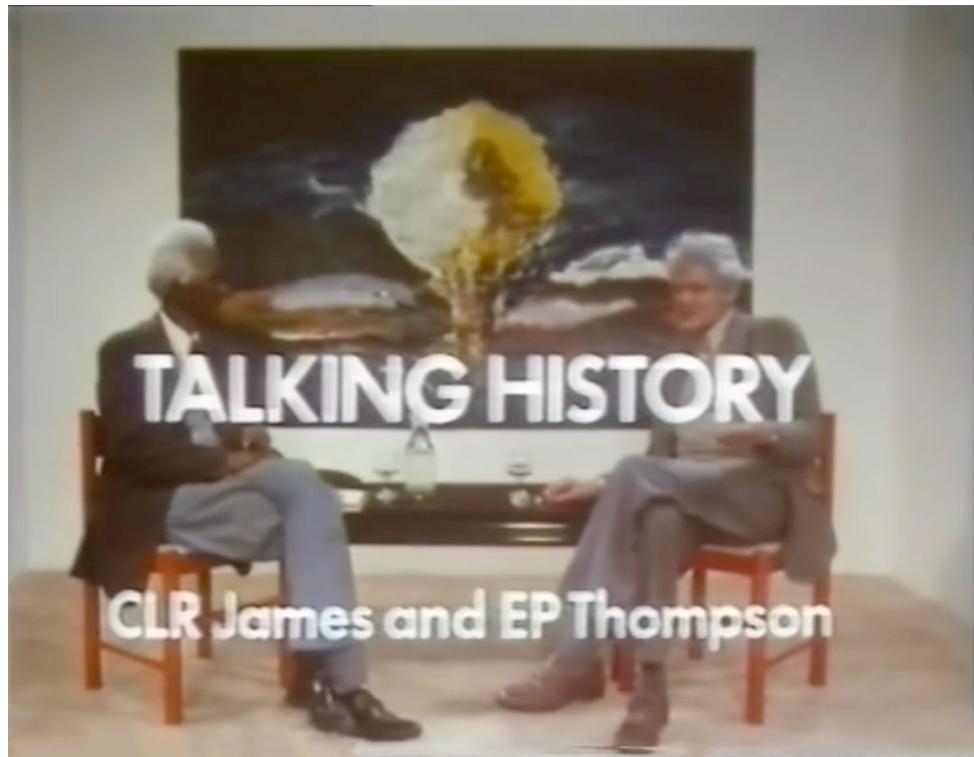


Figure 48: *Talking History*, H.O. Nazareth, Penumbra Films, 1983.

⁵⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁴⁹ For more on the songs created and sung at women’s peace camps, see Anna Reading, ‘Singing for My Life: Memory, Nonviolence and the Songs of Greenham Common Women’s Peace Camp’, in *Cultural Memories of Nonviolent Struggles: Powerful Times*, ed. by Anna Reading and Tamar Katriel, (Hounds Mills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), pp. 147–65.

⁵⁵⁰ This included an interview with Helen John, a founder of the Greenham Common peace camp. The *Times* article lists numerous blockades at military centres across the country, as well as the numbers of arrests of ‘peace women’. Nicholas Timmins, ‘Thousands join women’s day of missile protest’ *Times*, 25 May 1983, p. 2.

Talking History (1983), directed by H.O. Nazareth, documents a public discussion between two veterans of political activism, C.L.R James and historian E.P. Thompson held at the ICA as part of GLC peace year.⁵⁵¹ A wide range of topics, including disarmament activism, media bias and international relations feature in the extended dialogue, which is illustrated and interspersed by newsreel clips and stills of peace activism, and music from Spartacus R.⁵⁵² [Figure 48]

Unstable Elements: Atomic Stories 1939-85 directed by Paul Morrison and Andy Metcalf (Newsreel Collective) is a feature-length documentary and drama in two overlapping parts, combining an historical view of the inception of the atomic energy industry in the Britain and the US from the perspective of physicists working on the Manhattan Project and the interdependent development of the nuclear weapons and energy industries, with a fictional narrative that follows Martin, an atomic scientist experiencing disruption to his family life and a moral dilemma as his nuclear industry work threatens to encroach upon a beloved nature reserve.⁵⁵³ Further research is needed to ascertain the breadth of distribution and public reception of GLC sponsored peace films, but it is likely that they may only have reached limited audiences at small screenings. Nonetheless, as a community film productions made in close collaboration with activist groups, these films provide an important record of particular ‘nuclear subjectivities’ and potentially an alternative, more positive representation of women’s activism than those that more commonly reached mainstream broadcast media.

⁵⁵¹ H.O Nazareth, *Talking History*, with C. L. R. James, E. P. Thompson, distr. The Other Cinema, Penumbra Films, 1983 <http://www.concordmedia.org.uk/products/talking-history-c-l-r-james-and-e-p-thompson-540/> [accessed 26.05.2017]

⁵⁵² H.O. Nazareth was also employed part time to co-ordinate the GLC’s film, video and broadcasting programme for Peace Year in 1983. According to an interview from 1986, H.O. Nazareth studied politics at Kent University, ‘After working at *The Leveller*, he moved into television and formed production company Penumbra, receiving two early commissions from Sue Woodford at Channel 4: a six part talking-heads series between C. L. R. James and E. P. Thompson, which *Punch* magazine selected as the best talking heads show of the year.’ Extract from: Roma Felstein, ‘Exposing the plight of Asian Women: Interview with H. O. Nazareth,’ *Broadcast*, 15 August 1986, p. 10. See also, Robert Brown, ‘Talking History’, *Monthly Film Bulletin*, vol. 51, no. 603, April 1984, p.130. Penumbra Productions was given a ‘completion grant’ £15,000 towards the finishing of *Talking History* at the end of 1982, which enabled the archive picture research to accompany the ‘talking heads’ style discussion. See: [LMA:GLC/DG/MIN/006], 13.12.1982, p.345.

⁵⁵³ *Unstable Elements- Atomic Stories 1939-85* dir. Paul Morrison and Andy Metcalf (Newsreel Collective, 1985). Financial assistance from GLC and Channel 4, 16mm, 90 minutes, <<http://www.concordmedia.org.uk/products/unstable-elements-1194/>> [accessed 09.05.2017]. For reviews, see Kim Newman, ‘Unstable Elements’, *Monthly Film Bulletin*, vol. 52, no. 616, May 1985, p.165.

4.11 Performing Peace: Pop, Proms, Variety and Cabaret

Free concerts featured heavily in the GLC's Peace Year programme, including classical music 'proms' at the GLC's historic houses; three outdoor pop music festivals at Crystal Palace and Victoria Park,⁵⁵⁴ and a peace event featuring 'Latin American music' at the Royal Festival Hall as part of a week of events to mark the tenth anniversary of the military coup in Chile in association with the Chilean Solidarity Campaign. [Figure 52] The GLC also organised cultural events to coincide with the major Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament and People's March for Jobs demonstrations in 1983. As Alan Tomkins recalled in an interview with the author, while direct funding of political marches was not possible under the GLC's legal framework, the Arts Committees were able to sponsor any free recreational activities to entertain the public. Significant GLC sponsorship was also provided for a Youth CND music festival and rally in Brixton's Brockwell Park, which was to follow a march from Victoria Embankment [Figure 49].⁵⁵⁵ On 22nd October 1983, to coincide with the major CND demonstration, a GLC Peace Day was held at Jubilee Gardens, followed by a concert in Brixton [Figure 50]. According to the Arts and Recreation Committee minutes, one music stage was planned to be set up facing the river, 'directed at people marching along the opposite bank of the river and over Westminster bridge [...] the emphasis would be on brass bands, jazz bands with a 'marching beat' and reggae', to welcome the CND marchers.⁵⁵⁶ In addition to organising and sponsoring major public concerts, support for community music and theatre projects was a feature of the Arts and Recreation Committee's work, and 1983's peace theme had already begun to inform arts advisor's judgements. In March 1983, the Fallout Marching Band, a well-known political street band, was sponsored by the GLC to purchase new instruments and perform twenty public concerts, they appeared at CND rallies and several GLC Peace Year events.⁵⁵⁷ A month earlier however, a funding application from a boys' military marching band, the 'Essex Music Corps.' had been looked upon less favourably by community arts advisor Rod Brookes, who noted in his assessment report that its military theme would be a 'large pill' for the arts committee to swallow during Peace Year.⁵⁵⁸

⁵⁵⁴ Crystal Palace Bowl festivals were themed around Black British, Caribbean and African music, and 1960s rhythm and blues, with the final concert at Victoria Park aimed at a 'general' audience to mark Hiroshima Day. It was intended to attract an audience of 100,000 to be '...the largest open air free concert since the 1960s [...] it should attract widespread media attention.' GLC ARC Committee, 'Peace Year Committee Report [...]', p.5, [LMA:GLC/RA/GR/02/102].

⁵⁵⁵ Festival For Peace Youth CND Rally was held at Brockwell Park, Brixton on 07.05.1983, which was granted £21,500 of GLC funds, see *ibid*; also [LMA:GLC/DG/MIN/006/05 vol. 1, January 1983 - June 1983]. The festival line-up featured Madness, Paul Weller's Style Council, The Damned, and Clint Eastwood and General Saint, who had just released their 'Nuclear Crisis' single. The Victoria Park Hiroshima Day festival was granted £42,000 by the Arts and Recreations Committee, see [LMA:GLC/DG/MIN/006/ July 1983 - June 84]. For accounts of the Victoria Park and Brockwell Park festivals, see UK Rock Festivals, <<http://www.ukrockfestivals.com/glc-peace-festivals.html>> [accessed 11.04.2016].

⁵⁵⁶ The relationship between popular music forms, particularly 'Trad Jazz' and the CND has been noted in a variety of sources, including Jeff Nuttal, *Bomb Culture* (London: Paladin, 1968). Once again GLC supports cultural formations emanating from 1950s and 1960s social movements. See [LMA: GLC/DG/MIN/006/p.691].

⁵⁵⁷ The Fallout Marching Band, were a well-known political street band of the 1980s, who are credited with writing two key nuclear disarmament songs included in the 'Greenham Songbook', including 'Chant Down Greenham' and 'Take the Toys away from the Boys'. See Fallout Marching Band's Facebook page, <<https://www.facebook.com/Fallouts/>> [accessed 11.04.2016].

⁵⁵⁸ GLC CAS paper, 'Report by advisory member Rod Brookes' 10.02.1983, [LMA:GLC/DG/PRE/12/03].



Figure 49: Poster, GLC-funded Youth CND Rock The Bomb Festival for Peace, Brockwell Park, May 1983.



Figure 50: Poster, GLC Peace Day For Londoners, Jubilee Gardens, October 1983.



Figure 51: GLC, Hiroshima Day Peace Festival, Victoria Park, 6 August 1983.



Figure 52: Poster, GLC Peace Year Festival for Chile, South Bank, September 1983.

Touring productions, the *GLC Peace Cabaret*, and *GLC Nuclear Bunker Parties*, described as 'new variety / alternative cabaret' and featuring live bands and guest performers, were deployed to take the GLC's anti-nuclear message beyond inner London to the outer boroughs.⁵⁵⁹ [Figure 53] Theatre Centre was sponsored to produce a peace play for adults, touring eleven London venues. *Nineteen Eighty Three*, by playwright David Holman, followed the story of a young English women married to an American driver on a US Air Force base. When the protagonist befriends women protesting against cruise missiles, her own opposition to nuclear war grows, but she is faced with a moral dilemma when she discovers she is pregnant.⁵⁶⁰ [Figure 54]

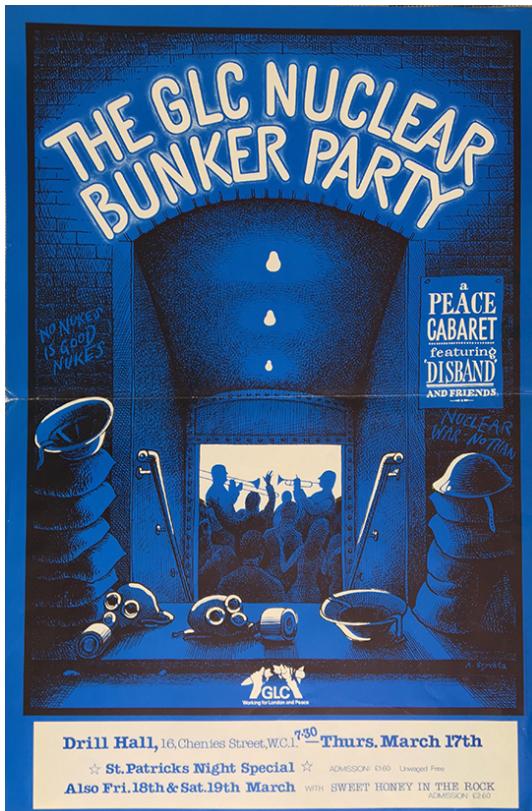


Figure 53: The GLC Nuclear Bunker Party: A Peace Cabaret, Poster, 1983. Archive of Alan Tomkins.

Figure 54: Publicity material, *Nineteen Eighty Three*, by David Holman.

⁵⁵⁹ *Nineteen Eighty Three*, see [LMA:GLC/PRB/35/040/275]. The GLC Peace Cabaret, featuring an in-house band, DISBAND and appearances by various guest performers including Tom Robinson, Benjamin Zephaniah, Spartacus R (of Osibisa), and folk singer Frankie Armstrong began a 15-show tour in February 1983, at Chat's Palace in Homerton, also touring Dagenham, Hounslow, Croydon and Ealing. The 'Nuclear Bunker Parties' toured venues including The Drill Hall and Chat's Palace. See [LMA: GLC/RA/GR/02/102]; GLC press release, 'GLC Peace Cabaret On Tour', 19.01.1983, [LMA:GLC/PRB/35/040/no.25]; GLC press release, 'GLC Peace Cabaret Visits Ealing' 03.03.1983, [LMA:GLC/PRB/35/040/no. 124A].

⁵⁶⁰ Norman Tebbit is quoted in the advertisement, describing Theatre Centre's peace play as 'At best, irrelevant, and at worst, decidedly harmful', while *Times Educational Supplement* responded more positively to the play, '[...] their treatment of a sensitive issue is hard to fault.' GLC press release, 'Peace Play Tours London', 10.05.1983, [LMA:GLC/PRB/35/040/nos. 166; 275]. Theatre Centre was founded by Brian Way in 1953, for Theatre Centre's archive of plays, see: <<http://www.theatre-centre.co.uk/about-us/news/2014/05/theatre-centre-plays/>> [accessed 01.04.2016].

4.12 Wall and Peace: Peace and Public Space

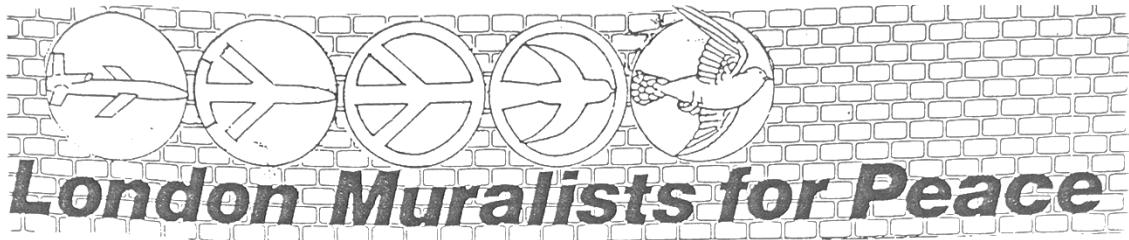


Figure 55: London Muralists For Peace, headed paper logo, 1983. Lambeth Archives.

Exemplifying Stephen Brooke's notion that space became a vital site of ideological conflict under the GLC, the promotion of London's 'nuclear-free zone' also extended to the thematic designation of a number of public recreational spaces as 'peace gardens' during GLC Peace Year, as well as the commissioning of peace-themed public art works such as murals and sculptures, and the construction of the Japanese Peace Pagoda in Battersea Park.⁵⁶¹ London's murals, as Owen Hatherley has recently noted, are today the most visible reminders of GLC 'municipal socialism' in action.⁵⁶² Now more than three decades old, many of these murals have faded into the urban backdrop, peeling, vandalised and neglected, though a few local favourites have been restored. GLC mural commissions represented another strategy in the Council's politicisation of public space, and the cultural articulation of its nuclear criticism.

As muralist Brian Barnes O.B.E, commented in an interview, "The best time for murals was under Thatcher. It reached a peak in 1983 when the GLC decided it would be 'Peace Year' and they wanted anti-nuclear murals all over the city."⁵⁶³ The 'London Muralists For Peace' were a collective of established mural teams from the boroughs of Battersea, Brixton, Greenwich, Hackney and Hammersmith, formed in November 1982.⁵⁶⁴ [Figure 55] Citing as their inspiration Brian Barnes's 1981 *Nuclear Dawn* mural in Brixton, the group proposed to create a series of murals on the theme of 'peace through nuclear disarmament', designed in consultation with the London CND, and assisted by local volunteer groups, for GLC Peace Year 1983.⁵⁶⁵ [Figure 56]

⁵⁶¹ Paul Gough, 'Planting Peace: The Greater London Council and the Community Gardens of Central London', *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, Vol.13, No1, (2007), 22-41. Alan Tomkins of the Arts and Recreations Committee was involved in the securing of the major gift to London of the Japanese Peace Pagoda in Battersea Park, which was completed in May 1985. This was of particular significance, according to Tomkins, due to the explicitly unilateralist stance of the monks and devotees of the Nipponzan Myohoji Buddhist Order, who constructed the Peace Pagoda. For further information, see <<https://batterseapark.org/history/peace-pagoda/>> [accessed 01.05.2016].

⁵⁶² Sometimes these were even clearly marked within their images as 'GLC FUNDED'. Owen Hatherley, 'Murals', in Benedict Drew et al., *Reclaim the Mural: The Politics of London Murals* (London: Whitechapel Gallery, 2013), pp.10-12.

⁵⁶³ Interview with Brian Barnes in Benedict Drew et al., 2013, p.18.

⁵⁶⁴ The collective was made up of artists who had been working on various public murals around London since the late 1970s. It included Brian Barnes and Christine Thomas of Wandsworth Arts Resource Project (WARP) who had initiated the 1981 *Nuclear Dawn* mural in Brixton.

⁵⁶⁵ This well-known mural is still visible, though damaged. It was designed and painted by Brian Barnes, Dale McCrea and volunteers from the housing association. Brian Barnes trained at Ravensbourne and the Royal College of Art. The mural depicts a giant skeletal figure of death sowing nuclear missiles, draped in US, Soviet and British flags, across stalking South London amidst a nuclear mushroom cloud, filled with the shadowy screaming faces of children. In the bottom right hand corner, Death's skeletal foot crushes the Houses of Parliament, and nine political figures, including Margaret Thatcher, are depicted huddled in a subterranean bunker beneath Parliament Square. This lower section of the mural has been badly vandalised, and the site itself is likely to be redeveloped.



Figure 56: *Nuclear Dawn Mural*, Brian Barnes, Coldharbour Lane, Brixton, household emulsion, 50ft x 30ft, 1981.
Photograph: London Mural Preservation Society.

Negotiations for the sites occurred in early 1983, and painting beginning on the various sites in summer of 1983 and continued through the winter months and into early 1984.

Barnes's design for peace year, '*Riders of the Apocalypse*' was located on a 30ft square site on the end house of the Sanford Housing Cooperative in New Cross [Figure 57] [Figure 58]. Sweeping a circular course around the Earth, four apocalyptic cartoon horsemen straddle four nuclear missiles, reminiscent of the final scene of *Dr Strangelove*.⁵⁶⁶ They leave a trail of fluttering banknotes in their wakes, a reminder of the huge cost of the arms race. Flying in the opposite direction, 'to the rescue', are 'comets incorporating symbols of peace', a dove, the CND symbol, feminism's Venus symbol, and a nuclear-free zone symbol.⁵⁶⁷ Golden and branded with the US flag, the first bomb's rider is a skeletal cartoon of President Reagan as Death, grinning and brandishing a scythe. The next two bombs are silver and blue, simultaneously bearing both the Union Jack and a US air force stripes and star symbol. The second rider is a grim, red-eyed cartoon of Margaret Thatcher, wearing a Union Jack pussy bow and a string of pearls. In a stance part cowboy, part witch on a broomstick, she clutches the 'reins', and stands high in the bomb's 'stirrups', appearing to sow the seeds of destruction from her raised hand. Thatcher is flanked by the third rider of the apocalypse, Michael Heseltine, then the Secretary of State for Defence, in a tattered blue suit, with one arm raised as if to flog the bomb like a horse. The fourth rider is Yuri Andropov, riding his soviet branded missile, appearing to gaze across at the other riders rather hesitantly, as they ride on to a collision course with the peace-symbol bearing comets. An embryo in an amniotic bubble floats to the left of the Earth like a vulnerable moon, and in the lower portion of the mural, the distinctive wire fence of RAF Greenham Common is portrayed, decorated with 'personal tokens from the protestors'.⁵⁶⁸ Reagan's golden missile is emblazoned with a portentous hidden anamorphic skull, drawn from Hans Holbein the Younger's *The Ambassadors* (1533), rendering this mural a nuclear *memento mori*.⁵⁶⁹

⁵⁶⁶ *Dr. Strangelove, Or How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb* (Stanley Kubrick, Hawk/ Columbia Pictures 1964). In the final scene, a character straddles a nuclear bomb and waves his arms like a cowboy riding a bull, as it falls to earth.

⁵⁶⁷ Text derived from *Peace Murals 1983 postcard pack, Muralists For Peace*, 1983. [Lambeth Archives, IV/288/2/4].

⁵⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁶⁹ Thanks to Ben Wiedel-Kaufmann for drawing my attention to this detail.



Figure 57: Brian Barnes, *Riders of the Apocalypse*, 1983, Stanford Street, New Cross, Keim Paints, 35ft x 35ft.
Photograph: London Mural Preservation Society.

Figure 58: Image Source: *London Muralists for Peace postcard pack*, Lambeth Archives.

Pauline Harding and Dale McCrea, of the Brixton Community Arts Centre, made a pair of complementary murals, *WAR* and *PEACE*, [Figure 59];[Figure 62] facing each other across a small park on Vining Street, SW2.⁵⁷⁰ *WAR* was designed by Pauline Harding. At the centre of *WAR*, a masked pilot is seated in the cockpit of a fighter jet, collaged from a kaleidoscopic mass of military machine parts, either viewed from above, or directly on a collision course with the earth. Heavily laden with nuclear missiles, the machine parts in the image bear variously the insignia of the US Air Force, a soviet red star, and even a part of St George's flag combined with the USAF Star and stripes. Beneath the machine's right 'wing', a disembodied hand in gunmetal grey reaches to unlock a hatch beneath the text 'LAUNCH'. Below the machine, to the right and the left, are images drawn from photographs of missile stockpiles, and men marching in formation. The image of war depicted in this mural seems to have art historical precedence in the Futurist interest in mechanised warfare, albeit from an 'anti-war' perspective.⁵⁷¹ It evokes the more ominous, dehumanised First World War machine-men portrayed by the British Vorticists,⁵⁷² and in particular, Edward Wadsworth's angular, disorienting *Dazzle-ships in Drydock at Liverpool* (1919),⁵⁷³ which in March 1983 had made an entry into popular culture with the release of *Orchestral Manoeuvres in the Dark*'s studio album *Dazzle Ships*, with its Wadsworth-inspired cover artwork by Peter Saville. [Figure 60] [Figure 61]. This mural is a counter-intuitive, and perhaps counter-hegemonic appropriation of Vorticist or Futurist military style imagery, as while it could be argued that both of these groups to a certain extent glorified war, the GLC sponsored Brixton peace muralists here had the opposite intention.⁵⁷⁴

The counterpart mural, *PEACE*, designed by Dave McCrea, was located across the small park, directly facing *WAR* [Figure 62]. *PEACE*, by contrast, depicts a blue sky and spring landscape with a solitary tree at its centre, 'imprisoned' behind a wire fence reminiscent of those at RAF Greenham Common. A dove appears flying at the apex of the building's roof, but its' skeleton is exposed, and it appears obstructed by a tangle of barbed wire. The lower quarter features a subterranean view at the roots of the tree, populated by a colourful array of 'unicellular organisms' from which life could regenerate, following the nuclear blast. In the background of the landscape appears an image of the mysterious Cerne Abbas Giant of Dorset, cut into the chalk of a green hillside.⁵⁷⁵

⁵⁷⁰ McCrea had also worked on Brixton's 'Nuclear Dawn' mural. The small park has now been built over with a housing development, however, a few inches of the left hand edge of the *WAR* mural is still visible on Vining Road.

⁵⁷¹ The central image of a pilot, apparently on a collision course with its Brixton park location, also recalls the 'Aeropittura' of Italian Futurists, such as Tullio Cralli's images of aerial warfare from the perspective of the dive-bombing pilot. In particular, Tullio Cralli, *Incuneandosi nell'abitato [In tuffo sulla città]*, 1939, oil, 60 x 70 cm, Museo d'arte moderna e contemporaneo, Rovereto.

⁵⁷² Such as the *BLAST!* Journal woodcuts of automaton marchers merging with their bayonets by Wyndham Lewis and C.R.W. Nevinson, See Wyndham Lewis et. al., *BLAST: Review of the Great English Vortex*, no. 1 (London: Lane, John, 1914).

⁵⁷³ Edward Wadsworth's angular, disorienting *Dazzle-ships*. Edward Wadsworth, *Dazzle-ships in Drydock at Liverpool* (1919), oil on canvas, 304.8 x 243.8 cm, National Gallery of Canada.

⁵⁷⁴ There is also a similarity to James Rosenquist's mural-scaled painting, *F-111*, minus the elements of consumerist critique. James Rosenquist, *F-111*, oil on canvas, 304.8 x 2621.3 cm, MOMA, New York.

⁵⁷⁵ The Abbas Giant is a Dorset earthwork monument of indeterminate age that has attracted many interpretations, from ancient fertility symbol to 17th Century satire. See George McKay, *Useless Acts Of Beauty: Cultures of Resistance Since The Sixties* (London: Verso, 1996).



Figure 59: *WAR AND PEACE (WAR)*, Rushcroft Road / Vining Street, SW2. 25ft x 15ft. Pauline Harding, 1983.



Figure 60: Edward Wadsworth, *Dazzle-ships in Drydock at Liverpool*, 1919.

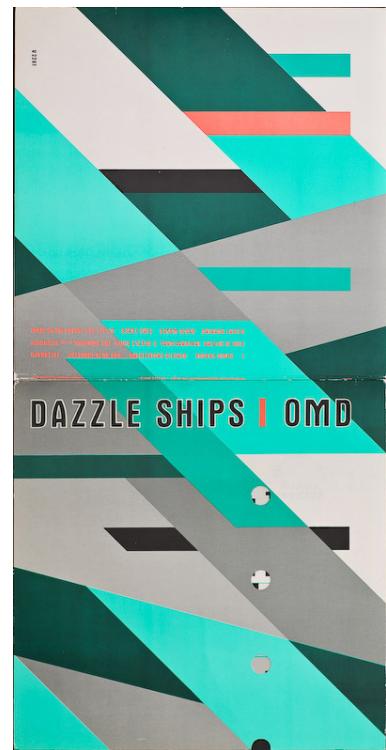


Figure 61: OMD, *Dazzle Ships*, LP cover, 1983. Design by Peter Saville.



Figure 62: *WAR AND PEACE, (PEACE)*, Rushcroft Road /Vining Street, SW2. 25ft x 15ft. Dale McCrea, 1983.

Greenwich Mural Workshop's Steve Lobb, Carol Kenna and Viv Howard designed the *Wind of Peace* mural, [Figure 63] for Creek Road in Greenwich, following consultations with local people from the Meridian Estate.⁵⁷⁶ The Muralists for Peace describe the mural as depicting '[...] local people rising up to defend Greenwich in a spiral of all races destroying the missiles that threaten London.'⁵⁷⁷ Painted onto the side of an end house, and incorporating the shape of the roof and chimneys, this dynamic mural shows a shower of grey tubular nuclear missiles falling vertically from the top of the image. The missiles appear to have been snapped in half, their pointed ends broken off, some appear 'buried' into the ground at the lower section of the image. Nineteen flying figures representing the multi-cultural residents of Greenwich, colourfully dressed in jumpsuits of red, yellow, blue green and purple, hold hands in a circle like a parachute troupe in free-fall (though in fact intended to represent the Greenham women's linking hands to 'embrace the base'), seeming to punch at the offending missiles with their clasped hands.

At the centre of the circle is a view of Greenwich from the air, with shipping industry and the Thames at the centre, and on its south bank, featuring the brown brick blocks of the Meridian Estate, the Cutty Sark, the various white buildings of the Royal Naval College, the Greenwich Observatory, possibly the Trafalgar Tavern facing the Thames, and behind it, the small, brown shed-like 'Trident Hall'.⁵⁷⁸ This is particularly significant, as both the Trident Hall,⁵⁷⁹ and the Royal Naval College, which had held the Department of Nuclear Science and Technology since 1959, are closely connected to Britain's nuclear military history.⁵⁸⁰ Despite Greenwich's participation in London's Nuclear-Free Zone, and local CND opposition, the Naval College still housed the 'JASON' nuclear 'training reactor' within its grounds.⁵⁸¹

⁵⁷⁶ The archive of the Greenwich Mural Workshop now resides at the V&A.

⁵⁷⁷ Text derived from *Peace Murals 1983 postcard pack, Muralists For Peace*, 1983, [Lambeth Archives, IV/288/2/4].

⁵⁷⁸ The buildings are somewhat difficult to make out from the few remaining reproductions of this mural, this is an educated guess (based on Google satellite maps), as to the identity of the buildings depicted.

⁵⁷⁹ Allegedly used as a Naval College lecture theatre in the 1950s when the Trident programme was being planned.

⁵⁸⁰ See Harry Dickinson, *Wisdom and War: The Royal Naval College Greenwich 1873-1998* (London: Ashgate, 2012).

⁵⁸¹ Ibid., p.217. 'The reactor, [fully installed in 1962] later to be known as JASON, became the bane of the local Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament groups and the London Borough of Greenwich, which in the 1980s declared the area a nuclear free zone, was always known as JASON, although why is not exactly clear.' JASON was located in a listed building in the grounds of the Naval College, and was decommissioned in the late 1990s in a complex operation to restore the building to public access, and the spent fuel was dispatched to Sellafield in Cumbria.



Figure 63: 'Wind of Peace', Greenwich Mural Workshop, 269 Creek Road, SE10, Keim Silicate paints, 35'x 35', 1983. Photograph undated (1980s), from 'A London Inheritance' blog, see: <<http://alondoninheritance.com/london-streets/murals-and-street-art-from-1980s-london/>> [accessed 24.04.2017].

Copyright: ALondonInheritance

Ray Walker of East London Murals, whose murals on historical and political themes included the (then in-progress) *The Battle Of Cable Street* depicting the local uprising against Oswald Mosley's fascists in 1936, also began work on the well-loved and recently restored *Hackney Peace Carnival Mural* [Figure 66].⁵⁸² The design was based on the procession of the Hackney Peace Carnival held in 1983, and features local residents amongst its many detailed, lively portraits, uniting in a positive carnival spirit, against the threat of the nuclear bomb.⁵⁸³ Slogans appear in trade union banners, signs and colourful balloons, including very visible 'GLC', 'JOBS NOT BOMBS', 'GREENPEACE', 'ECOLOGY', 'UNITE FOR PEACE', 'NUPE' (National Union of Public Employees), 'HACKNEY CND'. One figure wears a white headband bearing the words 'No More Hiroshimas'. A railway bridge features in the background, daubed with the words 'NUCLEAR FREE ZONE', much like the GLC's 'spot the nuclear train' poster campaigns. Ray Walker died suddenly in 1984, at the age of 39, before he was able to complete the mural. His wife Ann Walker and Mike Jones helped to complete the work, which was officially opened by Tony Banks in 1985 [Figure 65]. The GLC also supported a memorial exhibition at the Royal Festival Hall to celebrate Ray Walker's life and work [Figure 64].

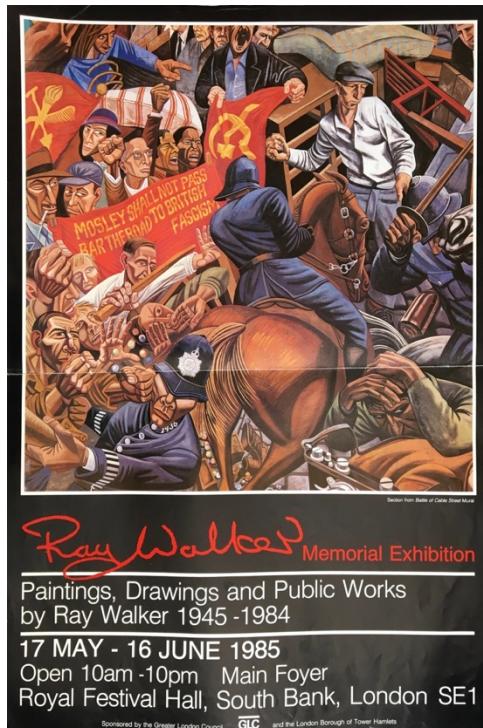


Figure 64: Poster, Ray Walker Memorial Exhibition, 1985, featuring detail from 'The Battle of Cable Street'.

Figure 65: GLC Chair Tony Banks officially receives the Hackney Peace Carnival Mural on behalf of London, Saturday October 19th, 1985.' GLC photograph, [LMA:GLC/PRB/5/153].

⁵⁸² Ray Walker's *Battle Of Cable Street* mural in Shadwell is amongst the most well-known murals in London. See: London Mural Preservation Society, <<http://www.londonmuralpreservationsociety.com/murals/battle-cable-street/>>, [accessed 21.05.2017]. A triptych of mural-sized canvases by Ray Walker also occupy a room in the Imperial War Museum, *Army Recruitment I, II, III, 1980-1982*, see [IWM ART 15423].

⁵⁸³ Due to the limited scope of this chapter, I will only focus on aspects of particular relevance.



Figure 66: *Hackney Peace Carnival Mural*, 13 Dalston Lane, E8. Designed by Ray Walker, completed 1985. Keim Silicate paints.

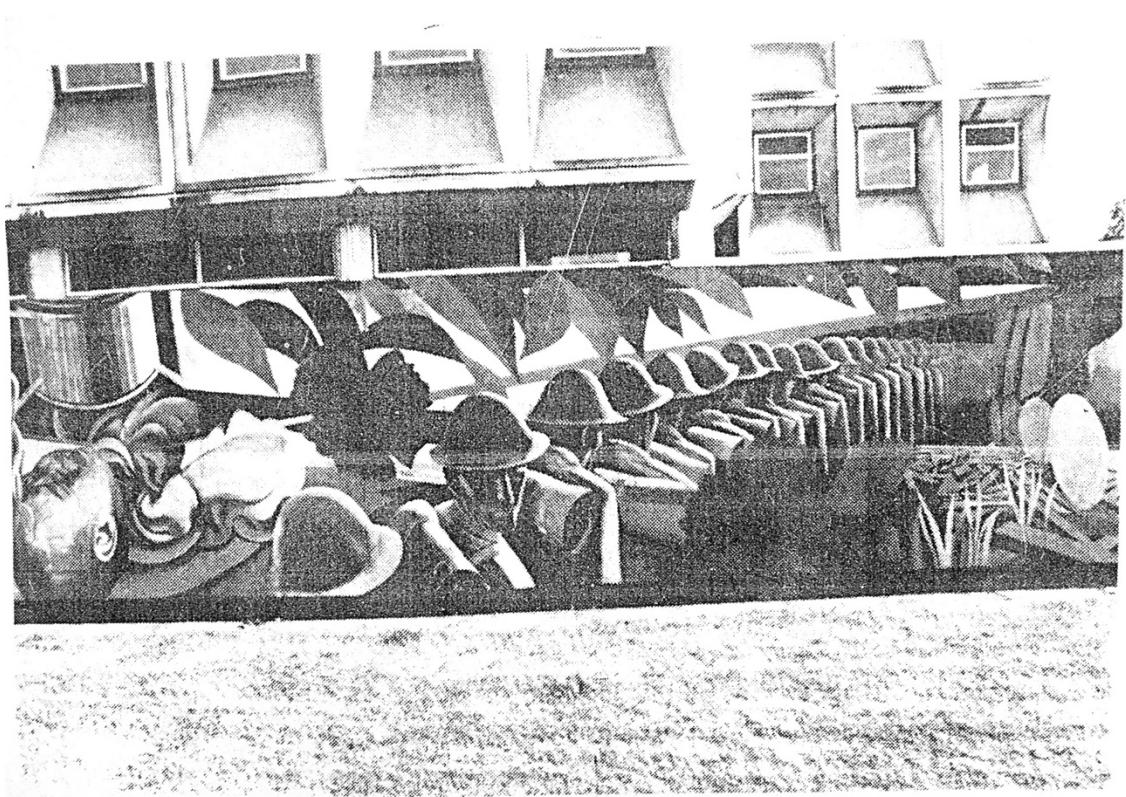


Figure 67: Paul Butler, GLC Peace Mural, British Telecom Building, Uxbridge Road / Cunningham Road. Keim Silicate paints, 13ft x 121ft. ⁵⁸⁴

Paul Butler and Desmond Roachfort of Public Art Workshop in Hammersmith also painted a GLC peace mural [Figure 67], which is now lost, on an old British Telecom exchange building along the Uxbridge Road.⁵⁸⁴ The mural is described in the Muralists For Peace postcard pack:

[...] 162 ft long x 12ft high [...] [Paul Butler] has endeavoured to create a positive image reflecting the unity of humanity. A tree spreads its branches across the upper part of the design, a baby is baptised at the centre, Japanese dancing children and Stonehenge counterpose images of marching troops, ruins of Hiroshima and a missile control console.⁵⁸⁵

The Muralists for Peace claimed that their projects in London inspired a similar series of peace murals being planned by Sheffield City Council, which had also taken an anti-nuclear stance.⁵⁸⁶

⁵⁸⁴ Greenwich Mural Workshop, *A Guide to London Murals since 1976* (London: Greenwich Mural Workshop, 1986). This is the only print reproduction that has been located thus far and is of poor quality.

⁵⁸⁵ Paul Butler, whose work had featured in the 1978 Whitechapel Gallery exhibition, Art For Society. Art for Society: Contemporary British Art with a social or political purpose, Whitechapel Art Gallery 10 May- 18 June 1978 (London: Whitechapel Art Gallery, 1978).

⁵⁸⁶ Text derived from London Muralists For Peace postcard pack, 1983, [Lambeth Archives, IV/288/2/4]. While beyond the scope of this research, entries in Sheffield Archives' 'Cold War Study Guide' suggest that a competition to design peace murals for Sheffield was held in 1984, appearing in Sheffield Council's minutes. [Sheffield Archives CA-POL/15].

In July 1983, the GLC received a new application from 'London Wall', a newly formed four-woman mural team: Louise Vines, Sonia Martin, Susan Elliott and Maggie Clyde, who came together at the Brass Tacks community workshop in Brixton.⁵⁸⁷ For London Wall, their status as an all-female muralist group, struggling to find opportunities as women to work within what they saw as a male dominated 'art world', and their aim to design 'non-sexist' murals, became an important part of their 'pitch' to the GLC Arts and Women's Committees.⁵⁸⁸ In their Peace Year proposal, they stated,

As a result of our discussions with the women at Greenham Common, they would like us to paint a mural to celebrate their work for Peace [...] We have found what we consider to be a most suitable site, the side of a large building located on the corner of Kennington Rd. and Lambeth Rd., the building is directly overlooked by the Imperial War Museum. Our Mural depicting women's struggle for peace and freedom will be seen by all who visit this monument to war. The implication is obvious. ⁵⁸⁹

The Women's Committee noted with interest that the mural would portray women's peace activism positively, giving London women confidence to raise their own objections to nuclear weapons despite the dominant negative press representation of women's peace activism. London Wall's chosen location, Surrey Lodge, was approved by the Women's Committee who proudly stated that 'every member of the public entering the Museum will see the women's peace mural and benefit from [...] an alternative view of warfare from that engendered by the Imperial War Museum.'⁵⁹⁰ London Wall were granted £14,284 by the GLC in October 1983 and began public consultations. However, both their proposed subject matter and provocative choice of location was to cause immediate consternation. London Wall's proposal was to be, in the headline of one paper, 'torpedoed' by residents and the local and national press.⁵⁹¹

⁵⁸⁷ Brass Tacks was community enterprise that provided training and temporary employment to 35 local unemployed people in household furniture and electricals restoration.

⁵⁸⁸ In the statement made by London Wall, 'read to the 'GLC Peace Committee' in July 1983, chaired by Illtyd Harrington.' From Lambeth Archives, 'We feel there is a need [...] to portray women positively in the arts. The non-sexist imagery and sentiment of an all-woman group will obviously differ from a male or mixed group. As we know, there are very few opportunities for women in the art world. There are few well known women painters, art schools employ few women tutors and we are up against even more difficulties than men to survive as artists. By painting murals we make art more accessible than it ever can be in a gallery. By creating an all women group, we are making our own long-awaited opportunity.' [Lambeth Archives, IV/288].

⁵⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁹⁰ Lambeth Archives, IV/288/2/3. Surrey Lodge was owned by the London Borough of Lambeth and leased to South Bank Polytechnic as a student residence.

⁵⁹¹ News articles reporting on the mural dispute between October 1983 and January 1984 included: anon, 'Fury over Red Ken's £14,000 Wall of Peace', *Sun*, 17 October 1983; Anon., 'Express Opinion: An Insult to the Fallen', *Daily Express*, 18 October 1983; Anon., 'GLC set to pay £14,000 for Mural', *Daily Telegraph*, 18 October 1983; Michael King, 'Women's £14,000 Wall of Peace', *Evening Standard*, 19 October, 1983; anon., 'Opinion: Brewing Up Trouble' *South London Press*, 21 October 1983, p.14; Joanna Clark, 'A Better Argument for Peace', *Standard*, 21 October 1983; Judy Hogg, 'War To Wall', *Evening Standard*, letters, 26 October 1983; Michael King, 'Rebels Leave Ken with Back to the Wall', *Standard*, 8 November, 1983, p.11; Hester Brown, 'It's War! Tenants slam peace mural: "We will burn down painting"', *South London Press*, 22 October 1983, p.2; Graham Taylor, 'Wall mural plan is knocked down: Residents halt missile protest', *South London Press*, 20 January 1984; Steve Doughty, 'Peace Mural is Torpedoed by Residents', *Standard*, 25 January 1984. [Lambeth Archives, IV/288/2/3].



Figure 68: Newspaper responses to the Women's Peace Mural proposal, Lambeth Archives, IV/288/2/3.

Below sensationalist headlines, accounts in *South London Press*, the *Sun*, *Daily Telegraph*, *Daily Express* and the *Evening Standard* articulated a variety of local objections, ranging from nearby tenants simply not wanting a mural at all, to complaints to the 'ban the bomb' message, fears that a political mural would quickly be vandalised, as well as objections to the spending of rates to pay for artists.⁵⁹² [Figure 68] In a rare moment of nuanced consideration, one letter printed in *Evening Standard* questioned the GLC's assumption that the Imperial War Museum's purpose was to glorify war.⁵⁹³ The Museum itself refused to enter into the affray, its deputy director making a statement that he only hoped a 'good artist' would be chosen.⁵⁹⁴ While London Wall muralist Louise Vines stated that she had drawn a hundred signatures in support of the project, the local press campaign had successfully amplified the negative responses, often drawing upon dominant anti-activist tropes. Vines's defence of the project to the GLC also noted that a

⁵⁹² Clearly local responses to the mural proposal were mixed, despite Louise Vines' assertion in GLC application documentation that she had drawn a 100-signature petition of support. While one letter to *Evening Standard* came out in support of the muralists: 'As a ratepayer of Lambeth and as one of many of the local residents consulted by the London War [sic.] Group, I would like to state my support for the peace mural. [...] The women in the group are neither vandals nor graffiti daubers. They are professional artists.' Judy Hogg, 'War To Wall' *Evening Standard*, letters section, 26 October 1983. One resident of Lambeth Towers, a block adjacent to the proposed site was quoted in the *South London Press*, 'Lambeth Towers resident John Golland said 'I wouldn't care if it were Mickey Mouse or Snow White they were painting. We do not want any mural whatsoever.' Hester Brown, 'It's War! Tenants slam peace mural: "We will burn down painting"', 22 October 1983, *South London Press*, p.2.

⁵⁹³ Joanna Clark, 'A Better Argument for Peace', *London Evening Standard*, Letters, 21 October 1983.

⁵⁹⁴ Robert Crawford, in 'GLC set to pay £14,000 for Mural.' *Telegraph*, October 18 1983.

negative leafletting campaign initiated by opposition Social Democratic Party Councillors in Labour-controlled Lambeth had made it impossible to make the local case for the art work.⁵⁹⁵

London Wall's mural soon became part of familiar press narratives decrying the GLC's 'inappropriate spending' and support of radical causes, with a third of the articles holding 'Red Ken' Livingstone personally responsible for this excess.⁵⁹⁶ The *Daily Express* branded the mural 'An Insult To The Fallen' as commemorated by the Imperial War Museum, also asserting that this move was indicative of the GLC Labour left's threat to the Labour Party's British values,

What is unforgivable is the deliberate insult this represents to the dead of two terrible wars. Unless Neil Kinnock publicly repudiates the Labour leadership in London, Labour nationally will be fatally tainted as the anti-British party.⁵⁹⁷

In response to the local and national media outrage, the mural was relocated to a less prominent and less controversial site, a Community Service Volunteers building facing a petrol station on the Pentonville Road in Kings Cross.⁵⁹⁸ Early sketches and collages held at the Lambeth Archives for the women's mural originally planned suggest a more overt connection to the theme the Greenham Common featuring women, children, echoes of Hiroshima and broken RAF base perimeter fencing [Figure 69]. However, the final design, titled 'The Sankofa Bird' [Figure 71], featured three central women figures linking hands, wearing the green, purple and white of the suffragettes, each representing different ethnicities, (a white woman, wearing white, with cropped hair in the foreground) joined by a child, possibly Japanese, in a dress patterned with cherries, in reference to the cherry trees planted as a memorial to the people of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.⁵⁹⁹ The central woman holds a 'Sankofa bird' in her hand, a symbol frequently used in African Diaspora contexts to symbolise reflection on the past. Above the women, filling apex of the gable end of the building, an eagle has caught a dove in its talons. Eight symbolic images surround the four figures serving to link local women's centres with national peace activism and the international implications of nuclear war. These include a literal depiction of a 'telephone tree', connected by a 'spider's

⁵⁹⁵ Louise Vines, in an application letter to the GLC in late 1983, stated: 'As a result of a campaign against us orchestrated by the SDP and the Press, we lost our original site.' [Lambeth Archives, IV/288/2/3]. SDP councillor for Lewisham East Paul Rossi was quoted in more than one source, dismissing the theme as 'blatant political propaganda', 'The People of Kennington will be appalled when they hear of this scandalous misuse of rate payer's money. I can appreciate that murals can do much to brighten a neighbourhood, but a mural of blatant political propaganda will soon become an obvious target for spray-can paint and graffiti. It will be an eyesore within weeks of completion.', anon., 'GLC set to pay £14,000 for Mural', *Daily Telegraph*, 18 October 1983. Another SDP member is also quoted in opposition, 'Roger Liddle, an SDP Opposition member on the Left wing Labour controlled [Lambeth] council, said – I think the council were startled by the opposition to the whole idea and by the number of tenants who protested. A lot of the local population fought in the last war and were deeply offended at the idea of a 'peace' mural.' Steve Doughty, 'Peace Mural is Torpedoed by Residents', *Standard*, 25 January 1984. Juliet Steyn, writing an article on the mural in 1986, records that an SDP-Liberal Alliance leafleted the area, in an attempt to discredit both the mural and the GLC, arguing that a mural would 'wreck the crossroads and make it ugly.' Juliet Steyn, 'The Women's Peace Mural (The Sankofa Bird)', *Aspects*, Spring 1986. This account is indebted to Steyn's, though utilised an array of materials from the London Wall Ltd. Archive, [Lambeth Archives, IV/288].

⁵⁹⁶ As identified by James Curran et. al., James Curran et. al, *Culture Wars*, 2005; anon., 'Fury over Red Ken's £14,000 Wall of Peace', *Sun*, 17 October 1983; Michael King, 'Rebels Leave Ken with Back to the Wall', *Standard*, 8 November 1983, p.11. See also Juliet Steyn, 1986.

⁵⁹⁷ 'An Insult to the Fallen', *Daily Express*, October 18 1983. These accusations were made in the months following Labour's General Election defeat in June 1983.

⁵⁹⁸ The mural was eventually relocated to a 55ft high x 26ft wide gable end of a Community Service Volunteers building, at 237 Pentonville Road, N1. GLC Women's Committee Bulletin 19, September 1984, [Lambeth Archives, IV/288/2/3].

⁵⁹⁹ By the time London Wall's 'Sankofa Bird' peace mural was completed in 1984, the GLC was celebrating its 'Anti-Racist year', and had begun commissioning work on this new theme.

web' to represent women's emergency communication at Greenham Common; a starving woman and child holding out a begging bowl to represent the waste of money on nuclear defence; a woman imprisoned for her peace activism holding a dove; a nuclear mushroom cloud over a destroyed Kings Cross station and women in overalls carrying a brick hopper, apparently building two local women's centres.⁶⁰⁰ The composition has been compared to the St. Francis altarpiece by Bonaventura Berlinghieri, in which St. Francis stands in the centre, surrounded by scenes from his life.⁶⁰¹ By the time the mural was officially opened by Valerie Wise in its less contentious location in June 1984 [Figure 70], the national press had lost interest in the story and its opening was only noted in the local *St Pancras Chronicle, Islington Gazette* and GLC-supported *City Limits*.

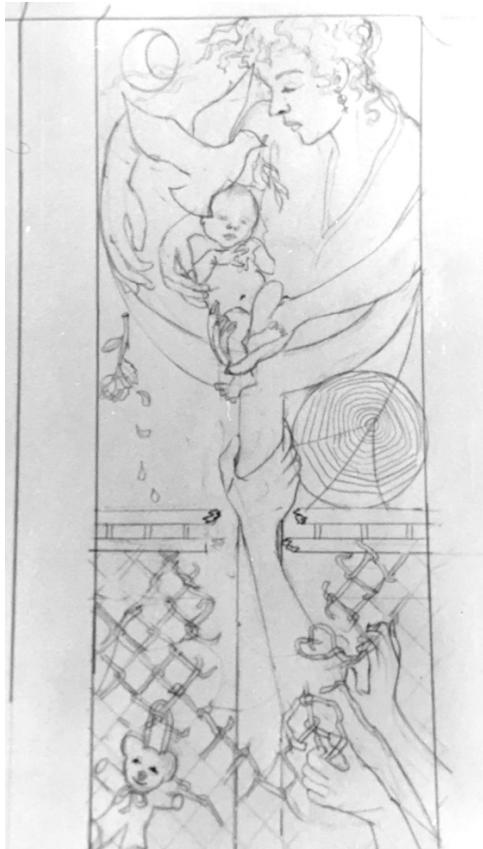


Figure 69: Proposal sketch for a Women's Peace Mural, London Wall Ltd., 1983. Lambeth Archives, IV/288/2/3

Figure 70: Valerie Wise (centre) and London Wall muralists at the opening of the Women's Peace Mural, 1984.

⁶⁰⁰ Including the Camden Women's Centre at 90 Cromer Street and the Women's Centre at Kings Cross, 71 Tonbridge Street. These explanations of the panels are informed by documentation in the London Wall archive, [Lambeth Archives, IV/288/2/4].

⁶⁰¹ Juliet Steyn, 1986; see also: Bonaventura Berlinghieri, *St Francis Altarpiece*, Church of San Francesco, Pescia, Italy, 1235.



Figure 71: *Sankofa Bird Women's Peace Mural*, London Wall Ltd., 1985, pan mastic emulsion, Dimex shield varnish. 26ft x 56ft. Image: Lambeth Archives.

4.13 Summary: 'What gift is life if the world must die?'

This chapter has outlined the Greater London Council's participation in the 'nuclear cultures' of 1980s London and beyond, demonstrating how 'official' local government cultural policy sometimes had a hand in facilitating and circulating 'unofficial' narratives about the nuclear State. The GLC aimed to inform Londoners about perceived nuclear threats to counter the hegemonic central government narrative of defence through deterrence, recruiting new hearts and minds beyond existing CND supporters to the cause of unilateral disarmament.⁶⁰² Conveying complex anti-nuclear arguments to the general public, on the technical side of nuclear science, civil defence, the complexity of international relations and the unthinkable consequences of nuclear war itself, represented something of a communications challenge for the GLC. Peace Year's organisers had recognised that nuclear issues were returning to the fore in British popular culture, and that creative and participatory cultural expressions were already a central part of the non-violent direct action protest repertoire of the rejuvenated anti-nuclear movement of the early 1980s. Cultural expressions extolling arguments for peace and criticism of the nuclear state came to be considered an effective counter-hegemonic vehicle to communicate and disseminate anti-nuclear arguments, and the GLC were keen to participate in this tide of anti-nuclear pop culture expression in London. Adding the 'GLC Funded' official stamp to the cultural activities of London's anti-nuclear activists during Peace Year was likely intended to add the official 'weight' of an elected body to these otherwise unofficial nuclear narratives and cultural products.

For some, existing anxieties about London's nuclear vulnerabilities may have been further stoked by Peter Kennard's ominous GLC billboards and poster packs that were distributed and pinned up in public buildings across London. Persistent nuclear-free zone press releases by the GLC decried the dangers of nuclear attack or accident and the inadequacies of London's civil defence infrastructure, in an effort to weaken Thatcher's authority on defence. Paintings over thirty feet high, depicting nuclear arsenals, cavalier caricature politicians and impending doom cast their menacing shadows over residential streets in Brixton, while more cheerful depictions of communities uniting in common purpose against nuclear aggression were commissioned to liven the streets of Hackney and Greenwich, thereby giving global issues local presence and perhaps increased relevance for some. Peace themed music festivals attracted captive audiences of thousands of young people to parks across London, ready to hear anti-nuclear messages, and the Battersea Park Peace Pagoda and other permanent peace gardens were planned. The GLC sought to promote the disarmament movement's message by providing it with a very visible, physical presence in London's public spaces, to ensure that the thought of immanent nuclear threat, defence policy and international conflicts in the abstract, would not fade from attention as Londoners went about their daily lives. Communicating the message of London's nuclear vulnerabilities may have drawn some voters to the unilateralist message it aimed to convey, and drawn London's existing CND supporters to support the GLC itself, but it could equally have had unintended consequences.

⁶⁰² CND's incredibly dry and technical magazine, *Sanity*, nonetheless popular enough to be stocked by newsagent W.H. Smith during this period, gives a flavour of the commitment necessary to digest these alternative nuclear narratives.

The GLC's anti-nuclear popular culture campaign was also aimed at discrediting Thatcher and Heseltine on defence questions in the run up to the general election in June 1983, in which Labour suffered its most significant nationwide electoral defeat under the leadership of Michael Foot, who had long been a CND supporter.⁶⁰³ It has been argued that Labour's position was not aided by what Paul Byrne has described as their 'ambiguous' stance on defence issues and nuclear weapons, which left their campaign open to repeated accusations from the Right of Labour's infiltration by the extreme Left, and of 'irresponsibility which would leave the country defenceless.'⁶⁰⁴ The GLC's anti-nuclear arguments were perhaps a difficult sell to the broader electorate during a period of lingering popular patriotic and pro-Thatcher feeling around the resolution of the Falklands dispute, matched by a Conservative media campaign to discredit a potential anti-nuclear Labour government, and Ministry of Defence actions to discredit CND supporters.⁶⁰⁵ During this period, 'increasingly dismissive and negative' reports filled the press, representing CND and Greenham Common peace activists as extremists.⁶⁰⁶ Whether or not the fight against London Wall's peace mural opposite the Imperial War Museum was 'orchestrated by the press' as Louise Vines alleged, clearly some residents local to Surrey Lodge in Lambeth were not comfortable with a proposal to adorn a 50-foot wall near their homes with a painterly ode to the Greenham Common women's peace camp. For some critics of the project, negative press representations of Greenham activists had already tarnished their reputation beyond redemption, while others simply rejected this overt incursion of politics into public space.

Polls reported that most voters backed the government's 'official' narrative on Britain's nuclear defence policy, with 'evidence suggesting that the nuclear issue had been significant, if not divisive' in the 1983 election campaign.⁶⁰⁷ However, activists and historians of the disarmament movement including Kate Hudson and Lawrence Wittner suggest that laying the blame at the door of the unilateralism issue may have been a distraction from the major effect of the splitting of the Labour vote by the SDP, rather than voters' straightforward 'endorsement of the government's nuclear policy'.⁶⁰⁸ In a report on the progress of Peace Year; Ken Hulme, 'GLC Peace Year Co-ordinator', noted that 'a certain amount of deflation [seemed] to have hit the peace movement' in the wake of the election.⁶⁰⁹ Despite this significant setback, the CND demonstration in London in October 1983 was its largest ever, in anticipation of the arrival of US cruise missiles in November.⁶¹⁰ The GLC continued to support cultural producers committed to unilateral nuclear disarmament beyond 'Peace Year 1983', though a new urgency to act to address the

⁶⁰³ The vote of the Labour party was reduced from 36.9 % in 1979 to 28.3 % in June 1983. Kate Hudson, 2005, p. 148.

⁶⁰⁴ Paul Byrne, 1997, pp.100-101.

⁶⁰⁵ See Eric Hobsbawm, 'Falklands Fallout', *Marxism Today*, January 1983, pp.13-19. On Heseltine and the Ministry of Defence's DS19 team combatting the CND, see Kate Hudson, 2005, p.143.

⁶⁰⁶ For analysis of Greenham Common protestors and media representations, see Alison Young, *Femininity in Dissent* (London: Routledge, 1990). For further discussion of CND and the press, see Jonathan Hogg, 2016, p. 144.

⁶⁰⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁰⁸ Lawrence Wittner, *The Struggle Against the Bomb. Vol. 3 Towards Nuclear Abolition: A History of the World Nuclear Disarmament Movement, 1971 to the Present* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003), p.138.

⁶⁰⁹ Ken Hulme, 'Report on the progress of GLC Peace Year' [Lambeth Archives, IV/288/] 'The general election [9 June 1983] has diverted some attention away from Peace Year and in the aftermath a certain amount of deflation seems to have hit the peace movement. This new situation may mean that the issue of Peace may focus more intensely on the issue of the siting of cruise missiles in the Autumn and this may have to be reflected in Peace Year events for the rest of the year.'

⁶¹⁰ Hudson notes that there were '400,000 in Hyde Park.' Kate Hudson, 2005, p.151.

equally pressing issues of racism, sexism and homophobia in cultural provision and to combat the threat of GLC abolition, was beginning to emerge.

Reflecting on local government involvement in the peace movement in *The Times* in 1985, a conservative-leaning professor of local government from Nottingham University, David Regan, described how, ‘Unfortunately, in the last few years anti-nuclear extravagance has spread like a contagious epidemic to local authorities of all kinds.’⁶¹¹ Stating that the GLC had spent over £2 million on peace activities in three years, which ‘included £80,106 on grants to unilateral disarmament organisations, £411,249 on GLC Peace Year, and £185,708 on ‘Nuclear-Free Zone’ expenditure’ he warned that it would be necessary to root out those who deemed it appropriate to spend on such ‘propaganda’, across all levels of local government. This ‘contagious epidemic’ of support for peace activism could be seen as a testament to the influence of the GLC’s experiments in nuclear-free ‘local socialism’ and in drumming up anti-nuclear feeling, not only amongst the public, but across the wider network of local authorities beyond County Hall. It is clear that GLC Peace Year sat uncomfortably for some commentators between a corporate publicity campaign, a public arts programme and outright ‘propaganda’. Regan perhaps fairly notes that the Council declaring a ‘nuclear-free zone’ had little or ‘no legal or practical consequence’, and was rather a political exercise, though the GLC would likely have argued that central government’s position on nuclear civil defence was equally propagandistic. As the 1980s progressed, divisions began to emerge in the Labour Party and even within CND as to whether disarmament ought to be unilateral or multilateral, and Labour eventually dropped its unilateralist stance in 1992, following Kinnock’s 1989 defeat.⁶¹²

To return to Brooke’s call for historians to attend to ‘the work emotions do politically’ in the context of GLC Peace Year, the tone of its publicity campaign, while aimed at presenting nuclear criticisms and publicising ‘unofficial’ nuclear narratives to galvanize a popular opposition to Thatcher’s nuclear position, likely had the effect of fuelling existing anxieties about London’s vulnerability. Peace Year’s cultural production may well have had profound emotional impacts, but these impacts would have been felt unevenly. It may have been difficult for those GLC councillors who were personally committed to disarmament to forecast what such an appeal to the electorate’s emotions and nuclear anxieties would ‘do politically’, amongst the population, beyond activist networks. While the GLC’s attempts to redress the balance between ‘official’ and ‘unofficial’ nuclear narratives were an understandable moral position for this 1960s-generation in local government to occupy given the gravity of the implications of a nuclear attack on London, its actions likely came at a political cost. The GLC’s appeal to London’s nuclear anxieties could not equate to Londoners’ wholesale support for disarmament as a means of allaying these fears. Nor was it guaranteed to draw voters to the Labour Party in the 1983 general election. Moreover, the GLC’s cultural policy approach to nuclear criticism was easily ‘weaponised’ by those who disagreed with the GLC’s agenda. These minor cultural insurrections and attendant localised disputes were to

⁶¹¹ David Regan, ‘Nuclear free-at a price.’ *Times*, 5 August 1985, p.12.

⁶¹² Paul Byrne, 1997, pp.101-3.

circulate nationally as part of sensationalist discourses centred on the indictment of peace activists, the Labour left in London and in effect, the Party as a whole.

Turning now from the broader political consequences of GLC Peace Year, towards the more personal, it is significant that the GLC was in a position to use its considerable funds and publicity capabilities to support cultural producers in the communication of ‘unofficial’ nuclear narratives. Money spent on the cultural production of GLC Peace Year created fairly paid employment, albeit temporary. It supported the early careers of a number of politically committed cultural practitioners: both financially, and acting as public promotion, for documentary photographers, film and theatre directors, musicians and entertainers, mural painters, and poster and banner-designers. It can also be argued to have had an impact across wider networks of production and distribution in which GLC funded practitioners worked, often making use of community arts centre production facilities, and involving local volunteers to participate in the production of their creative work. As cultural producers including Peter Kennard and John Dugger have attested in the course of this research, their paid work on GLC funded peace projects was of significance to their careers. Projects such as Kennard’s GLC work enjoyed otherwise unachievable levels of widespread public distribution, and Dugger’s work for the GLC opened many doors to his Banner Arts organisation, which continued to produce banners for cultural organisations and trade unions.

Peace Year’s films, as forms of ‘nuclear culture’, record various ‘nuclear subjectivities’, individuals’ critical responses to the nuclear State in the early 1980s, and the ‘emotional communities’ that sometimes formed around those critical positions. In particular, the films recording the International Women’s Day for Peace in 1983, and the anti-nuclear mothers’ group, Babies Against the Bomb, aimed to present a picture that defied dominant press characterisations of women peace activists as selfish or extreme. By sponsoring these peace films, the GLC attempted to intervene in the representation of activists, to provide a corrective to how these dissenting political voices were being vilified or often wholly ignored by the media. The resulting documentaries also evidence the role that emotions played in some women activists political commitment to the peace movement. In the case of the *Babies Against The Bomb* documentary, its interviews suggest that these women’s concerns about the British nuclear State reached far beyond local and individualistic anxieties for their own families’ safety. It was as often their empathy for the suffering of women and children globally that brought them together in confidence to participate and exercise their newfound political agency in public. Their collective actions and organisation for mutual emotional support also defied the prevailing message of the ‘common sense’ individualism of Thatcherism.

While perhaps not at the forefront of the GLC’s intentions, an important legacy of GLC Peace Year 1983 has been the survival of documents that can provide historians with insights into the peace movement in 1980s London, and draw attention to the cultural forms its activism sometimes took. Paper documentation records applications for funds from a variety of peace groups, press releases and publications present the GLC’s own nuclear critique, photographs document attendances at GLC peace music festivals, rallies and exhibitions, video documentaries record fleeting non-violent direct actions, and

even the few idiosyncratic anti-nuclear murals that are still visible on London's walls serve as a reminder of a moment in which nuclear anxieties preoccupied at least *some* in the city, and the many cultural forms of activism that the ensuing public outrage inspired. As new mothers, the Babies Against The Bomb group were well placed to ask, in Frankie Armstrong's moving peace song, 'What gift is life if the world must die?' The GLC had expressed a similar sentiment, in its refusal to co-operate with central government's gravely inadequate civil defence plans, which it argued would have left London for dead.

While the GLC had engaged with CND throughout Peace Year 1983, some within the GLC had expressed doubts about the organisation. In October 1983, a report entitled 'Peace movement and anti-racism initiatives' was presented to the GLC's Ethnic Minorities Unit. It made serious accusations: that CND was a 'racist' organisation dominated by the 'white middle class', with its campaigns deemed 'Euro-centric [...] ignoring the plight of the Third World'. A meeting between GLC race relations advisors and CND representatives had revealed a nervousness on the part of the CND to approach this sensitive issue, as well as 'claimed ignorance of how to adequately communicate and involve such groups without being accused of tokenism or being patronising'.⁶¹³ The CND Council submitted to the GLC a new declaration of its anti-racist policy addressing the concerns they had raised, in January 1984. This marked the start of a year of well-publicised GLC anti-racist initiatives and a programme of cultural events, to some extent following the model of 'Peace Year', which will be explored in the next chapter.⁶¹⁴

⁶¹³ GLC Anti-Racist Programme Sub-Committee Papers, 'Peace Movement and Anti-Racist Initiatives', Report 27.9.83, [LMA:GLC/DG/PRE/50/01].

⁶¹⁴ GLC Anti-Racist Programme Sub-Committee Papers, 'CND Commitment to Anti-Racism', 30.01.1984. [LMA:GLC/DG/PRE/50/01].

Chapter Five: 'It was a big hindrance, but it was also a help': GLC's Ethnic Arts Sub-Committee and Black Culture in London



Figure 72: Ken Livingstone, Paul Boateng and Peter Pitt test the trampoline at the opening of the Brixton Recreation Centre, 1985. Photograph: Stefano Cagnoni.⁶¹⁵

5.1 Introduction

There were few GLC experiments perceived to be more contentious, both from right and left perspectives, than its 'Ethnic Arts Sub-Committee', which was involved in sponsoring and promoting cultural production, community organisations and public events 'by and for ethnic minority communities', encompassing a variety of creative practices including visual arts, public murals, photography, filmmaking, theatre, dance, music, literature, poetry and community history projects.⁶¹⁶ The term 'ethnic arts' had originated in Naseem Khan's Arts Council report, *The Art Britain Ignores* (1976), which intended to argue for the inclusion of black British culture within the Arts Council's remit.⁶¹⁷ Through categorising black

⁶¹⁵Stefano Cagnoni, Report Digital, see: <http://www.reportdigital.co.uk/gallery/preview/1882/2029/1158/0/greater-london-council-leader-ken-livingstone-on-the-trampoline-with-paul/0_00088380.html> Accessed 02.02.2017.

⁶¹⁶This 'arts sponsorship' approach was only one aspect of the GLC's broader strategy to bring issues of 'race' and racism to the fore in public institutions. For a discussion of 'anti-racism' within social movements, see chapter two.

⁶¹⁷The *Black Artists and Modernism* research project uses the term 'Black-British', to describe peoples of African-Caribbean, East-Asian and South-East Asian descent living in Britain, under a single term of hybrid unity. Emerging from the cultural and political discourses of 1980s Britain, the term Black-British is used to assert a unifying political identity, based upon the idea that these social groups have experiences of disenfranchisement in common. Furthermore, this unifying identity has been particularly relevant in situations where such groups have come together in order to make demands of the State and its institutions, which makes the term 'Black British' particularly appropriate for this research. For the *Black Artists and Modernism* research project, see: <<http://www.blackartistsmodernism.co.uk>> [accessed 16.11.2016]. As Pnina Werbner explains, anthropologists have identified the 'salience of ethnic segments' for groups of people in particular contexts, but 'Black' as a political category represents a necessary alliance 'at the level of confrontation with the State on matters of poverty, underprivilege, police violence, racial harassment, or political representation.

culture as of ‘ethnic’, ‘minority’ and ‘community’ concern however, the report, and the policies it came to influence, are viewed as having had the longer term impact of reinforcing marginalisation. These 1970s discourses on ‘ethnic arts’ were contested throughout the 1980s and 1990s, coming into question both in institutions of the State and in cultural institutions funded by the State, which began to enter into more complex dialogues with black British cultural producers and activists who sought to contest such ‘ethnic’ ‘minority’ labels that rendered their important work peripheral, rather than central to the understanding of modern British culture. The term ‘ethnic arts’ was used in many areas of State bureaucracy throughout the 1980s, and it was carried forth into the GLC’s arts bureaucracy in 1981, five years after Khan’s publication. The term was *not adopted uncritically* by the new GLC administration however, for whom it became an ‘ironic misnomer’, though it also proved to be a damaging shorthand.⁶¹⁸ The GLC’s ‘Ethnic Arts’ policies received a mixed reception during its years of operation, and the confusing and outdated feel of the ‘ethnic arts’ categorisation has likely limited the appetite for its subsequent analysis by historians.⁶¹⁹ This chapter offers a revisionist account of GLC policy and practice in relation to black British cultural production between 1981-1986 moving beyond existing often narrowly critical accounts

Immigrant activists are fighting to establish both the overriding principle and the cultural articulation of the black experience as a primary basis for political mobilisation. “Blackness”, in other words, is first and foremost a political category encompassing the material, political and symbolic subordination of post-war British immigrant communities.’ Pnina Werbner and Muhammad Anwar, *Black and Ethnic Leadership in Britain* (London: Routledge, 1990), p.21. While acknowledging that no terminology of identification can realistically claim to represent all or suit all situations, and that the right to assert self-identification is a personal choice, this research will use the term ‘Black-British’ where possible. While many writers choose to add further emphasis to the term ‘Black’ as political identity by denoting this with a capitalised ‘B’, this research will attempt to follow Stuart Hall’s usage of ‘black’ and ‘black British’, which requires that the reader take it as read that the word ‘black’ refers to this unified political identity and ‘plural signifier of difference’. As Hall has described his usage, “‘Black’ is used here with a deliberate imprecision deriving from the ’70s, when the term encompassed all the minority migrant communities without the careful discrimination of ethnic, racial, regional, national and religious distinctions which has since emerged. It is used here not as the sign of an ineradicable genetic imprint but as a signifier of difference: a difference which, being historical, is therefore always changing, always located, always articulated with other signifying elements: but which, nevertheless, continues – persistently – to register its disturbing effects.’ Stuart Hall, ‘Black Diaspora Artists in Britain: Three ‘Moments’ in Post-War History’, *History Workshop Journal*, 61 (2006), p.2-3; See also Glenn Jordan, ‘Beyond Essentialism: On Stuart Hall and Black British Arts’, *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, 19 (2016), 11–27, p.13. Where the term ‘black’ is used in quotation, I will retain the original author’s usage.

The term ‘Black Artist’ was used in self-identification at this time (usually with a capital ‘B’, when in reference to what has subsequently been labelled the Black Arts Movement, particularly in visual arts), but the term ‘artist’ can appear to imply ‘visual art’ or ‘fine art’ application and presents problems as to its relevance to workers in the broader cultural industries such as music promotion or independent publishing for instance in which the GLC’s arts and cultural policy also took an interest. Visual arts were but one of the GLC’s Arts Committee’s interests, which aimed to promote an understanding of ‘popular culture’ more broadly. Consequently, this research will use the word ‘cultural producer’ and ‘Black-British cultural producers’ to reflect this breadth of interest, and reserve the term ‘Black British Artist’ where it seems appropriate to refer specifically to cultural producers working in relation to ‘art world’ institutions. For ‘art world’ see Howard Becker, *Art Worlds* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982). For more on discussions around ‘Black Art’, see Kobena Mercer, *Welcome to the Jungle: New Positions in Black Cultural Studies* (London; New York: Routledge, 1994); Eddie Chambers, *Black Artists in British Art: A History from 1950 to the Present*, (London: I.B. Tauris, 2014); David A. Bailey, Ian Baucom, and Sonia Boyce eds. *Shades of Black: Assembling Black Arts in 1980s Britain* (London: Duke University Press, in collaboration with the Institute of International Visual Arts and the African and Asian Visual Artists Archive, 2005).

⁶¹⁸ The background for this has also been discussed in this research in Chapter 3.12, see also later in this chapter. Kwesi Owusu has noted that ‘Its use of the term ‘Ethnic Arts’ was a residue of the past six years or so of funding policy, and later became an ironic misnomer.’ Kwesi Owusu, *The Struggle for Black Arts in Britain: What Can We Consider Better than Freedom* (London: Comedia Publishing Group, 1986), p.84.

⁶¹⁹ A variety of terminology of categorisation were used throughout the 1980s to describe Black British people’s work in the cultural field. Naseem Khan’s *The Art Britain Ignores* was a persistent presence throughout the 1980s as institutions of the State slowly gained an awareness of Black British culture, which had hitherto survived without much State recognition or intervention. Naseem Khan, *The Arts Britain Ignores: The Arts of Ethnic Minorities in Britain* (London: Arts Council of Great Britain, Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation and Community Relations Commission, 1976); Richard Hylton, *The Nature of the Beast: Cultural Diversity and the Visual Arts Sector: A Study of Policies, Initiatives and Attitudes 1976-2006* (Bath: ICIA, Institute of Contemporary Interdisciplinary Arts, 2007).

to present a more nuanced representation of the varied activities of the GLC in relation to black British constituents and their cultural experience in 1980s London. It will revisit these accounts through a close re-examination of one heavily criticised GLC commission, the ‘Anti-Racist Mural Project’ (1984-5). Subsequently it will examine archive material of the GLC Ethnic Arts Sub-Committee held at the London Metropolitan Archives to ascertain both its development and policy direction, and identify some of the groups that benefitted from its sponsorship. The subject of this chapter could easily demand a doctoral research project in itself, and consequently, I intend to bring this period back into view, revisiting a historical moment that has been neglected beyond its deployment within particular discourses centred upon critical readings of municipal anti-racist interventions.

5.2 ‘Municipal Anti-Racism’ at the GLC

As an authority [The GLC’s] pre-1981 existence made no positive impact whatsoever on black people’s lives. It had, in its previous responsibility a reputation for channelling black people into the most deficient and least desirable housing accommodation. As a large employer in London it had very few black people on the payroll, the vast majority of whom were on low grade and low status occupations.⁶²⁰

Prior to 1981, GLC administrations had a very poor reputation for public service provision for London’s Black-British constituents.⁶²¹ As Herman Ouseley recalled, when the 1981 GLC administration began to make statements that it sought to make a difference to black lives in London and employ more black people itself in the process, it was embarking on new territory, having hitherto done little to address its duties under the Race Relations Act of 1976 or recommendations of bodies such as the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE).⁶²² A new Ethnic Minority Unit (EMU) was to be set up to address these needs. The EMU’s aims were devised, as Ouseley stated, ‘[...] to make all services and resources accessible and relevant to [‘ethnic minority’] needs; provide equal and fair share of jobs and training opportunities for them; create a public image embracing all of London’s racial groups; pioneer and establish new initiatives to challenge racism in London.’⁶²³ Ken Livingstone, keen to demonstrate commitment to the cause, chaired its central committee which was to devise policy to better serve black Londoners.⁶²⁴ In its brief five years of operation, the final GLC administration embarked on a major project of research into and reform of equalities policy, attempting, with very limited success, to reach every area of Council work, a project which would inevitably remain a work in progress, cut short by the Council’s closure by the Conservative government in April 1986.

⁶²⁰ Herman Ouseley was formerly head of the GLC’s Ethnic Minorities Unit (EMU). He provides a helpfully balanced view of the progress made and multifaceted difficulties faced in the GLC’s attempts to improve services for black British Londoners in the following publication, Herman Ouseley, ‘Resisting Institutional Change’, in Wendy Ball and John Solomos eds., *Race and Local Politics* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Education, 1990), p.139.

⁶²¹ The GLC’s responsibilities were also changing, with work in areas such as housing provision, education and social services being transferred to other bodies in the 1980s.

⁶²² See GLC, *Working for London: The Final Five Years* (London: GLC, 1985), p.7.

⁶²³ See Ouseley, 1990, pp. 138-139.

⁶²⁴ The Ethnic Minorities Unit (EMU) was a separate entity from the Arts and Recreation Department’s Ethnic Arts Sub-Committee (EAS), whose work will be the main focus of this chapter. This discussion of the EMU is necessary to locate the EAS’s anti-racist work in the cultural sphere within a broader context of municipal anti-racist commitment by the 1981-86 GLC administration.

As well as seeking to improve its own employment record, on which it began to make some progress, the GLC sought to advocate for ‘ethnic origin record keeping’ and equal opportunities policies to be adopted more widely amongst London borough councils, service providers and employers.⁶²⁵ The gradual increase in black staff at the GLC between 1981-1986 was also a significant factor in getting different views voiced, and actions agreed upon in Council meetings. These new black Council staff and advisors were in some cases placed into what were likely to have been less than comfortable positions as ‘ethnic advisors’ within complex and predominantly white bureaucracies, which cannot have been universally welcoming.⁶²⁶ For a moment, they must have perceived a rare opportunity to begin to change the discourse, on the many frontiers that came to influence Council decision making, to ultimately affect black lives in London.



Figure 73: Ken Livingstone signing Anti-Racist Declaration, with a ‘GLC/London Against Racism’ banner commissioned from John Dugger’s Banner Arts, 1984.

The EMU took a role in advocating for the repeal of discriminatory laws, such as those relating to immigration, the Nationality Act, and census questions. The GLC also claimed to be the first local authority to formally recognise racism faced by Irish people in London.⁶²⁷ As the dissemination of

⁶²⁵ [...] by 1985 the GLC had more than trebled the number of black staff, many of whom attained middle ranking positions and raised consciousness about racism.’ Ouseley, 1990, p.142.

⁶²⁶ It is significant to note that in Mackintosh and Wainwright’s 1987 account of the GLC’s Economic Policy Group, no black former GLC economic policy group staff were willing to contribute a chapter on anti-racist work in GLC economic policy, given their dissatisfaction with their GLC experience, and their [...] struggle to develop black employment policy, late on, without sufficient political support [...].’ This suggests that the difficulties and frustrations some black GLC staff may have experienced in the course of their work may have discouraged them from writing about it subsequently. See Maureen Mackintosh and Hilary Wainwright, 1987, pp. 10-12, 414-420.

⁶²⁷ Including the particular effects of the Prevention of Terrorism Act (1974) on Irish communities. See also GLC, *Policy Report on the Irish Community: Ethnic Minorities in London*, (London: GLC, 1984).

information to other local authorities was a major part of the GLC's remit, new research was conducted and reports written on areas that identified disadvantages people experienced in relation to health provision, council housing, town planning and environment, and political representation in mainstream parties. It also looked beyond the UK, making an Anti-Apartheid declaration in 1983, and began withdrawing from financial links to South Africa.⁶²⁸ Arguing for increased police accountability to elected representatives, the GLC also set up a Police Committee, in 'response to the crises of policing which had culminated in the Brixton "riots" in April 1981.'⁶²⁹ It actively criticised police complaints procedures, campaigned against The Police and Criminal Evidence Act (1983), and promoted the interests of women in relation to policing. It provided grants to voluntary organisations involved in research into police response to racial attacks, victim support, and local police monitoring groups.⁶³⁰ In its own analysis in 1985, The EMU's work was unhelpfully constrained by 'the lack of a specific spending power', as well as difficulty in integrating its work across departments.⁶³¹ Herman Ouseley recalls that the EMU was also consistently targeted as it conducted this work, 'bombed with abusive telephone calls and vile correspondence', by members of the public provoked by the 'powers of the media' in daily stories about GLC 'Loony Left' anti-racism.⁶³² The EMU offices on the sixth floor of County Hall even suffered a bomb attack by a far-right group on 26 March 1985, a reminder that fascist groups, which had been on the rise at the end of the 1970s remained a threat, even to institutions of government, and particularly those that were engaged in positive action policies.⁶³³

The EMU made a number of efforts to consult with black organisations in 1982 on a very broad variety of everyday issues that negatively affected their communities. For some groups, to be formally invited to the table was a new experience in itself, but also an initial move towards uniting efforts of various interest groups within communities to apply to the GLC for more resources and recognition. At an initial 'Ethnic Minorities Consultative Day Conference' on 24th April 1982, a proposal was made for the GLC to declare London an 'Anti-Racist Zone', and to promote a range of anti-racist campaign activities.⁶³⁴ An initial proposal reported that the idea received broad support from conference participants, and cited a number of 'disturbing trends' of racism in society that could become the target of the of anti-racist campaign.⁶³⁵

⁶²⁸ Controversial, given central government's stance on South Africa during this period.

⁶²⁹ GLC, 'The Police Committee', *Working for London: The Final Five Years*, (London: GLC, 1985), p.10.

⁶³⁰ For instance, a report on racial attacks and vandalism in council housing was also produced by the GLC in 1984. *Ibid.* p.11; See also GLC Anti-Racist Programme Sub-Committee Papers, 'GLC Police Committee Report of the Panel of Inquiry into Racial Harassment', 29.09.1983, [LMA:GLC/DG/PRE/50/01].

⁶³¹ 'Constraints and Problems', GLC, *Working for London, The Final Five Years*, 1985, p.9.

⁶³² [...] by 1984 (the GLC's 'Anti-Racist Year') the media attack was at fever pitch and the readership of the press were increasingly provided with their daily dosage of reported 'left loonyism' in the name of anti-racism.' Ouseley, 1990, p.140.

⁶³³ Kwesi Owusu, 1986, p.104. Owusu wrote of the attack, [...] four incendiary devices. The offices of the unit were completely burnt out. This arson attack had been preceded by race-hate letters and threats to officers as well as graffiti on walls and doors. As is the case with many of London's racist arson attacks, the perpetrators are still at large.' The aftermath of the bombing was documented by a GLC supported film maker, Menelik Shabazz, of Ceddo Film and Video. See Menelik Shabazz and Ceddo, *GLC Bombing (Rushes)*, 1985, 16mm colour negative, <http://www.bfi.org.uk/films-tv-people/4ce2b7de3fb93> [accessed 16.11.2016].

⁶³⁴ This was devised as part of the Council's duty under the Race Relations Act of 1976, 'to promote good relations among London's different racial groups.' GLC, *Working for London*, 1985, p.7. This strategy was similar in some ways to the proposal for London's 'anti-nuclear zone' which was to be announced two months later.

⁶³⁵ 'The background to the proposals for declaring the capital an "Anti-Racist Zone" is one of increasing concern [...] increasing racial discrimination in employment [...] recent CRE research indicated that nearly 60% of employers studied

Further consultations towards the end of 1982 included separate discussions with delegates from organisations and individuals from Afro-Caribbean youth organisations, black gay men and black lesbians groups,⁶³⁶ Rastafarians, Latin Americans, Asian youth, Jewish and Orthodox Jewish communities, the Irish community in London, and British and Irish Travellers.⁶³⁷ Topics included consultations on specialist 'race workers' in local authorities, healthcare issues, housing and homelessness, prisons, policing and the Scarman Report,⁶³⁸ black representation and participation in the media,⁶³⁹ participation in sports, and Notting Hill Carnival. While these important research activities were underway the EMU also planned and organised a year of events, accompanied by a prominent awareness-raising billboard poster campaign, for 'GLC Anti-Racist Year 1984'. The strategy was devised by a new 'Anti-Racist Programme Sub-Committee' of the EMU, which was set up to coordinate events across council departments, and sixteen working groups were devised to make proposals relating to Anti-Racist Year to address the following areas: employment in the public, private and voluntary sectors, political parties and trade unions, policing, health, women, nationality and immigration, existing anti-racist organisations led by black Londoners, and including support for Anti-Apartheid Movement, education, media, housing and cultural activities and projects. The GLC's process of consultation was pioneering but some have argued that its effects may have been unintentionally divisive, putting cultural producers and voluntary organisations from different ethnic groups in direct competition for council money, rather than uniting them in a common cause around a unified black political identity.⁶⁴⁰ As Herman Ouseley recognised, 'Black and ethnic minority

were found to be discriminating against young black people [...] racial harassment on housing estates has increased [...] the majority of black people would regard the mass media as biased against them [...] immigration and nationality legislation have added to the insecurity of many black people resident in this country because it has by its nature racially discriminatory effects which tend to confirm an image of black people constantly depicted as a problem.' See 'Proposals for a special programme of anti-racist activities 1983-4' report 29.09.82 pp.1-2, [LMA:GLC/DG/PRE/50/01].

⁶³⁶ Today's 'LGBTQ+' terminology did not come into common usage until the early 1990s, the acronym 'LGB' became more common prior to this in the mid to late 1980s.

⁶³⁷ The GLC's official published report of these consultative meetings also documents the divisions between groups that were beginning to appear, questions of trust directed towards the GLC itself, and its newfound interest in minority needs, particularly from Jewish representatives. It was recorded that representatives of black lesbians for example, (at by far the least well attended consultation meeting, with just seven attendees), expressed to the council the hostility and harassment they suffered at black women's centres and from the black community itself (wherein homosexuality was a taboo subject), but also from white feminists, and from the black gay group, which was made up largely of men. They, like many of the groups consulted, put forward proposals requesting a 'safe space' of their own. See GLC Ethnic Minorities Anti-Racist Year Sub-Committee papers, [LMA:GLC/DG/PRE/50/01]; See also GLC, 'Consultation with Ethnic Minority Organisations', October-December 1982 in GLC, *Ethnic Minorities in London* (GLC, 1984).

⁶³⁸ The most well attended meeting, with 217 attendees, was that in response to the Scarman Report, which had been published in November 1981. The consultation concluded that the report 'failed to recognise the insidious and endemic nature of racism in British society [...] consequently there are no concrete proposals to tackle racism- individual, institutional or cultural [...] Scarman is essentially a diversion.' The GLC was to go on to support community groups in monitoring police forces for discriminatory practices and harassment, an area beyond the scope of this research. *Ibid.*

⁶³⁹ The second highest attendance of these Ethnic Minority Unit consultation meetings was on the subject of the media, and the 'need to attack and challenge racist practices in the media [in television, radio and film] both in employment and in representation of black people [and to] put pressure on media unions, especially ACTT [...]', as well as to promote and advertise council jobs within minority media publications. Although this meeting appeared to focus on questions of the mainstream media industry, this was an area of need that the Arts and Recreation Committee's EAS was also to take up, particularly in the areas of independent film workshops and skills training provision. 'GLC to put pressure on IBA, BBC, LWT, and Thames TV to ensure equality of opportunity enforced; Explore possibility of setting up a film and video workshop; GLC to initiate dialogue with London TV companies focusing on recruitment, programming and training, support independent black film-making [...] set up steering group.' *Ibid.*

⁶⁴⁰ Not only did grant aid represent a large administrative burden to manage the incoming applications, but in Herman Ouseley's view, the grant-aid to black and minority ethnic groups was a problematic distraction from the progress that other areas of the GLC was making on more strategic considerations for black Londoners. See Ouseley, 1990, pp.141-2. 'Grant aid to community groups became a major political commitment but it was in practice a huge diversion. True it provided much needed resources direct to local communities in order to cushion them from the harsh effects of

communities entered into the competitive spirit and they were determined to secure their fair share. Not only were black groups competing against white groups and multi-racial groups, there was inter-ethnic competition, simply reinforcing divisiveness.⁶⁴¹ On this point, arguments made by Ambalavaner Sivanandan in a talk given at the Ethnic Minorities Unit (EMU) in early 1983 were prophetic of the potentially atomising effects of the 'ethnic' focus of sponsorship for the idea of 'Black' as a political unifying identity, and the resentment which those from black communities who involved themselves in council work would meet, coming to be seen as an aspirant black middle class holding little regard for the working class.⁶⁴² While it can be seen that this atomisation did occur over time, this also reflecting the complexity and fragility of activist political collectivities which was seen in other social movements, for example, in the women's movement in this period.⁶⁴³ In one of the more unlikely examples of Anti-Racist Year's work, the GLC funded the release of an anti-racist reggae record. A major focus for the Police Working Group's contribution to Anti-Racist Year 1984 was to communicate the GLC's opposition to the proposed Police and Criminal Evidence Bill.⁶⁴⁴ In October 1984, Paul Boateng, then chair of the

Thatcherism and the monetarist crisis.⁶⁴⁵ While Ouseley saw grant-aid as an unhelpful diversion from more pressing work, it is possible to speculate that the fact that the GLC was facing an uncertain future may have influenced this prioritizing of grants, emphasising short term relief to organisations, over longer term strategy. What Ouseley's perspective does not consider are the harder to measure broader social and cultural effects of the Council, as an arm of the State, simply voicing opposition to racism, or publicising black cultural production during a period in which the mainstream media and central government representation of black people was so overwhelmingly negative and damaging. Admittedly, to take this positive perspective is the direct opposite to how Paul Gilroy (1987) perceived the GLC's actions as discrediting black communities own anti-racist activism and exposing it to media ridicule: particularly by way of its association with the GLC itself, which attracted negative press reports. The GLC's Anti-Racist Year programme planners may well have entered into it without foresight of the possible reactions Gilroy describes.

⁶⁴¹ Herman Ouseley 1990, p.141. For example, The GLC's own analysis of the Community Arts Sub-Committee discusses a particular problem that arose from the separation of 'ethnic arts' and 'community arts' funding, namely that of which minority groups were to 'count' as 'ethnic arts' groups. In 1984, the EAS narrowed its focus to Black and Asian cultural producers only, and requested that the Community Arts Sub-Committee fund other groups, such as 'Hungarian, Chinese, Turkish, etc.', though it did not wish to transfer any of its budget allocation to the Community Arts Sub-Committee to do so. A further disagreement occurred over the funding of Irish groups, as it took some time before Irish people were recognised as an 'ethnic minority' by the Council, the EAS were 'reluctant to stretch their budget any further' and it was argued that racism against the Irish was different from racism experienced by black people, which therefore warranted separate provision. This was strongly disputed by the Irish Liaison officer, finally appointed in 1985, who argued that a common thread could be found in histories of colonisation. Green Ink, and Irish in Britain History Project were initially funded through the Community Arts Sub-Committee. Eventually in 1985/6, after lobbying the Council for extra resources, twelve Irish groups were funded in the final six months of the GLC's existence. As a number of commentators have noted, there was a competitive side to seeking GLC funding, which may itself have itself been divisive, rather than uniting organisations in common. See GLC, *Campaign for a Popular Culture* (1986), p.60.

⁶⁴² [...] on the ideological level a new battle was being mounted by the state against *black* struggles whereby they could be broken down into their ethnic and, through that, their class components. Ethnicity was a tool to blunt the edge of black struggle, to return 'black' to its constituent parts, of Afro-Caribbean, Asian, African, Irish - and also, at the same time, to allow the nascent black bourgeoisie, petit-bourgeoisie really, to move up in the system. Ethnicity delinked black struggle-separating West Indian from the Asian, the working class black from the middle class black. [...] Black, as a political colour, was finally broken down when government money's were used to fund community projects, destroying thereby the self-reliance and community cohesion that we had built up in the 1960s. Ambalavaner Sivanandan, 'Challenging Racism: Strategies for the 1980s.' (talk given to GLC Ethnic Minorities Unit, 12.03.1983), reproduced in Ambalavaner Sivanandan, *Communities of Resistance: Writings on Black Struggles for Socialism* (London: Verso, 1990), p.61. To dismiss all of these individuals as an aspirant 'middle class' or future career politicians or cultural producers with little care for the communities they simply left behind seems a little unfair, given the complexity of the bureaucratic and ethical challenges they faced, bringing their crucial and critical ideas to bear for the first time upon the staid and hitherto unyielding institutions of the local State.

⁶⁴³ This analysis aligns with recent historical accounts of fractures and limits to solidarity within social movements during the 1980s, see Daisy Payling, 2014; see also Natalie Thomlinson, *Race, Ethnicity and the Women's Movement in England, 1968-1993* (Hounds Mills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016).

⁶⁴⁴ For more on the police committee contribution to Anti-Racist Year, [LMA:GLC/DG/PRE/50/01]. Labour's 1983 manifesto mentioned the removal of the Police and Criminal Evidence Bill and disbanding SPGs (Special patrol groups) which the GLC came to fervently oppose. Alongside this, it worth noting that independent filmmakers were sponsored by the GLC to produce documentaries on topics such as the Police and Criminal Evidence Bill. See for example, Clive

GLC's Police Committee, was interviewed on LBC to promote a new reggae record release which had been financed by the GLC, on the theme of opposition to central government's proposed Police Bill.⁶⁴⁵ Written by Rankin Ann (Swinton) a pioneering woman DJ and MC, this record communicates a young black woman's perspective of injustice and humiliation experienced at the hands of a police force with increased powers.⁶⁴⁶ [Figure 74] While it is perhaps unsurprising that the record was refused by mainstream radio stations and failed as a commercial enterprise, it offered a potent social and political critique of the Conservative government's policing policy, funded and promoted by the Greater London Council.⁶⁴⁷



Figure 74 : Record label, sleeve featuring GLC Logo, 'Keep GLC Working for London'. Lyrics: Ranking Ann (Swinton) - 'Kill the Police Bill', Ariwa Music, financed by GLC Police Committee Support Unit, 1984.

A 'Cultural Activities Working Group' proposed a programme of events which would form part of Anti-Racist Year 1984, which included such items as live music events, with the GLC's Arts and Recreation Committee submitting suggestions from their existing programme including a Black Literature Competition, and Anti-Racist Film Programme for schools and community, the Third Eye Film Festival, and an Anti-Racist Mural Project.⁶⁴⁸ Actions were also taken for the GLC-run Southbank concert halls

Myer, *The Bill*, Film Work Group, GLC, 1985. <<http://collections-search.bfi.org.uk/web/Details/ChoiceFilmWorks/150106866>> [accessed 16.11.2016].

⁶⁴⁵ This record was written prior to the extension of Police powers through the 'Police and Criminal Evidence Bill', which was to become law in 1985-6. Hansard records in 1984 that Richard Tracey (MP, Surbiton) claimed in the Commons that the GLC had given £38,077 to the Campaign against the Police Bill which is an indication of the GLC's opposition, and the controversial nature of such sponsorship. Hansard: HC Deb 24 February 1984 vol. 54 cc1071-140, 1130. See also LBC, 'Reggae Protest Against New Criminal Bill', 18 October 1984, <<http://bufvc.ac.uk/tvandradio/lbc/index.php/segment/000950 0258015>> [accessed 16.11.2016].

⁶⁴⁶ Amongst the track's more controversial lyrics: 'Thirty-six hours in a detention/ And dem wouldn't even let me contact no one/ Dem try fe mek a search inside me private region/ Sey me conceal a dangerous weapon/ And lord me analyse the situation/ Mek no mistake it's like legal rape [...] We have fe kill, kill de Police Bill/ We have fe kill, kill dis Police Bill/ Cause if dis Police Bill become law/ Pon de street we a got have pure war.' Ranking Ann (Swinton), 'Kill The Police Bill', Ariwa Music, financed by GLC Police Committee Support Unit, 1984.

⁶⁴⁷ See: Dick Hebdige, 'Sister Posse Forward: is this the future?' in *Cut 'n' Mix: Culture, Identity and Caribbean Music* (Routledge, 2003[1987]), p.106. Hebdige suggests several reasons for its lack of commercial success, one of which being its female lead, in what was still a predominantly male reggae record industry. See also Les Back, 'Coughing up Fire: Sound Systems in South-East London', *New Formations* no.5, Summer 1988, pp.141-152.

⁶⁴⁸ Some projects had already been organised or sponsored by the Arts and Recreation Committee and fit into the theme, so became part the schedule of Anti-Racist Year public events and activities for 1984, see 'Report EM572', 06.04.84, [LMA:GLC/DG/PRE/50/01]. The mural project will be discussed in more detail later.

and GLC festivals and events to ban performers who had previously worked for Apartheid supporting organisations in South Africa. In October 1985, the GLC invited Oliver Tambo, then president of the African National Congress (ANC) to unveil a bronze bust of Nelson Mandela, a GLC commission from sculptor Ian Walters.⁶⁴⁹ [Figure 75] The following day in the House of Commons, Tony Banks, reportedly wearing an ANC T-shirt, invited Prime Minister Thatcher to the South Bank to see the sculpture, an offer she bluntly refused, citing Tambo's support for armed struggle against Apartheid.⁶⁵⁰



Figure 75: Nelson Mandela Statue, Ian Walters. Royal Festival Hall, London, Historic England AA008488. <<https://historicengland.org.uk/whats-new/news/black-british-history-recognised-through-listings>> [accessed 19.11.16.]

The GLC's initial aims for this year of 'anti-racist' activities could be split between those that were intended to be consciousness-raising about the issues of racism in general, such as a highly visible public awareness and education programme conducted through publicity campaigns and popular public events,

⁶⁴⁹ Walters later made the Nelson Mandela sculpture for Parliament Square, unveiled in 2007. Tony Benn, 'Ian Walters', *Guardian*, 18 August 2006. <<https://www.theguardian.com/news/2006/aug/18/guardianobituaries.artsobituaries1>>, [accessed 16.11.16.] Walters had also been commissioned by the GLC for a sculpture to memorialise the International Brigade which is still located in Jubilee Gardens.

⁶⁵⁰ See also: London Remembers, <<http://www.londonremembers.com/memorials/nelson-mandela-bust>> [accessed 01.11.16], which records that the sculpture was vandalised a number of times, the original was destroyed by fire after its first year. The replacement bust was placed on a higher plinth to discourage vandalism. Alan Tomkins recalls that the unusual site, set close to the side of the Royal Festival Hall, was chosen to defend the sculpture from removal by subsequent authorities, as that area of land was owned by the GLC (Alan Tomkins, interview with the author, 2016). In 2016 it was awarded Grade II listed status, see: <<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1435261>>, [accessed 01.11.2016]. Hansard: HC Deb 29 October 1985 vol. 84 cc811.

and those more practically focused proposals that would attempt to seek real commitments from political parties, central and local government, statutory bodies, employers and trade unions, to affect actual changes to working practices and legislation to tackle systemic discrimination, perhaps the most significant issue. This fit with Council's own definition, abridged perhaps for public understanding, of 'anti-racist' action, which would take aim at what it referred to as the 'twin challenge to the institutional structures (where power is located) and people's behaviour which is conditioned by racially prejudiced attitudes.'⁶⁵¹ While the two approaches could be seen as interdependent, it will come as little surprise that the GLC was to be more active on the first count, in producing a visible campaign intended to publicise the issue of racism, than the more challenging second, effecting any real or immediately apparent change in society or the conditions of black Londoners by working to 'eradicate' systemic racism. The GLC's anti-racist strategy was burdened by the controversial nature of its interventions as Herman Ouseley recalled,

So although the GLC espoused anti-racism on a grand scale, the main organisational structures and decision makers continued to reflect the status quo. The culture of tokenism had taken over without anyone really realising what was going on, such was the euphoria over the fact that new and radical initiatives were happening thick and fast.⁶⁵²

Paul Gilroy forcefully criticised the GLC's entire approach to the cultural politics of 'race' by exposing to detailed textual analysis the language of its 'anti-racist campaign' billboard posters and publicity material, an advertising campaign intended to convey the GLC's particular approach to 'anti-racism' during its 'London Against Racism' campaign in 1984. Gilroy's account attends to the GLC's Anti-Racist Year's poorly-articulated public messages and lack of unified direction. Gilroy argues that the publicity's municipal definitions of racism and anti-racism, as distributed in its printed material, was guilty of presenting race as akin to 'national origins', as though 'Its existence can be taken for granted and the political problems which attend it are reduced to the issue of prejudice [...] denying implicitly the salience of structural and ideological factors [...].'⁶⁵³

A 'London Against Racism' fact pack, contained information sheets on racism and government, policing, housing, racial attacks, women, media and the arts, was produced. It also contained badges and bumper stickers, and an anti-racist declaration, printed on parchment paper, presumably to be signed by individuals, organisations and employers and proudly displayed. [Figure 76] Print advertisements and billboard posters were produced for a city-wide publicity campaign, which predictably invited some racist graffiti and confused responses, subjected to a detailed textual analysis by Paul Gilroy.⁶⁵⁴

⁶⁵¹ Report 10.5.83, [LMA:GLC/DG/PRE/50/01]. See also: Paul Gilroy, *'There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack': The Cultural Politics of Race and Nation* (London: Hutchinson, 1987), p. 188.

⁶⁵² Ouseley, 1990, p. 142.

⁶⁵³ Gilroy is known to have worked as a 'researcher' for the GLC during the 1980s, though the detail of this is not known. *Ibid.*, p.188.

⁶⁵⁴ Paul Gilroy, 'Municipal Anti-Racism' in *'There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack': The Cultural Politics of Race and Nation*, Routledge Classics ed. (London: Routledge, 2002 [1987]), pp.177-194.



Figure 76: Cover logo detail, GLC *London Against Racism Fact Pack*; GLC *London Against Racism Declaration* and pin badges, 1984. [LMA: GLC/DG/PUB/01/253/U1232]

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Figure 77: Two posters from the GLC's Anti-Racist poster campaign, London Against Racism Fact Pack, 1984. [LMA:GLC/DG/PRB/24/A3/033]

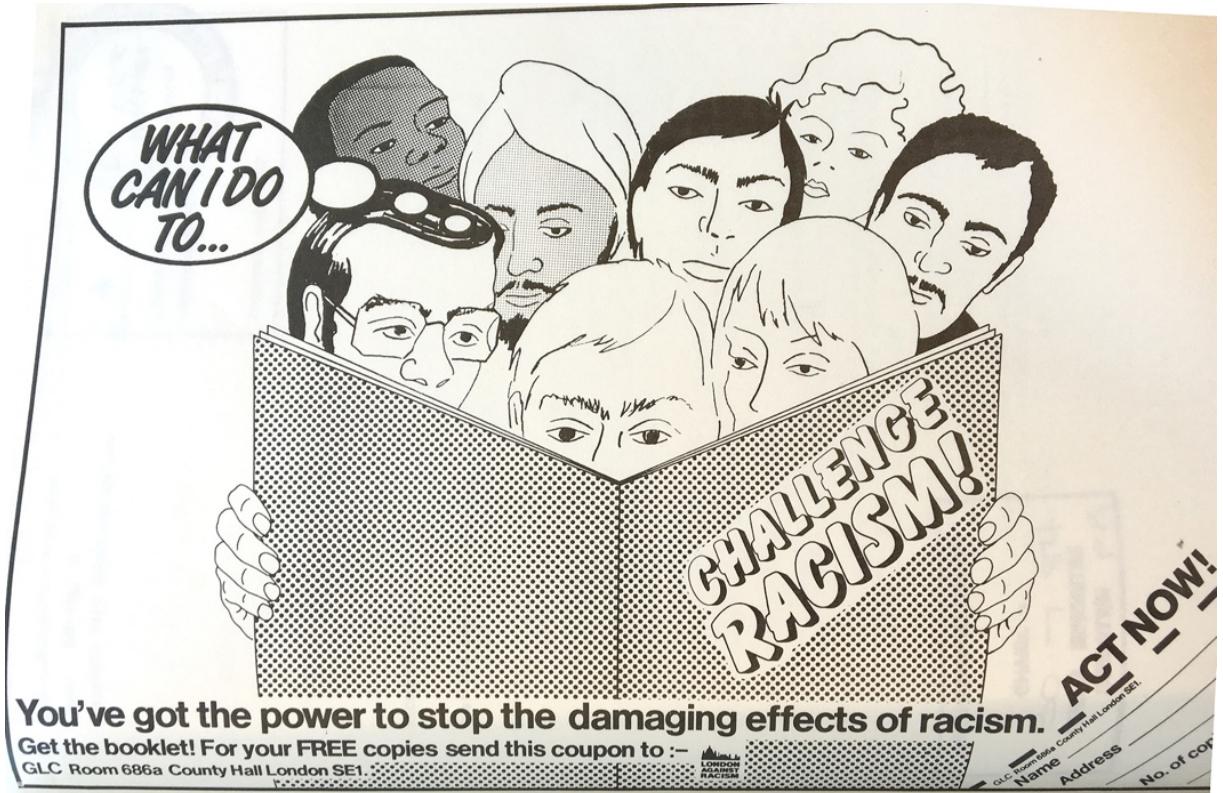


Figure 78: Advertisement for GLC *What Can I do To Challenge Racism?* booklet, [LMA:GLC/DG/PRE/50/1-2].

A GLC public information booklet, *What Can I Do To Challenge Racism?* [Figure 78] attempted to define racism for those Londoners who might be unsure, and give more constructive advice about how to challenge it, which Gilroy has noted, was worded in such a way that it set up a binary opposition between victims and perpetrators that seemed to negate the possibility of anti-racism as a position. Gilroy argues that the GLC's anti-racist publicity campaign mistakenly targeted white Londoners and emphasised individuals' racism over systemic institutional racism, thereby absolving organisations themselves of blame or need to transform practices. Gilroy's account also recalls anecdotally that 'GLC attempts to develop popular anti-racism tended to lack the active participation of large numbers of black people'.⁶⁵⁵ Keith Thompson has argued that this 'municipal' brand of anti-racism was not tackling what he perceived to be the real issues of oppression and state violence, but rather focusing on a 'liberal reformers plea to capture hearts and minds', which in his view discredited black communities' own anti-racist work and attracted much cynicism from both black people and the press,

The photo-opportunity, in which liberally-minded actors, celebrities and GLC officials would unveil a monument or a children's art exhibition as a tribute to their own anti-racist credentials, became a tool in the GLC's campaign to educate the masses in antiracism.⁶⁵⁶

The GLC's desire to appear to be the local authority 'leading by example' by bringing discussions of racism to public prominence, was met with derision by several black critics who perceived such pronouncements as a cynical vote-winning exercise rather than a sign of commitment. From their analysis, we may conclude that the GLC's Race Equality Unit were not successful in generating any effective popular 'social

⁶⁵⁵ Ibid. p. 197.

⁶⁵⁶ Keith Thompson, *Under Siege: Racism and Violence in Britain Today* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1988), p.112.

movement' around anti-racism through 'Anti-Racist Year', and commentators such as Gilroy have subsequently argued that such actions were futile to attempt in the first place.⁶⁵⁷ Their intervention in this area may have made matters worse, Gilroy argues, as the poorly articulated public messages had the longer term impact of fuelling a role-reversing reframing of anti-racism as a form of statist censorship of white freedom of speech, thereby making all forms of anti-racism a target for the tabloids.⁶⁵⁸ While Gilroy's textual approach provides an excellent analysis of the likely social and cultural effects of this problematic publicity campaign on its audiences, it does not attend so closely to details of the circumstances in which the campaign came about, and an analysis based in 'political economy' approaches may have added further detail.⁶⁵⁹ It does little to frame this unhelpful GLC publicity campaign within the context of other work it was doing, and holds up the failed campaign as indisputable evidence that all of the GLC's claimed attempts to listen to, and develop appropriate policy to serve London's black British communities were a wholly empty endeavour. The gravity of such assertions of wrongdoing and misdirected efforts may have discouraged historians from further examination of the GLC's work more broadly in this area since, across different departments.

⁶⁵⁷ They were not successful in gaining wholesale support from the black communities they sought to address, and their anti-racist activities were perhaps more directed towards white, rather than black audiences. Gilroy's view, writing in 1987, was that social movements, particularly those constituted around the historical and political idea of 'race', can only thrive outside of state institutions, see Gilroy, 1987, Chapter 6.

⁶⁵⁸ Gilroy argued that this redefined racism as 'the product of black and anti-racist zeal that is both destructive of democracy and subversive of the social order [...] associated with authoritarianism, statism and censorship', standing in the way of the British 'right to be prejudiced [...] articulated within the discourses of freedom, patriotism and democracy' Gilroy, 1987, p.313. See also: Paul Gilroy, 'The End of Anti-Racism' in Ball and Solomos eds., *Race and Local Politics* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Education, 1990), p.191. 'The dictatorial character of anti-racism, particularly in local government, has itself become an important theme within the discourse of popular racism.'

⁶⁵⁹ In its focus on the GLC's political communications surrounding 'municipal anti-racism', Gilroy does not fully contextualise this particular publicity campaign within the broader scope of what the GLC was doing across different departments. Gilroy's account reveals little about the negotiation between various individuals in committee meetings who may not have supported the form of the campaign, the relationship between the Ethnic Minority Unit's 'Anti-Racist Year' Sub-Committees, advisory groups consulted, or advertising agencies involved in the project. We know little of how or why it happened, Gilroy only provides us with an interpretation of this particular project's end result. It also tends to refer to 'the GLC' as a homogeneous entity, rather than taking into account the agency of various individuals at certain moments, within it.

5.3 GLC Cultural Policy for Black Arts: a crucial distinction

Cultural policy and sponsorship are the focus of this thesis, and while cultural events played a part in the Anti-Racist Year, a distinction must be made between the cultural policy work of the Arts Committees that was directed towards anti-racist aims, and that of the Ethnic Minorities Unit (EMU), in order to avoid conflating the two. Simultaneous to the 'London Against Racism' year campaign, in work which was conducted *separately from* that undertaken by the Ethnic Minorities Unit (EMU), the GLC's Arts and Recreations Committee was embarking upon its own radical experiment for tackling racism in the *cultural* field, by increasing the share of arts sponsorship the GLC provided for black organisations in London.

⁶⁶⁰ The GLC set up the Ethnic Arts Sub-Committee (EAS), a committee with its own budget and advisory panel made up of black British cultural producers, to respond to applications from black cultural organisations and advise on GLC cultural policy in general. While very much related at the level of anti-racist discourses and general aims, it is important to reiterate here that the Arts and Recreation Committee's new Ethnic Arts Sub-Committee (EAS), and the Ethnic Minorities Unit (EMU) responsible for Anti-Racist Year, were in fact separate entities. In the view of this research, it is an incorrect approach to GLC cultural policy to conflate the work of different departments, following Nicos Poulantzas' assertion that the State should not be conceptualised as one monolithic entity, but rather it is important to recognise its internal contradictions. At the GLC, these contradictions are reflected in evidence of the various attempts at introducing 'anti-racist' discourses and policies across its departments, a fact articulated by former head of the Ethnic Minorities Unit, Herman Ouseley in his account of the GLC's anti-racist work, which suggests that departments sometimes worked at cross-purposes, or slipped into tokenistic practices, despite good initial intentions.⁶⁶¹ The remainder of this chapter will largely address the work of the Ethnic Arts Sub-Committee (EAS), unless otherwise stated.⁶⁶²

⁶⁶⁰ The Ethnic Arts Sub-Committee's (EAS) work was conducted separately from that of the Ethnic Minorities Unit, although the work was related at the level of anti-racist ideas and aims.

⁶⁶¹ As Nicos Poulantzas asserted, such contradictions exist within the State. See also Ouseley, 1990.

⁶⁶² The Ethnic Arts Sub-Committee will be referred to as 'EAS' in the remainder of this text, except in cases which require particular clarity.

5.4 Existing accounts of the GLC's approach to the sponsorship of Black Culture

Eddie Chambers: My main criticism is that white institutions have no serious commitments to the work of Black artists, in the same way as they have towards white artists.

Rasheed Araeen: That's a valid criticism, and I do agree with you that most of the exhibitions which we saw in the last few years were of a tokenistic nature. But what else can you expect from them? None of the institutions public or private has shown any commitment to the radical change that has been taking place in this society since the War, and the question of culture is very complex in this respect because it effects institutions at the level of ideas. What has happened in my view is that many public spaces responded to political pressures, particularly at community level, and the paradox of the matter is that although political struggle cannot be separated from cultural demands, politics do not always have to have a positive approach to cultural matters. And that's what happened at the GLC, and it was the GLC that promoted this kind of tokenism [...] There is a feeling we shouldn't expect much from the established institutions or public venues, and that we should have our own alternative organisations run by ourselves. In fact, we do now have some of these alternatives established. There are publically funded art galleries, art centres, cultural organisations, etc. which are exclusive to black peoples and are run by black peoples themselves. Do you think this is the right alternative? [...] The black community does not have the economic power to support its artists. [...] The only alternative then is to turn to the established system, whether one likes it or not, and make demands within it. It has contradictions, particularly when one is engaged in a radical practice, but that's the way things are. [...]⁶⁶³

Artist, writer and curator Eddie Chambers has provided one of the few retrospective critical analyses of GLC's Ethnic Arts Sub-Committee currently available to researchers, in his unpublished doctoral thesis from 1998.⁶⁶⁴ It is significant because Chambers's account has directly influenced Richard Hylton's 2007 analysis of the GLC's black arts policy in his book, *The Nature of the Beast: Cultural Diversity and the Visual Arts Sector*, which in turn will continue to influence future writing on the subject.⁶⁶⁵ Chambers's reading of the GLC takes as its key texts John Carvel's 1984 biography of Livingstone, *Citizen Ken*,⁶⁶⁶ Kwesi Owusu's brief account of the GLC cultural policy which focuses on performing arts,⁶⁶⁷ and Paul Gilroy's aforementioned work on the GLC's municipal Anti-Racism which is dominated by its reading of the work of 'London Against Racism Anti-Racist Year', a project of the Ethnic Minorities Unit.⁶⁶⁸ Chambers readily admits his confusion as to the purpose of the various committees and units nominally relating to 'ethnic minorities' in his account, but does not perceive that this may weaken his interpretation.⁶⁶⁹ Furthermore,

⁶⁶³ Rasheed Araeen, 'Black Art – A discussion with Eddie Chambers' Owusu, Kwesi, ed., *Black British Culture and Society: A Text Reader*, (London: Routledge, 1999), pp.250-253, originally published in *Third Text*, 5, Vol. 2, (1988), pp. 51-77.

⁶⁶⁴ In particular, chapter 6 of Eddie Chambers's doctoral thesis refers to the GLC. Edward Chambers, 'The Emergence and development of Black Visual Arts Activity in England between 1981 and 1986: Press and Public Responses', (unpublished doctoral thesis, Goldsmiths, 1998).

⁶⁶⁵ Richard Hylton, *The Nature of the Beast: Cultural Diversity and the Visual Arts Sector: A Study of Policies, Initiatives and Attitudes 1976-2006* (Bath: ICIA, Institute of Contemporary Interdisciplinary Arts, 2007). Chambers is credited with commenting on Hylton's drafts, as well as writing the afterword. Hylton's account of the GLC's Ethnic Arts funding is heavily reliant upon chapter six of Chambers's doctoral thesis.

⁶⁶⁶ John Carvel, 1984.

⁶⁶⁷ Chambers dismisses Kwesi Owusu as a 'Gushing Admirer' of the GLC. Chambers, 1998, p. 163; Kwesi Owusu, 1987.

⁶⁶⁸ Despite the fact that those responsible for the advertising campaign for anti-racist year had little to do with the Ethnic Arts Sub-Committee, except that both were working in departments within the GLC's more than 22,000 staff. As Alan Tomkins has commented at interview, there may have been little connection between the two departments.

⁶⁶⁹ 'The Ethnic Arts Sub-Committee had a number of officers and at one time or another took on staff to undertake specific functions or projects, but these officers and employees maintained a discrete presence. There also existed a Race Equality Unit, an Ethnic Minorities Unit, and an Ethnic Minorities Committee. But the relationship of these 'units' and 'committees' to each other and to the public was never clear. It may have been that all these 'committees', 'units' and 'departments' were all one and the same, or overlapped significantly, but again no one outside of the GLC knew.' See Chambers, 1998, p.161.

there is little evidence of GLC archival research in his text. Richard Hylton's account reiterates Chambers's arguments, and has its basis in Chambers's sources.⁶⁷⁰

Chambers's initial responses to the manner in which the GLC conducted its sponsorship of black artists can be traced to an article in *Race Today* in 1986.⁶⁷¹ Chambers directed sharp criticism not only at the GLC in its newfound support for what they had pejoratively categorised as 'ethnic arts', but also reproaching his peers, other black visual artists and cultural workers, for getting involved with the GLC in the first place.⁶⁷²

But the betrayal and re-appropriation of our art has never been a one sided process. All too often [...] black artists themselves have become involved with various projects that have had words such as "tokenism", "careerism", and "paternalism" stamped all over them. In the case of the so-called "GLC Anti-Racist Murals" one assumes that the supposedly lucrative sums of money offered were the incentives used to coerce black artists into what can only be described as an ill-conceived and hollow project. At other times one assumes that as an increased profile in art circles (again supposedly) is what attracts black artists to take part in the neutralising of their own creativity.⁶⁷³

Chambers's strength of feeling against the GLC's Ethnic Arts Sub-Committee, and GLC proclaimed 'anti-racist' intent in general, reflects his ideological position, and subsequent assessment of the situation from his particular perspective that cannot accommodate what he saw as any problematic and compromising collusion with the State.⁶⁷⁴ Chambers's critique of the GLC seems seated in the belief that Black Art,

⁶⁷⁰ It is not known if the London Metropolitan Archive's GLC holdings were available to Chambers at the time of his work. Richard Hylton's 2007 account makes no reference to the GLC's archive.

⁶⁷¹ Eddie Chambers, 'The Marginalisation of Black Art', *Race Today Review*, 1986. Chambers lays out his criticisms of both the GLC's approach to black artists, laying the blame at their door for, if not inventing, then at least promoting the idea of an 'ethnic arts' as an unhelpful and damaging 'ethnicising' category by which black artists could be continually marginalised from mainstream cultural institutions. He also criticises the GLC for creating a class of black administrative staff, or 'ethnic arts officers', and the anger in Chambers' tone is palpable in his criticism of the readiness of his black artist contemporaries to accept state funding, and as he perceives it, compromise their political position. To quote Chambers at length; 'Faced with progressive, restless, and assertive Black Artists who demanded their new-found voices be heard the white art world simply switched tactics. For years it had ignored and marginalised the work of Britain's pioneer Black Artists [...] the art world went for the time-honoured European practice of re-appropriation [...] and began making liberal, accommodating noises and gestures. A previously unknown activity, "Ethnic art", was encouraged and suddenly became a familiar and widely practiced art form. The white establishment created a type of person known as an "Ethnic Arts Officer". Black arts administrators were trained [...] The white art establishment claimed that it was "assisting" Black Artists. [...] (For months now I have been meaning to write an article titled "How the GLC undermined and subverted Black creativity.") [...] It is the sum total of these modern attempts to subvert militant Black creativity, while at the same time talking about the "Vision and Voice" of Black visual arts, that has led to the ethnicising (and at the same time marginalising) of Black Art. [...]':

⁶⁷² It is of relevance here to consider Chambers's participant positionality in relation to his response to the GLC, as one of a generation of young black British artists struggling against both the oppression of black people by State institutions such as the police, and the racist indifference of mainstream State funded arts institutions to Black British artists. Chambers's rejection of State sponsorship also represents an understandable and justifiable response, in the art-historical sense of the 'avant-garde'. On the meanings of the term 'avant-garde' in art history, particularly in relation to State-controlled institutions of art in late-nineteenth century France, See Jonathan Harris, *Art History the Key Concepts* (London: Routledge, 2008 [2006]), pp.36-7. London's publicly funded art galleries lagged behind their regional counterparts when it came to exhibiting black visual artists in the 1980s, with regional galleries such as The Mappin Art Gallery in Sheffield and The Bluecoat in Liverpool leading the way. See Richard Hylton, 2007, p.75.

⁶⁷³ In his argument, Chambers cites Marcus Garvey's warnings against the dangers of collusion with white power structures. Many cultural and voluntary organisations are likely to have wrestled with the question of accepting the GLC's financial assistance, or indeed any form of State sponsorship.

⁶⁷⁴ Niru Ratnam, reviewing the collection of Chambers's writings in 1999, has argued that the strength of much of Chambers's writing is heavily dependent on the context from which it emerges, for instance, Chambers's particular reading of 'Black' and 'Black Art' and its relationship to Pan-Africanism, are a good reflection of contemporaneous debates. Niru Ratnam describes Chambers's 'determined will to challenge orthodoxy', which while admirable, makes his polemical and often self-contradictory writing style lack the nuance that might be useful in subsequent analysis of the GLC period.

perceived as a radical social movement (itself an idealised notion) must locate itself outside of the State to remain effective, an assertion with parallels in Paul Gilroy's assessment of the GLC's failed attempts to foster a popular anti-racist social movement. It might be unfair of Chambers and others to imply that those who did choose to 'get involved' with the GLC, serve on advisory committees, or accept local government money for cultural projects did not consider that they too were doing something radical and unprecedented, in regard to cultural policy, though certainly hard won and not without a set of difficult ethical and social issues with which to contend.⁶⁷⁵ It is also of importance that the GLC's Ethnic Arts Sub-Committee represented a first in that it gave the GLC's black arts advisory panel grant-allocating powers- a point that Richard Hylton's account fails to record.⁶⁷⁶

To take perspectives from 'inside' the GLC, Herman Ouseley wrote that the GLC's lack of progress understandably frustrated high expectations, and attracted perhaps an unfair share of criticism, given that this was new territory,

Not surprisingly, black and ethnic minorities became quickly frustrated by the lack of any visible substantial benefits. Because of raised, but reasonable expectations, as a result of the new and relatively radical approaches to tackling institutionalised racism and because of more open and accountable approaches, black and ethnic minority communities were able to be much more critical of these authorities, even though they were generally among the most progressive. Quite remarkably those authorities with no progressive policies on race remained relatively unscathed [...] the 'do little, do nothing, no problems here' local authorities [...]⁶⁷⁷

Furthermore, Ansel Wong, who worked in the GLC's Ethnic Minorities Unit alongside Ouseley, identified the criticisms of their work that came from some amongst the black radical left,

[...] some of those who were in receipt of funding obviously had a very positive attitude towards us. There were others who felt their politics was such that they felt we were just window-dressing as black people [at the GLC] and therefore we weren't really representative of the black community [...] in fact [to them] we were traitors and [could not] be trusted. So there was that element, particularly from the radical black left. I understand that because I was part of that, when I left the building I was part of that radical black left [...] the relationship was very tetchy with those organisations and they were all very critical of us. It was important for us to understand where they were coming from and to take that on board but it sometimes hurt when you were told in public that you're a traitor to the black race [...]. But we believed in what we were doing [...] yes, there was an element of papering the cracks, there was an element of just doing things in a showy manner, just pure presentation as opposed to substance and structural change. We knew that, but equality was the message that was getting across- that equality matters, that black peoples were here to stay and therefore you had to deal with us. [...] Consultation was an essential element of our work [...] so we reached out to those communities in a quite structured and deliberate way so from that point of view, the negative comments that came from the radical left was very much to the extreme left. Most people were quite willing to accommodate us, to embrace us if not necessarily fully support us.⁶⁷⁸

Ratnam argues that Chambers's approach and style has left his writing 'open to academic nit-picking', and in view of Chambers's historical analysis of the GLC, some further 'nit-picking' is necessary, even if to do so is to enter upon uncomfortable territory, or to expose any revision to accusations of unwarranted positivity. See: Niru Ratnam, 'Run Through the Jungle: Selected writings by Eddie Chambers', *Third Text*, 1999, 13, 46, pp. 104-107.

⁶⁷⁵ For all those who perceived the GLC as an enemy of radicalism, posing as a friend, there were many who were prepared to stand by it in the face of the perceived common enemy that Thatcherism represented.

⁶⁷⁶ Errol Lloyd, opening the Minority Arts Advisory Service (MAAS) conference in 1983, 'He pointed out that the funding practice of the GLC was in sharp contrast to other funding bodies [...]' Errol Lloyd, 'MAAS National Conference report, 26 November 1983, Commonwealth Institute', reproduced in *Artrage*, Issue 6, (Spring 1984).

⁶⁷⁷ Ouseley, 1990, p.138.

⁶⁷⁸ Ansel Wong, interview with Zahra Delilah, The GLC Story Oral History Project, 16 February 2017, London.

Chambers included an expanded argument regarding the GLC in his doctoral thesis, and two points in particular are worthy of emphasis.⁶⁷⁹ Chambers focuses on the GLC's limited support for black visual art forms, with only little reference to how visual art in mainstream arts venues as a category was considered somewhat elitist by GLC arts policy makers, the proper remit of the Arts Council, and therefore held little sway for the Council's Arts Committees more interested in promoting a general definition of 'popular culture'.⁶⁸⁰ Chambers's thesis argues instead that black visual artists were therefore 'pigeon holed and bullied' into accepting work in lesser 'community centre' settings, in situations where their participation was burdened by the imperative to 'represent' their 'ethnicity', thereby applying the 1970s categorisation of 'ethnic art' inappropriately to the new generation of young radical Black Art practitioners active in the early 1980s. This is a serious accusation, which implies that the black cultural producers who chose to become involved in GLC sponsored projects had no agency whatsoever and were forced to make work in compromised conditions, to work in prescriptive ways around themes that further essentialised, exoticised or ethnicised their production. Statements to this effect are made by both Eddie Chambers and later Rasheed Araeen, and are repeated in Richard Hylton's 2007 analysis of black arts policy.⁶⁸¹ To fully investigate these claims, and to put them in the context of the GLC's cultural sponsorship strategies more generally, would require further time to interview more of the artists and arts advisors involved to ascertain how this happened.⁶⁸² Secondly, Chambers's argument focuses most heavily on the GLC-initiated public visual arts projects which were in his view least successful, stating that 'unwilling to simply respond to black artists' initiatives or requests for money, the GLC took it upon itself

⁶⁷⁹ See Eddie Chambers, 1998. Chambers's 2014 publication, '*Black Artists in British Art*', includes aspects of his doctoral research, but notably excludes his critical writing about the GLC.

⁶⁸⁰ As previously discussed, Chambers' thesis account of the GLC's 'anti-racist' claims is problematic, approaching the GLC as a unified entity, conflating the work of different departments, and paying perhaps too much heed to Livingstone-as-figurehead narratives and publicity pronouncements. More interesting, as I have previously argued, are the moments of contingency that emerge in different departments at the GLC, in which different voices begin to be taken seriously, and black, Asian, lesbian and gay employees begin to get grant awarding powers and some say in policymaking. These individuals were both criticised by Chambers and dismissed by Rasheed Araeen as 'black functionaries' for working within the State. This did not entirely discourage Rasheed Araeen from engaging with them himself. See Chambers, 1998, pp.161-166.

⁶⁸¹ For example, Hylton states, 'It is arguably implausible that such funding could be considered as anything other than "exotica funding", particularly as it was the GLC itself which found it necessary to implement a separate funding category for Black artistic activity.' Hylton, 2007, pp. 46-48.

⁶⁸² It is possible that an examination of arts projects in detail could serve to re-examine these claims. As Chambers mentions towards the middle of his argument, a comparative assessment of the various funding strategies – more inclusive of 'theatre, carnival, film-making, poetry, music [...] were beyond the scope of his research. See Chambers, 1998, p.167. This fact is given little weight in his argument, however. He reiterates a narrative of the 'control' of black visual artists in particular: 'But as far as the work of Black visual arts was concerned, it was GLC staff/employees who directly initiated and directed the projects in which Black Visual Artists were involved.' Chambers, 1998, p.159; p.164. Chambers states that 'Visual artists were never respected for the individuality of their practice [...] instead they were regarded as symbolic and politically representative components of some sort of anti-racist ethnic jigsaw.' While this may have been how many perceived the situation, it should be reiterated here that 'visual arts' including fine art practices such as painting were competing for funds with a wide variety of practices that constituted the GLC's 'popular culture' focus, and consequently may not have been a priority. This could be a subject for future research.

to direct and initiate activity.⁶⁸³ This is repeated in Richard Hylton's account.⁶⁸⁴ While there were certainly a number of major instances in which the GLC did centrally organise events, or where its public relations department press releases appeared to be taking too much credit for the work of its sponsored cultural producers.⁶⁸⁵ It is not entirely fair to state that the GLC did not fund black British cultural producers or organisations unless the GLC was 'directing and initiating them' however, as this chapter explores.⁶⁸⁶ Chambers's thesis is a useful starting point for the development of an understanding of the mixed feelings, and in some cases understandable wholesale distrust that black *visual artists* had about approaching the GLC and accepting its sponsorship and stands as an index of contemporaneous debates. However, it does not appear to reference much of the evidence of sponsorship decisions, aims and papers presented in the GLC's archive or the realities of the EAS's bureaucratic operation, which might lend a different interpretation. Chambers's necessarily narrowly-focussed argument unhelpfully has the effect of closing down further investigations of what was really happening across many different departments in County Hall, and neglects to put sponsorship of visual arts projects in their wider contexts, both in terms of the GLC's complex bureaucracy and cultural sponsorship remit, its pending abolition and of arts sponsorship for black cultural producers more generally in London prior to 1981.⁶⁸⁷

It could be argued that both Gilroy and Chambers's approaches to GLC material, based in the textual-analysis mode of the discipline of cultural studies, are missing some contextual evidence about the bureaucracy of the GLC as an institution of the State, and the agency, and limits to agency, of actors within it, in ways that might also reflect the divide between the disciplines of cultural studies and 'political economy' approaches.⁶⁸⁸ In subsequent readings of the GLC's actions on black cultural sponsorship to

⁶⁸³ See Chambers, 1998, p.159. Chambers cites the example of the GLC's slowness to respond to Rasheed Araeen's request for financial support for the exhibition 'The Essential Black Art.', which he eventually held in 1988, without GLC assistance. Further archival research would be necessary to ascertain what conversations occurred between Araeen and decision makers at the GLC. It is known that Araeen's book, *Making Myself Visible*, was however granted GLC funds. Rasheed Araeen and Guy Brett, *Making Myself Visible* (London: Kala Press, 1984).

⁶⁸⁴ Hylton also denounces the GLC's 'control' of black artists, echoing Chambers: 'By insisting on initiating (and controlling) much of its activity relating to black visual artists, it could be argued that the GLC not only pigeon holed but also contributed to the negation of Black artistic practice within the visual arts sector.' Hylton, 2007, p.52.

⁶⁸⁵ Commentators have correctly warned against this impression, perhaps propagated by aspects of the GLC's press releases publicizing their sponsorship of London's Black and Asian cultural producers. Part of the GLC's remit was to publicize both events themselves and the GLC's involvement in supporting them with a view to increasing audiences and also increasing electoral support for the GLC. Clearly, such pronouncements did not help and were frequently greeted with cynicism. An *Artrage* editorial in 1985 stated 'The GLC has allowed many things of importance in the arts, to happen. But it has been rumoured that there was life - and black people making art- before the GLC. Those who subsidised the unfashionable arts then- thousands putting in time, energy and a sense of optimism that the making of artefacts matter- will continue with difficulty to live this vital part of their lives.' E.A. Markham, 'random thoughts (Editorial)', *Artrage*, 11, Winter 1985, (London: MAAS), p.1. Errol Lloyd wrote elsewhere that '[...] some people have mistakenly assumed that there was no black creativity before the advent of the GLC.', see Errol Lloyd, 'An Historical Perspective, Introduction' in Julia Nicholson, et al., *Caribbean Expressions in Britain* (Leicester: Leicestershire Museums, 1986), p.6.

⁶⁸⁶ It is not clear if the GLC's self-initiated interventions into black art exhibitions in London were partly motivated by a frustration at the lack of movement, despite GLC pressure, on the need to ensure black cultural producers had opportunities to exhibit work in 'mainstream' London arts venues. It is also very difficult to retrospectively assert the exact reasons why any initiative was not funded or given support quickly enough, such as the aforementioned Rasheed Araeen organised exhibition *The Essential Black Art*, as cited by Chambers, in Chambers, 1998, pp.161-2.

⁶⁸⁷ This also points to a methodological problem: the GLC's rhetoric and public pronouncements in relation to its promotion of black cultural production do not tell the whole story. It is important to begin to identify the internal contradictions within its bureaucracy from which its policy emerged.

⁶⁸⁸ Nicholas Garnham, 'Political Economy and Cultural Studies: Reconciliation or Divorce?' *Critical Studies in Mass Communication*, 1, 12 (1995), 62-71; See also Michael Keith, 'Book Review, Paul Gilroy', *International Journal of Urban and*

date, there is less emphasis on intention, context or actions, and more on perceived longer term effects, emphasising failures. Whatever the outcomes were of GLC policy, they present only a partial story.

These readings of the GLC's involvement with black visual artists can be compared to a brief account by art writer Niru Ratnam, which appeared within a broader discussion of the Arts Council's short-lived cultural diversity initiative, 'Decibel' (2004). It was printed two years prior to Richard Hylton's book, within a minor publication accompanying an exhibition at Spike Island gallery, Bristol. Hylton was dismissive of Ratnam's article, suggesting that it 'overstated' the GLC's support, preferring to emphasise what he and Chambers identified as the 'conditional' nature of the GLC's monetary commitment to black visual arts.⁶⁸⁹ A closer reading of Ratnam's article would suggest that rather than a celebratory overstatement of the GLC's involvement in black culture, Ratnam presents the GLC's 'ethnic arts' moment as one of contradiction and incremental change, and part of a longer trajectory in policy development. Ratnam argues that while the GLC was often criticised for its 'implicitly and sometimes explicitly separatist' black arts policies, their approach reflects '[...] a debate that prevails to today when considering an initiative such as Decibel.'⁶⁹⁰ Furthermore, the 'Black Arts' approach itself, which 'took anti-racism to be an organising principle', may have invited or necessitated a certain level of separatism, as Ratnam noted, '[...] Paul Gilroy has argued [anti-racism] often depended upon the idea of 'us and them'. This approach was increasingly questioned in the second half of the 1980s through theorising, practice and debate.' This would suggest that this separatism was not only something imposed by funding bodies such as the GLC, but rather was at the time regarded as one possible solution to the lack of state sponsorship for black culture, by some black cultural producers and arts organisers themselves. Ratnam interprets the GLC's more problematic ethnic arts focus on 'community', and the breadth of its' definition of 'arts' to encompass many cultural forms, rather than simply visual arts, as an unhelpful remnant of Naseem Khan's emphasis in *The Art Britain Ignores*, which tended to isolate 'ethnic arts' from wider artistic discourses, limiting them to only 'community' interest.⁶⁹¹ This may also have been unintentionally reinforced by other factors, as it coincided with the GLC's aforementioned 'popular culture' focus across *all* of its arts policy, which did not set out to privilege 'visual arts' in particular, but rather sought to promote and provide resources for a variety of cultural forms and to engage a broader spectrum of its constituents.

We might also compare Eddie Chambers's response to GLC interventions to that of his contemporary, Black British artist Sonia Boyce, who expressed a more open-ended view in 1987 that allows for an account of the mixed results of the GLC's work,

regional research, vol. 12, 2, June 1988, p. 333. Keith comments, 'The cost of this sort of focus can be measured in its silences in political economy [...].'

⁶⁸⁹ Niru Ratnam, 'Decibel: Running to Stand Still' in *Spin Cycle: Runa Islam, Damien Roach, Hiraki Sawa* (Spike Island, Bristol: Systemisch, 2004). Hylton insists that 'Niru Ratnam overstated the GLC's role in support of Black Artists when he asserted that: "There is little doubt that the most straightforward way that the GLC contributed to the development of the field of Black Arts was, quite simply, money." However, although the GLC's patronage of Black visual artists was unique, it was certainly not 'quite simply' about giving 'money', and what it did give was by no means given unconditionally.' See Richard Hylton, 2007, p. 56. Ratnam's account, it should be noted, makes some use of GLC papers, presumably from the LMA.

⁶⁹⁰ Ratnam, 2004, p. 73. One could also draw comparisons with the narrowly focussed remit of inIVA (Institute of International Visual Arts) today.

⁶⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p.74.

It was a big hindrance, but it was also a help. What the GLC did was give communities the resources to mobilise on a different scale. They made it seem possible that a local government could provide the opportunities for black people. Unfortunately, the GLC's policy decisions really did confuse and blur the edges of what was tokenistic and what wasn't. The notion of 'positive discrimination' headed us down a complex, and in my view, wrong road.⁶⁹²

Any investigation into GLC interventions into the promotion and sponsorship of London's black cultural producers between 1981-1986 are likely to reveal narratives suggesting that the GLC were, at different moments, more of a help to *some* people than to others, with both negative and positive impacts. Certain policies may have had short term effects, others may have contributed to longer term transformations, for better or worse.⁶⁹³ It is Boyce's interpretation, of how the GLC might have simultaneously been a 'big hindrance' *and* a help, that lends chapter five both its title and its direction. Herman Ouseley, analysing the work of the Ethnic Minorities Unit (EMU) of the GLC, leaves us with a reminder that these experiences, both positive and negative, were innovations which need to be learnt from,

Whatever the failure in overall terms, the pockets of success cannot be dismissed, even though their significance may seem to be more local and parochial. There are important experiences to be shared from the innovations, experiments and programmes it attempted.⁶⁹⁴

The next section will return to one of the GLC-initiated EAS projects for which Eddie Chambers reserved particularly acute criticism, the 'Anti-Racist Mural Project', with a view to both documenting the project, of which there is little record, and to re-examine some of Chambers's claims. This will be followed by a more general account documenting some of the work of the EAS, to reconsider Chambers's assertion that the GLC did not fund black visual artists directly, but rather only operated through problematic in-house projects.

⁶⁹² Sonia Boyce, in John Roberts, 'Interview with Sonia Boyce', *Third Text*, 1, Autumn 1987 pp.55-64.

⁶⁹³ Where some sponsored organisations proved to have longevity, others suffered and ground to a halt when the GLC closed, if alternative sources of public funds were not forthcoming, self-sustaining strategies could not be found, or the impetus to continue was lost for other reasons.

⁶⁹⁴ Ouseley, 1990, p.135. How the GLC's 'pockets of success' are defined is also disputable.

5.5 Municipal Interventions: The GLC Anti-Racist Mural Project (1984-5)



Figure 79: Gavin Jantjes, 'The Dream, The Rumour and the Poet's Song', mural, Brixton, 1984.

Source: *Signs of Resistance: A Tape-Slide Programme on Anti-Racist Mural Paintings in London*, Albany Video, 1986.

Interviewing artist Sonia Boyce for the first issue of Rasheed Araeen's international art journal *Third Text* in 1987, John Roberts asked if the GLC had 'expected a certain kind of artist, or a certain kind of work' from the black artists they had selected to sponsor between 1982 and 1986.⁶⁹⁵ This leading question indicates the high level of suspicion on the part of the interviewer, enquiring for his no doubt equally sceptical readership, that the GLC's interest in black artists between 1983 and 1986 was not all that it seemed. Indeed, as Stuart Hall recounted in stronger terms, black people were extremely wary of working with the GLC in general, as they 'expected to be ripped off daily'.⁶⁹⁶ Roberts's question also points towards the conflict of interest artists may have come up against in seeking or accepting funding from a formerly-uninterested local authority such as the GLC and the concern that they would be required to make compromises on their creative integrity, independence and politics. Roberts' politely phrased suggestion that the GLC may have been seeking 'a certain kind of artist' also gestures towards many acute criticisms of the GLC's focus on 'ethnic minority arts', including its continued use of the problematic label. As previously discussed, artist Eddie Chambers asserted in his thesis that the GLC sought to apply artists to support their own political agendas in the short term, 'buying' cultural producers to demonstrate GLC inclusivity and to showcase their own 'municipal anti-racist' credentials. It is unsurprising that the

⁶⁹⁵ John Roberts, 'Interview with Sonia Boyce', *Third Text*, Autumn 1987 pp.55-64.

⁶⁹⁶ Stuart Hall, interview with Franco Bianchini, in Bianchini, 1995, p.210.

GLC was suspected of endorsing what Barry Troyna has bitterly satirised as the ‘insincere multiculturalism’ of the ‘three S’s’- saris, samosas and steel pans, tokenism in which so-called ‘traditional cultures’ are paraded to placate communities, simultaneously reinforcing the ‘absolutist imagery of ethnic categories’⁶⁹⁷ without addressing those issues perceived to be most fundamental, racism and the unequal distribution of power in society.⁶⁹⁸ As previously discussed, beyond County Hall, it appeared to some that little thought had gone into the potential negative effects of the GLC’s so-called ‘ethnic arts’ interventions, for the longer term inclusion of black and minority voices within Britain’s mainstream cultural institutions, and within the narrative of British culture itself. Sonya Boyce responds to John Robert’s question,

Unfortunately the GLC’s policy decisions really did confuse and blur the edges of what was tokenistic and what wasn’t. The notion of ‘positive discrimination’ headed us down a complex, and in my view, wrong road. [...] Many artists were asked to produce murals, rather than continue with what they were already doing, which meant they were obliged to fit into the role of accessible / public / ‘popular’ artist. I think the commissioning of black artists to produce murals was an attempt to redress the lack of support for art in public places. Public accountability and bureaucratic control are not always sympathetic to the concerns an artist may address in the work.⁶⁹⁹

Highlighting some of the contradictions black artists faced when accepting to work on GLC-initiated projects, Boyce indicates the position of having to ‘fit’ uncomfortably between roles, as a ‘public/ popular artist’, as well as a ‘community representative’, rather than as an artist simply being granted funds to continue with artistic practice, free of compromise. Boyce also suggested that the mural commissions may have had more to do with the GLC’s concern to address a general lack of support for public art works amongst voters. The reality may have had more to do with matters of Council bureaucracy, and the limits of its legal powers to sponsor individual artists.⁷⁰⁰ The difficulty lay in making grants to artists as private individuals, as the Council was limited to sponsor work which would have ‘public benefit’ to Londoners, such as the commissioning of a new artwork for public purchase and display, commissioning and promoting a public exhibition, supporting a gallery to mount an exhibition, or providing funding for a community centre to support an artist in residence.⁷⁰¹ In this respect, the GLC’s ability to sponsor visual artists directly was significantly different to that of the Arts Council, who were perhaps better placed to make awards to individual artists.

⁶⁹⁷ Paul Gilroy ‘The End of Anti-racism’, *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 17 (1990), 71–83, p.72.

⁶⁹⁸ See Barry Troyna, ‘Beyond Multiculturalism: towards the enactment of anti-racist education in policy, provision and pedagogy’, *Oxford Review Of Education*, vol. 13, no. 3, (1987) 307-320.

⁶⁹⁹ Sonia Boyce, in John Roberts, ‘Interview with Sonia Boyce’, Third Text, Autumn 1987, p59.

⁷⁰⁰ On the acquisition or commissioning production of artworks for public display, in reference to ‘Schedule 2, Article 16 of the Local Government Act 1963’, see GLC Anti-Racist Sub-Committee Papers, ‘Report, Head of Legal Branch, GLC Anti-Racist Year 1984 Proposal’, [LMA: GLC/DG/PRE/50/01].

⁷⁰¹ In the same paper, Errol Lloyd records that it was felt by the advisors, and by those attending the ‘GLC Ethnic Arts Conference’ of May 1982, that a strategy that would be of most benefit to artists if the GLC organised and promoted exhibitions itself, ‘[...] an exhibition which brought to the attention of Londoners the extent of talent within the ethnic minority communities would be of enormous value [...] it would be necessary for a reputable gallery to be hired [...]’. The support of existing galleries to mount new art exhibitions of their own was also seen as an essential strategy for the support of artists whose work may not be a commercial success, and furthermore, that the ‘Anti-racist Year’ theme could also apply to this. *Ibid.*

Discussions of the problematic context of State cultural sponsorship in general, and the anti-racist theme in particular, tend to dominate how this mural project has been remembered and subsequently discussed. Eddie Chambers accuses the GLC of using black visual artists simply as 'illustrators' of their anti-racist campaigns, rather than respecting them for their own work. This is certainly a key contradiction of this mural project, tied into the prescriptive nature of this commission, funded by public money, and therefore subject to challenges of public accountability that may have had a required a level of 'prescriptiveness' requiring that artists be seen to be providing the community with a service for their fee. It is perhaps akin to the way in which muralists were similarly 'conscripted' to illustrate the GLC's anti-nuclear messages during Peace Year 1983, but the way in which the mural project commission from black artists became tied into the 'Anti-Racist Year' theme, makes this particular 'conscription' all the more problematic. However, a closer look at the projects themselves presents another question, of how far the artists had agency in their choice of subject matter and execution of the project.

Public mural commissions fit well with the GLC's legal powers to sponsor individual artists, and was initially proposed as a strategy in October 1983 by Errol Lloyd, a painter working as an advisor to the EAS, who also edited the Minority Arts Advisory Service (MAAS) magazine, *Arrage*. His presented paper suggests that two murals might be commissioned for either 'Brixton, Harlesden, Southall and Notting Hill Gate', and proposed that 'One possible theme [for the murals] could be the commemoration of Anti-Racist Year 1984'.⁷⁰² These areas became the target for new murals, as Parminder Vir of the EAS later explained in an interview for a tape-slide documentation of the project,

Those areas where there are high concentrations of Black people, Black communities, Brixton, Southall, East End, and Notting Hill, they are also areas that represent continuous struggle, against institutionalised racism, racism on the streets, and also the achievements of those communities in those areas. And the murals as they stand are a socio-political statement of those struggles and those achievements by those communities, historical and contemporary.⁷⁰³

Vir made a distinction between this project's deliberate selection of black visual artists rather than selecting from London's established community arts muralists teams,

We wanted to commission black artists, that is artists from the Afro-Caribbean and Asian communities, for them to be able to capture and reflect their respective areas. The other important criteria was that the artists should be established artists, and artists with a reputation, working to a very high standard. Significantly, none of the four artists selected for the project were Muralists. They brought with them their training in the fine art tradition.⁷⁰⁴

A series of four murals were planned in support of the Council's Anti-Racist Year. Following Lloyd's initial proposal in October 1983, approval was sought for the funds of around £40,000 to be allocated in July 1984, with an additional £12,375 allocated to complete the project in July 1985, bringing the total

⁷⁰² GLC, Errol Lloyd, 'Visual Arts and Crafts Policy: A discussion paper', 18.10.1983, [LMA: GLC/DG/PRE/50/01].

⁷⁰³ Parminder Vir, interviewed in a tape-slide production made to document and showcase the murals, comprised of still images, audio narration and interviews: Graham De Smidt, and Gavin Jantjes, *Signs of Resistance: A Tape-Slide Programme on Anti-Racist Mural Paintings in London*, 20 mins, Albany Video, 1986, [Central St Martins Video Collection].

⁷⁰⁴ Ibid. The commissioned artists had a technical consultation with mural painters from the Greenwich Mural Workshop to plan their work and assure its permanence. Vir's distinction between these black visual artists and professional mural painters is somewhat contentious, but perhaps articulated to assert a difference between this commission and previous murals on 'multi-cultural' themes, which were predominantly undertaken by white 'community arts' practitioners.

cost to £52,375 for the four murals.⁷⁰⁵ Two murals, in Brixton and Shadwell, Tower Hamlets, were to receive permanent sites on walls and two were painted onto ‘mobile panels’ which could be transported to various sites to be seen by local residents.⁷⁰⁶ Planning permission had to be sought for the siting of any mural, and mural projects were not always welcomed by local councils or local residents. Artist Keith Piper, who worked on the ‘Southall Black Resistance Mural’, suggested in conversation that the intended permanent mural site in Southall ‘fell through’, or was perhaps not granted planning permission, resulting in the mural being painted onto boards.⁷⁰⁷



Figure 80: Gavin Jantjes and Tam Joseph, ‘The Dream, The Rumour And The Poet’s Song’, illustration from GLC Anti-Racist Mural Project 1985 Catalogue (London: GLC, 1985).

⁷⁰⁵ See GLC ARC Committee Minutes 18.07.1984, [LMA:GLC/DG/MIN/006]. A further £12,375 was allocated on 17 July 1985, which according to the minutes brought the total to £52,375 for the mural project, see GLC EAS Minutes, [LMA:GLC/DG/MIN/014].

⁷⁰⁶ Press Release ‘GLC Commissions Anti-Racist Murals for London’, 24.06.1985, [LMA:GLC/DG/PRB/35/048/0525].

⁷⁰⁷ Keith Piper, conversation with the author, at *The Work Between Us: Black British Artists and Exhibition Histories Conference*, Bluecoat Gallery Liverpool, 20th January 2016. This may also have also occurred in the case of the ‘Notting Hill’ mural, which was to be located in the staunchly Conservative borough of Kensington and Chelsea.

The first of the four murals to be completed, ‘The Dream, The Rumour and the Poet’s Song’ [Figure 80] painted by artists Gavin Jantjes and Tam Joseph, was officially ‘opened’ in Brixton in Autumn 1985 [Figure 81].⁷⁰⁸ As Jamaican-born novelist Ferdinand Dennis commented in his 1988 account of Brixton in his observations in ‘Afro-Britain’, ‘the mural tells a story’, and could be ‘read’ from left to right, as though walking past its 75 feet length across Dexter Square.⁷⁰⁹ The mural begins with a diasporic theme, a man awake in a patchwork bed flanked by palm trees, perhaps ‘the dreamer’ of the title. Then the suitcase- carrying arrivals of women and children, the shadow of a bridge and city buildings rising up behind them- one woman, smartly dressed with a hat perched on her head is striding forth eagerly with a coffin like traveling chest on her back, in a pose reminiscent of the stooped female figure in the lower right portion of Picasso’s ‘Guernica’.⁷¹⁰ In the scenes that follow, we see the dream turn sour, and a parallel theme emerging between ‘Guernica’ and Jantjes’s Brixton mural, in the violence of fascism. Recalling Picasso’s eye-like bare lightbulb symbol in ‘Guernica’, a single lightbulb illuminates an empty chair in a stark a prison cell, a twisted body in handcuffs has been hurled to the floor, a solitary jack-boot hovers in place above its faceless head, poised to crush the skull as though it were an egg. A woman with a pushchair crouches on the floor amongst broken crockery, a smashed window behind her, looking despairingly up towards a crucifix for comfort. A young man and woman appear to run for their lives down an alleyway, behind them the shadowy apex of a house at night, crowned with flames, fire billowing out of an upstairs window. This image most disturbingly calls to mind the local incident which came to be known as the ‘New Cross Massacre’ of 1981, in which thirteen black British teenagers were killed when a fire broke out under suspicious circumstances at a birthday party. The lack of police investigation into allegations of a racist arson attack provoked widespread outrage.⁷¹¹ In the final scene, which visually recalls painters of the Harlem Renaissance, the poet of the title, resembling Linton Kwesi Johnson with his distinctive hat, suit and glasses, recites his work under a street light while bystanders listen. Above the scene, a white bird sings on a telegraph wire, suggesting that through the poet’s song, victims of injustice like the teenagers killed in the New Cross fire are never forgotten.

⁷⁰⁸ The 15ft x 75ft mural was painted in acrylic paint, varnish and an anti-graffiti shield, see: Steve Lobb et al., *Murals in London* (Greenwich Mural Workshop, 1986).

⁷⁰⁹ Titled “The Dream, the Rumour and the Poet’s Song”, it was painted by two artists, South African born Gavin Jantjes and Dominican Tom Joseph. It is a sort of homage to events in Brixton and the Brixton-based, Jamaican born poet Linton Kwesi Johnson- note the Ghanaian name. The Mural tells a story. It starts with pictures of people migrating, followed by pictures caught in a terrible fire. It ends with the poet reading his works under a spotlight. The migration is easy to understand. The children and the fire less so. It is based on an incident which became known as the New Cross Massacre. In January ’81, thirteen young Afro-Britons died in a fire in New Cross, an area not far from Brixton. The cause of the fire remains a mystery. Ferdinand Dennis, *Behind the Frontlines: Journey into Afro-Britain* (London: Gollancz, 1988), p.199; see also McLeod, John, *Postcolonial London: Rewriting the Metropolis* (Routledge, 2004) pp.126-7.

⁷¹⁰ There may also be a similarity between the title of Jantjes’s mural and Picasso’s ‘Dream and Lie of Franco’ lithographs, (1937) which prefigured the Guernica mural.

⁷¹¹ The tragic event at 439 New Cross Road, on Sunday 18th January 1981, was commemorated by musicians and dub poets at the time, including Linton Kwesi Johnson’s ‘New Crass Massakah’, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FUMYAqAlAXA> [accessed 16.11.16]; Benjamin Zephaniah’s ‘13 dead’ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_Chm8TtUQp4>; Johnny Osbourne’s ‘13 dead (nothing said)’ <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w5faPxNfVWAA>> [accessed 16.11.16]. It inspired a significant demonstration, the ‘Black People’s Day of Action’ in March 1981. See Les Back, ‘New Crass Massakah, Remembering the Fire’, <<http://www.gold.ac.uk/news/remembering-the-new-cross-road-fire/>> [accessed 16.11.16].



Figure 81: Gavin Jantjes (right) at opening of Brixton mural 'The Dream, The Rumour and The Poet's Song', 1985.
[LMA: GLC photograph archive].



Figure 82: Video still featuring Gavin Jantjes Mural, in *Britain's Black Legacy - Welcome To Brixton*, AgenceIMmedia, Paris Migrant Media London, 1991.

The site of this mural was also of significance, reaching across the new public space, 'Dexter Square'.⁷¹² The mural ornamented a newly remodelled square layout, which was devised by urban planners to cut off an 'escape route' side street following the concentration of violent conflict in 1981 along Railton Road, or the 'Frontline', as it was locally known.⁷¹³ Given that this was a mural sponsored by local government, commissioned in the remit of much-criticised GLC 'municipal anti-racism', Jantjes was given enough freedom to express a political position in the painted narrative that went beyond what might have been expected for an 'uncontroversial' or sanitised work of municipal public art. Jantjes welcomed the opportunity to paint the Brixton mural where the local community could see it, but also acknowledged the complicated negotiations involved between various interest groups and political positions:

I've always looked at murals as another work of art. A public work of art- it's in a public place people can't avoid seeing it. If they want to see gallery art they have to be dedicated enough or interested enough in either the artist or his work to make that move. [The subject of the mural] comes from engagement I have with people from Brixton including the police [...] Once I had gone through the phase of actually interviewing people and drawing up the design it was in that process that all those decisions were made that I had to really ask myself critical questions - proportion of issues. About the issues of creativity, the issues of police harassment, immigration, street riots and violence, issues of people wanting to change the environment. Those I had to begin to evaluate.⁷¹⁴

⁷¹² The hurriedly-written article in *Artrage* reads as follows: 'Completed in just two months, the mural 'The Dream, The Rumour and a Poet's song' was designed and painted by artists Gavin Jantjes and Tom Joseph. The mural is twelve feet high and overlooks the public open space Dexter Square on Brixton's Railton road and measures over 75ft in length by 12 feet covering approximately 118 square yards.' Anon., 'GLC Anti-Racist Murals', *Artrage*, double issue 9/10, (Autumn 1985), pp.44-45.

⁷¹³ According to a French television interview with Linton Kwesi Johnson in 1991, Dexter Square was built to close off a side street (Dexter Road) frequently used as an 'escape route' from Railton Road during the 1981 uprisings. The original mural site appears to have gone since new housing was built over the square, presumably in the 1990s. It is divided by a new street, Montego Close, built between the new housing and Dexters Adventure Playground. Dexter Square as it was in 1991, with the mural intact, can clearly be seen in the television clip, at 5 minutes. AgenceIMmedia, Paris Migrant Media London, *Britain's Black Legacy - Welcome To Brixton*, 1991, <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kp7xk6xnJ7o>>, [accessed 21.09.2016]; See also John McLeod, 2004.

⁷¹⁴ Gavin Jantjes in De Smidt, Graham, and Gavin Jantjes, *Signs of Resistance: A Tape-Slide Programme on Anti-Racist Mural Paintings in London* (Albany Video, 1986).

The political content of Jantjes's mural could be contrasted with an earlier mural by Stephen Pusey, commissioned by Lambeth Council, the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) and Greater London Arts (GLA) soon after the violence in Brixton in 1981. While images in reference to the struggles of the local community had initially been proposed for the mural, it was decided that an image entitled 'Children at Play' of multi-cultural children playing together harmoniously, would be less controversial.⁷¹⁵ The remaining murals commissioned for GLC Anti-Racist Year did not shy away from provocative topics either.

The second mural, by Shanti Panchal, assisted by Dushlea Ahmad, was found a permanent site on a former Victorian school which had become a community centre on the housing estate at Lowood Street in Shadwell, Tower Hamlets, where it is still partially visible.⁷¹⁶ The lower section of this mural, now obscured by a panel of brown brick-coloured paint, in the original design portrayed the scene of a racially motivated attack which had recently occurred on the nearby Teviot Estate in the borough. This initial sketch [Figure 83], distressingly depicts a Bengali family who have barricaded themselves into their home with a table, and who are trapped inside watching Margaret Thatcher on the television, while a gang of white skinheads stand by, one of their number wielding a crowbar to break down the door. Some of their white neighbours appear to be condoning the violence, watching from an upper balcony, while others are, according to a recent interview with Panchal, 'signing an anti-Asian petition'.⁷¹⁷ In the upper section, children black and white play together around a giant dove in a playground as their mothers look on, and a mountain scene with a single cloud fill the uppermost space. Unsurprisingly, some locals objected to the content of the original design, fearing it might have the undesirable effect of encouraging further racist attacks on the frequently targeted local Bengali community.⁷¹⁸ The skinhead gang were replaced by a white man in a suit and tie, pointing at the Bengali family's door as though singling them out to their prejudiced neighbours - a moderating gesture by the artists that did little to transform the mural's portrayal of suffering, projected as it was into the public space of the housing estate for all to see [Figure 84]. As one reviewer enigmatically wrote at the time, 'Children played in the yard under Shanti and Dushlea's vibrant depiction of a people living with hate and fear.'⁷¹⁹ Whether this literal depiction of the trauma in their midst had the effect of uniting or dividing the estate's residents in the longer term is unclear - though it may be of significance that today, only the upper half of the mural survives.

⁷¹⁵ This mural is still visible, for more information see London Mural Preservation Society, <<http://www.londonmuralpreservationsociety.com/murals/children-play/>> [accessed 20.05.2016].

⁷¹⁶ Panchal was born in Gujarat, India, studied in Mumbai, and won a British Council Scholarship which brought him to London to study at Byam Shaw in 1978. See: Shanti Panchal, <<http://shantipanchal.com/wordpress/>> [accessed 26.09.2016]. Dushlea Ahmad was a former student of Chelsea School of Art.

⁷¹⁷ See Benedict Drew et al., 2013, p.29.

⁷¹⁸ The GLC had in fact conducted research into racist attacks on council estates as part of its Anti-Racist Year work, highlighting it as a serious problem.

⁷¹⁹ See: Rohan Jayasekera 'Art Under Attack', *News From The Roundhouse*, Autumn 1985. [Chelsea Archive: Box 2, 1985].

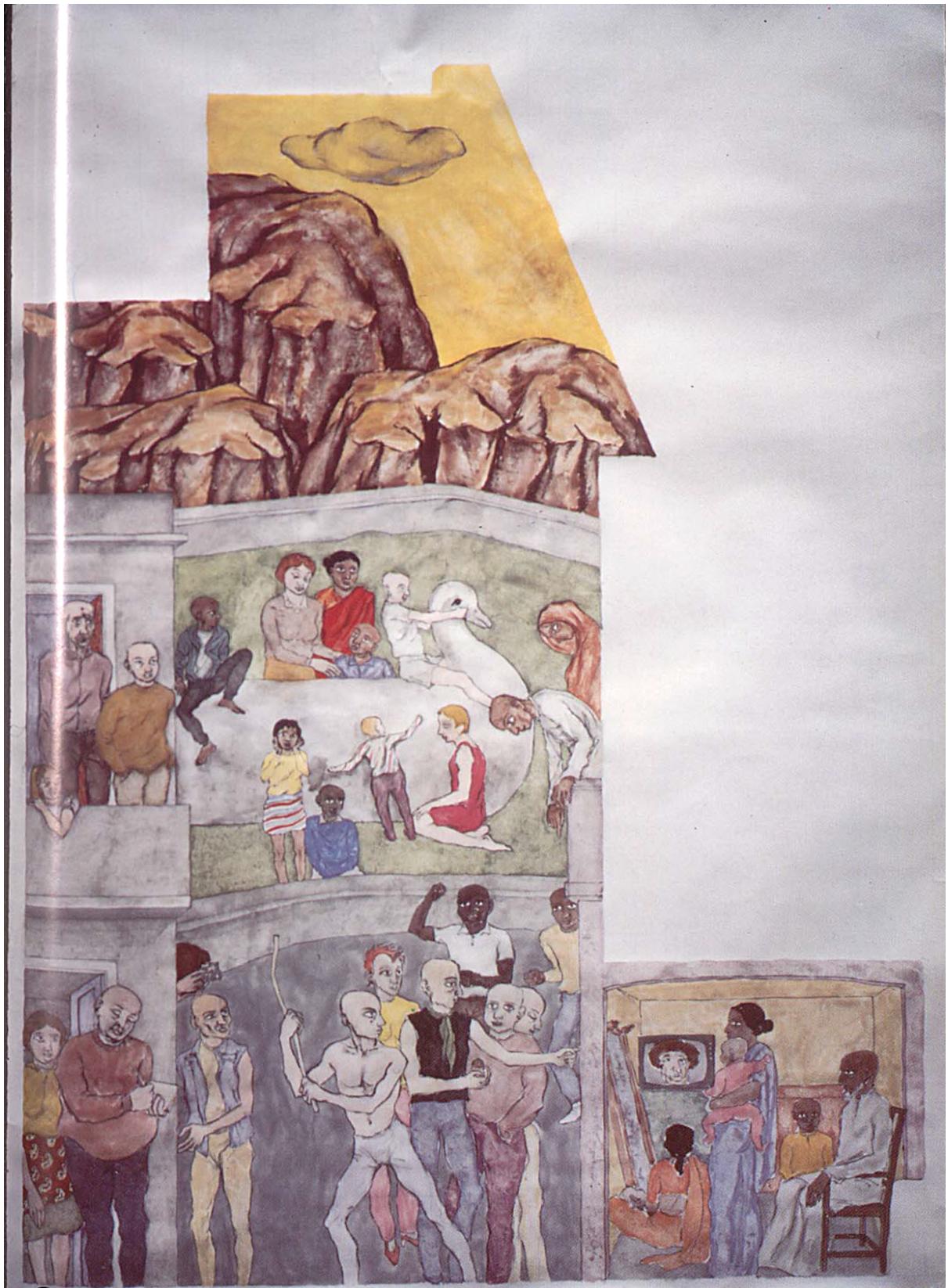


Figure 83: Draft design for Shanti Panchal and Dushla Ahmed's 'Dellow Street Mural: Across the Barrier', as reproduced in GLC Anti-Racist Mural Project 1985 Catalogue (London: GLC, 1985). [LMA: GLC/DG/PUB/01/269/U1499].



Figure 84: Detail of lower portion of the mural. 'Shanti Panchal and Dushlea Ahmad, Across the Barrier', Dellow Street, 1985, Cryla Acrylics, 30ft x 40ft. Photograph from *A London Inheritance* <<http://alondoninheritance.com/london-streets/murals-and-street-art-from-1980s-london/>> [accessed 01.01.2017].

Artist Lubaina Himid, a campaigner for and curator of Black Women's art, had also served as a non-voting advisor to the GLC's EAS between October 1983 and June 1985. Himid was paired with Simone Michelle Alexander who was at the time studying at Byam Shaw School of Art, to work on an anti-racist mural for Notting Hill. The mural was not successfully allocated a permanent site, and was instead to be made 'mobile' and transported to various London venues.⁷²⁰ The original draft [Figure 85] was published in the GLC's catalogue for the Anti-Racist Mural Project in 1985.⁷²¹ In the original design, five black figures are striding forward under a banner marked 'UNITY, EQUALITY, FREEDOM', in a procession or protest. Cut out text plays a significant role in this design. Raining from a raised umbrella marked with the words 'JUSTICE' are the names of various campaigns against unjust treatment of black British and Asian communities by the police and other authorities, 'Newham Eight; Bradford Twelve; Sari Squad; Southall Black Sisters'.⁷²² A figure wearing white has further text- significant names of black activists, writers and politicians emblazoned on his clothes.⁷²³ This man appears to be kicking a dustbin, uncovering hiding policemen, who are attached by threads to the disembodied hand of a puppeteer above them. Cut out text covers the dustbin, 'police puzzle; puppets of the state; civil war; paid poodles of oppression; NF manifesto; the law; little white lies; repatriation'. The next figure, wearing a shirt emblazoned with a rallying call, 'The Time Is Now', reaches back to cut the puppeteer's fingers. In the lower left corner, the heads of eleven politicians, including Prime Minister Thatcher, have been collaged onto the image, each appearing on a stick, as though a pile of discarded carnival masks. Although the limited documentation recovered thus far of the mural in situ is of poor quality, it is clear that the design appears to have been modified in its final form. The figures seem to have taken on a more carnival like appearance, with an extra dancing child replacing the politicians faces. Two police men can still be seen in a dustbin, and it is unclear if they are spying from the dustbin, or being pushed into it by the figure in white. The documentation's poor quality also makes it hard to discern what has happened to the extensive text of the original design. [Figure 86] [Figure 87]

⁷²⁰ Lubaina Himid and Simone Alexander, 'Unity Freedom and Equality' mural, 1985, painted on portable wood panels, materials unknown. Meanwhile Gardens, 156-158 Kensal Road, W10.

⁷²¹ GLC, *Anti-Racist Mural Project 1985 Catalogue* (London: GLC, 1985). [LMA:GLC/DG/PUB/01/269/U1499].

⁷²² The Newham Eight defence campaign See <<http://www.nmp.org.uk/timeline/newham-8/>> [accessed 09.09.2016]; Sari Squad were a group of Asian women campaigners against deportations; The Southall Black Sisters were a campaign group against domestic violence, who received GLC funds to establish a women's centre in 1983. See: <<http://www.southallblacksisters.org.uk/sbs-timeline/>> [accessed 09.09.2016].

⁷²³ The names included: 'Marcus Garvey; Paul Robeson; Franz Fanon; Malcom X; Bishop Tutu; George Jackson; Bob Marley; Nelson Mandela; Winnie Mandela; Alice Walker; Toni Morrison; Mary Seacole; Toussaint L'Ouverture; Angela Davis; Martin Luther King; Water Rodney; Steve Biko; Robert Mugabe.'



Figure 85: Lubaina Himid, mural design, GLC Anti-Racist Mural Project 1985 Catalogue (London: GLC, 1985).



Figure 86: Image of the 'Unity, Freedom and Equality' mural completed mural for Anti-Racist year, image from: *Signs of Resistance: A Tape-Slide Programme on Anti-Racist Mural Paintings in London* (Albany Video, 1986).



Figure 87: The 'Unity, Freedom and Equality' mural, installed on scaffolding and boards in Meanwhile Gardens, behind Trellick Tower, North Kensington. Image from *Signs of Resistance: A Tape-Slide Programme on Anti-Racist Mural Paintings in London* (Albany Video, 1986).

Liverpool artist Chila Kumari Burman was paired with Birmingham's Keith Piper for the commission to paint a mural for Southall. Burman was at that time artist-in-residence at the Southall Afro-Caribbean and Asian Arts Collective and drew inspiration from her experience there to create the 'Southall Black Resistance Mural' [Figure 89].⁷²⁴ Burman sourced photographs of community action in Southall from a range of local activist organisations, including Southall's police monitoring group 'Policing the Police', and Southall Black Sisters, which she and Piper collaged together in the mural design, to represent the various voices of local struggles,

We both did a master drawing and Keith and myself thought we should put everything in it from women being at the forefront of the struggle, Blair Peach, Misty in Roots and even ideas about Peace, the Animal Liberation movement, music- all the things that reflected Southall. The first sketch we did was almost banned. People felt we didn't include white people enough in it; that it was really romantic and over-idealised, and didn't want us to include anarchist symbols, women with guns and stuff like that. We had big discussions about it and it was obvious that it was not going to be accepted. [...] This was the Southall Haverlock Community Centre [...] which had white teachers and lots of Indian students and they really didn't approve of it. There were all kinds of people- including plainclothes policemen- who thought it didn't really reflect Southall [...] [a consultation process] was part of the GLC guidelines. I had to ask the community for approval.⁷²⁵

The sketch [Figure 88] indicates the artists' intention to commemorate various Southall organisations, through references to historical events, and demonstrations with placards and banners being held aloft by crowds of people. The left of the sketch details labour movement activism of the older generation of Southall's Asian population, organising strikes and demands for a living wage, with placards visible including the Indian Workers Association (IWA), which had been active in Southall since 1956, and had purchased the Dominion Cinema, depicted in the background, as a community resource, (which was facing closure in 1985, at the time of the mural's painting).⁷²⁶ The next section depicts the rise of the second generation of British-born Asians in Southall - young people carry banners with slogans 'the youth are angry' and an advert for a Rock Against Racism gig featuring Southall reggae band and musical activists, Misty In Roots.⁷²⁷

⁷²⁴ Chila Burman and Keith Piper, The 'Southall Black Resistance' Mural, 1985, Acrylic on plywood portable panels, 8 panels, 8 ft x 4 ft. Sponsored by the GLC Race Equality Unit. The original site for the mural was at the Southall Afro-Caribbean and Asian Arts Collective, Unit 16 Charles House, Southall, UB2 4DB. See Steve Lobb et al., 1986, p.10.

⁷²⁵ Chila Kumari Burman, 'Chila Kumari Burman interviewed by Errol Lloyd', *Artrage*, 11, Winter 1985, pp.15-17.

⁷²⁶ For the story of the Indian Worker's Association, See: <http://www.iwasouthall.org.uk>. See also related documentary video, <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BHMwMkUIlSE>> [accessed 26.02.2017].

⁷²⁷ Misty In Roots formed the 'Peoples Unite' community centre, which itself suffered a violent raid by police.

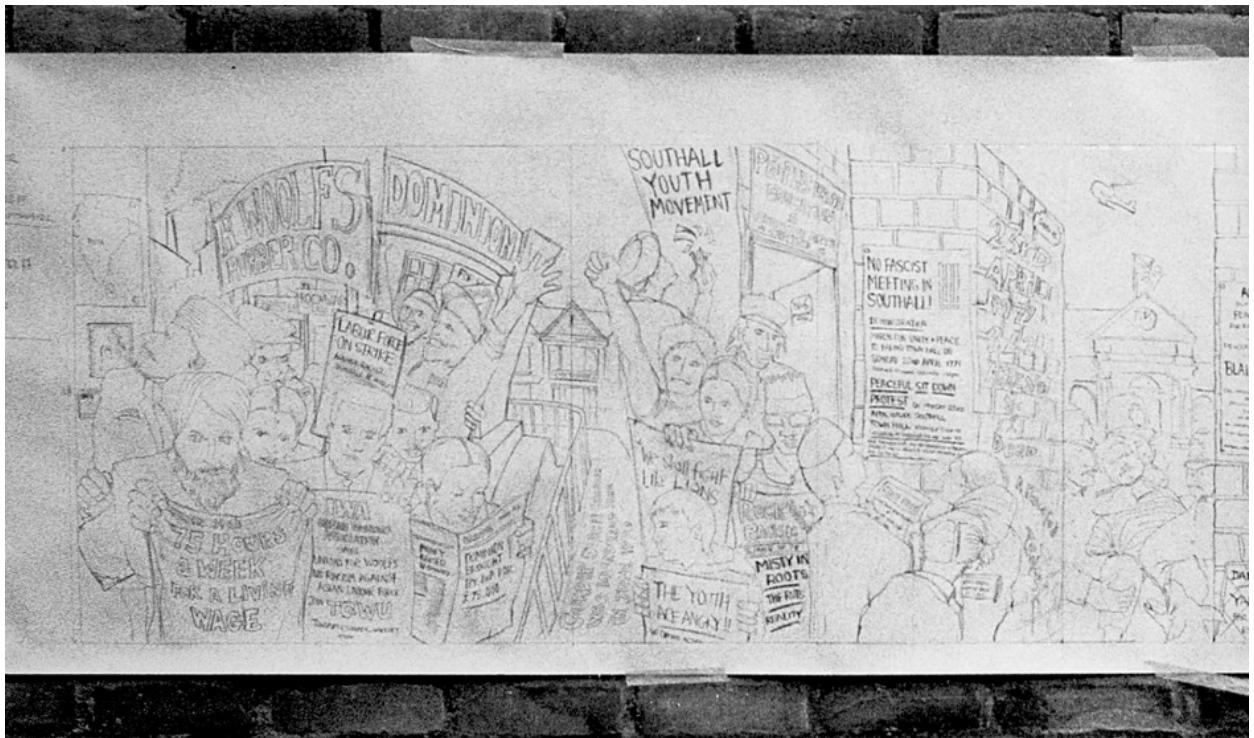


Figure 88: Sketch for the *Southall Black Resistance Mural*, Chila Kumari Burman and Keith Piper, GLC Anti-Racist Mural Project 1985 Catalogue (London: GLC, 1985).

The panels that follow commemorate the events of 23rd April 1979, in which Southall's Asian community and Anti-Fascist demonstrators gathered to oppose a National Front meeting in Southall Town Hall and came into conflict with the police, resulting in many arrests and the death of Blair Peach.⁷²⁸ Beside this is a view of Southall Town Hall with its' distinctive triangular pediment and clock, and police officers are heavy-handedly apprehending an Asian man in the foreground. A banner of the Southall Youth Movement follows, commemorating the deaths of Blair Peach and the racially motivated murder of a young Sikh student, Gurdip Singh Chaggar in 1976.⁷²⁹ In the background, the Hambrough Tavern burns; the site of the infamous '4 Skins' Oi! gig which attracted National Front supporters to the area and sparked a violent reaction in self-defence by local Asian youth in July 1981.⁷³⁰ Another group of demonstrators represent the involvement of women in Southall's struggles. Women are gathered around a large Southall Black Sisters banner, behind which a banner in Punjabi translates roughly as 'women won't accept any more crimes against them', and some women gathered in this section are giving a Black Power salute.⁷³¹ [Figure 90]

⁷²⁸ In the mural, a bill poster painted onto a wall, a facsimile of an original poster for the sit-down protest, as well as graffiti, memorialise the events of that day, in which 40 were injured and 300 arrests were made. Blair Peach, a New Zealand-born special needs teacher and activist, whose death is likely to have occurred at the hands of a police officer, as the investigation revealed in 2010, see http://www.met.police.uk/foi/units/blair_peach.htm, [accessed 03.03.2017].

⁷²⁹ Banners read 'Southall Youth Movement Remembers Blair Peach and Gurdip Singh Chaggar', and the rallying cry of the Southall Youth Movement, 'We Shall Fight Like Lions'.

⁷³⁰ Anandi Ramamurthy, *Black Star: Britain's Asian Youth Movements* (London: Pluto Press, 2013), p.122. See also: YouTube, 'BBC Nationwide documentary, 1981', <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pnMP1OQhAP0>> [accessed 03.03.2017].

⁷³¹ Southall Black Sisters, a non-profit Asian organisation formed to support Asian women's struggles against racism, which later took on a role to advocate for Asian women victims of domestic violence and religious fundamentalism.



Figure 89: Photograph of the mural installed at the community centre in Southall. The mural was painted in acrylics and made up of eight plywood panels joined together, each measuring 8ft x 4ft, making the mural 32ft long. Photograph: Rina Arya, *Chila Kumari Burman* (London: KT Press, 2012).



Figure 90: Southall Black Resistance Mural, Photograph: GLC, As reproduced in *Arrage*, Winter 1985.



Figure 91: Stills from *Signs of Resistance*, 1985

The most contentious content of the original mural design is mentioned in Chila Burman's *Artrage* interview, though does not appear in the article's photo documentation, and it is not entirely clear if these aspects were omitted from the final mural. However, the sketches are included in the tape-slide film, *Signs of Resistance*, one section of which clearly shows a placard that reads 'Nazis ... The police murdered him / disband the SPG' in reference to the Met's Special Patrol Group who were accused of Blair Peach's murder, and another depicts a woman in a sari lying on the ground, aiming a rifle. [Figure 91] When questioned about the gun at interview, Burman related this to found imagery of Kashmiri women, and some metaphorical transposition of the idea of armed struggle to the British context.⁷³² Unsurprisingly, it was these aspects of the original design that were not universally welcomed. The local press disparagingly labelled it a 'Race Mural', in the vernacular shorthand akin to descriptions of 'Race Riots' from contemporaneous newspaper headlines, predictably missing, or diffusing the intended message of resistance and liberation. As the *Southall Gazette* reported,

Some of the scenes and words on the painting angered viewers, who called it a "waste of public money" [article states £10,000]. They said that artists Chila Burman and Keith Piper do not live in Southall and could not possibly understand the feelings of the local people. The mural is supposed to depict significant moments in the history of "black resistance" in Southall, according to the head of the race equality unit of the GLC's Arts and Recreation Unit, Parminder Vir. But some of the factual events on the mural have been questioned and words used have been described as "inflammatory". A woman is shown in a prone position aiming a rifle, and under a scene showing the killing of Blair Peach, the words "This racist murder will be avenged, we'll get you racist scum".⁷³³

The mural project also neatly fell into the wider press narrative of GLC 'loony left' overspending, at £10,000 in 1985 this was not cheap, furthermore it was unfortunate, though unsurprising given the content, that it did not find planning permission for a permanent location in a public space, that might have guaranteed it some longevity. The mural was reportedly [...] destroyed after the Conservative Party

⁷³² [...] an inset at the bottom of a drawing of a woman with a gun. What it was talking about was armed struggle. [...] I'm not a violent person and I hate anything like that but seeing what's happening in South Africa – and the fear of what might happen here- I think that we always have to be armed, maybe not with a gun, but armed in some way. But it may happen. The police are being armed now, so what are we going to do? Chila Burman, Interview with Errol Lloyd, *Artrage*, Winter 1985, p.17.

⁷³³ Anwar Tambe, 'Race Mural is a Waste of Cash', *Southall Gazette*, Friday 14 June 1985. [Chelsea Archive]

won the local election in Ealing.⁷³⁴ The *Southall Gazette* also reported mixed local feelings about the prospect of such a controversial mural. A 'Principal Community Relations Officer' in Ealing suggested that the artists had 'got the feelings wrong', and that the sentiment should have been oriented towards 'justice' rather than 'vengeance'. Another commentator pointed out that '[...] if it is supposed to represent the community in Southall- white or black, young or old- then it is totally unrepresentative. I find it unnecessarily provocative and it will upset and offend a lot of people.' However, a member of Southall [Police] Monitoring Group disagreed, describing it as 'an excellent representation of what police community relations are.'⁷³⁵

These responses to the mural plans indicate the complex position that the two early-career artists found themselves in, accepting local government sponsorship to produce a mural on the subject of 'Anti-Racism' for Southall, a locale whose diverse residents' calls for justice for recent victims of police brutality had been ignored by the authorities. It indicates also the divergent feelings about the appropriate response to the difficulties faced by Southall's residents, between different generations of Southall's Asian communities, and between those directly involved in activism and confrontations with authorities, and those within the polity who chose not to get involved.⁷³⁶ The artists appear to have undertaken some 'community consultations' with groups such as the Southall Black Sisters or the local police monitoring group, but it is not clear from their interviews if they cast their nets wide enough to encompass non-activist, less radical voices in their initial research, given the public nature of the GLC commission. As the interview caption commented Burman and Piper's mural 'aroused strong local reaction', and the final design had to be modified to respond to local objections, as Burman stated, 'I don't think it had the same gut feeling the first drawing had. It didn't have the same sort of shock provocation to wake people up.'⁷³⁷ Eddie Chambers had particular criticism for the mural project, as an example of failed GLC *initiated* public projects, from the perspective that it was of benefit to only the few artists who were invited to participate in the project, but less so to the wider community and its long term development, had the same investment been made elsewhere.

[...] their patronage became dubious and counter-productive when they took it upon themselves to become initiators rather than simply project funders [...] As a thoroughly shoddy and superficial project, the Anti-Racist Murals venture fitted neatly into the ongoing attempts to re-appropriate and exploit Black visual creativity. Instead of making funds available to the much wider community of Black artists, the GLC encouraged individualism and opportunism by concentrating their capital funding around ventures, which involved no more than a clutch of artists. (And even these few artists had to be selected).⁷³⁸

⁷³⁴ Rina Arya, Chila Kumari Burman: *Shakti, Sexuality and Bindi Girls*, (London: KT Press, 2012).

⁷³⁵ Mr Martin Grubb, former Principal Community Relations Officer with the Ealing Community Relations Council; Rashida Punja, 'a member of the Pathway centre in Southall' and Suresh Grover, of the Southall Monitoring Group; quoted in Anwar Tambe, *Southall Gazette*, Friday 14 June 1985.

⁷³⁶ An instance in which it is unrealistic to claim that radical activists claim to represent the whole polity, they are in some ways an exception. Perhaps placing this particular mural in an arts centre was also an act of preaching to the converted.

⁷³⁷ *Ibid*, p.17.

⁷³⁸ Eddie Chambers, website, 'The Art Pack', see <<http://www.eddiechambers.com/archive/artpack/>> [accessed 16.11.2016].

Chambers's criticism is fair - this money might have been spent better in the longer-term on infrastructure to support a larger number of black artists in other ways. However, this was the decision taken by the EAS at the time, and it was made *alongside* the general sponsorship of existing black cultural projects, not instead of it, as Chambers asserts.

This thesis acknowledges the problems that art historical accounts of black British artists' work which focus too heavily on political content or biographical narratives have caused in terms of reiterating dominant narratives that situate black British artists' work as peripheral to the mainstream narratives of European Modernism, and is wary of the contribution that this brief account of the GLC Anti-Racist Mural Project may make to that effect. In the case of the public art works produced by black artists selected for the GLC's Anti-Racist Mural project however, it is wrong to isolate these works from the municipal context of their production and the relationship of State sponsorship in which the work was commissioned. The murals were operating within public space, and not within typical 'art world' contexts, despite the GLC's statement asserting that the painters were trained as fine artists rather than professional muralists.

This account of the Anti-Racist Mural Project relies heavily on photographic and video evidence of murals which are no longer in existence, and analysis of aesthetic detail of how the murals were executed is difficult with limited information gathered in the course of this research.⁷³⁹ Press responses recovered are frequently too preoccupied with attacking 'GLC overspending' to dwell on the murals themselves, or to include any positive public responses. A future iteration of this research will enquire in more depth about the project from the artists involved, as well as look to further gather local newspaper evidence of public responses to the murals including any vandalism they subsequently attracted, which is hinted towards in the case of the Tower Hamlets mural. It would also be of interest to consider where and how the mobile murals were displayed.

Isolating the aesthetic attributes of these murals from their historical contexts is also difficult given the strong sense of narrative, and deliberate reference to historical activism and events clearly communicated in the content of these murals- and how far this is a result of their commission brief is unknown. In these murals, a particular cut-and-mix technique in approach, juxtaposing archival material such as newspaper cuttings or photographic images of local protest and resistance, referencing events of the more recent past which characterise the artists response to the 'anti-racist mural project', may have reinforced for viewers- local residents and passers-by in whose public space these murals were sited, the sense of the continuing urgency of anti-racist activism. Despite the apparent constraints of working on a public project with GLC requirements that the artists' work in some way served a local community,⁷⁴⁰ the artists did appear to

⁷³⁹ Given the general aim of this thesis to revisit the GLC's cultural policy to open it to new scrutiny, the mural project could only be investigated to a limited extent. Future research could seek further documentation both from the GLC's archive and artists involved.

⁷⁴⁰ Chambers makes reference to Chila Kumari Burman's writing in which Burman criticises the pressures that a GLC commission put on an (anonymous) artist to work in a way that was to 'serve' local community interests. It is difficult to

have some control in the selection of their subject matter for the work. Although constrained by the GLC's direction to in some way to respond to themes of 'racism' and 'anti-racism', the murals produced did not shy away from politics by offering up a bland depiction of multi-culturalism or 'racial harmony'. These murals, unlike some of their predecessors in Brixton, could not be accused of lapsing into what Lubaina Himid in 1983 had identified as the 'genteel murals' of community-relations-ameliorating multiculturalism,

[...]to take to the streets, not with bottles or with bombs, nor even genteel murals. We must smother our cities with well chosen, well placed, well drawn imagery. It must be unloveable, replaceable, unbuyable, anonymous.⁷⁴¹

None of these public art works survived far beyond the end of the decade intact, and few records exist of what would have been perceived at the time as an expensive public project. While more 'genteel' murals may have had a greater chance of long-term survival, perhaps historians can be content that although they are now 'lost' or rather, as Lubaina Himid asserted, were made purposefully 'replaceable', they reflected an urgency with which these visual artists saw this project as an opportunity to speak their truth to power, and do so in public space.

5.6 The Ethnic Arts Sub-Committee

While this closer examination of the Anti-Racist Mural Project begins to problematise Eddie Chambers's account of the EAS, it is important to now consider the archive of the Ethnic Arts Sub-Committee itself in order to uncover new historical narratives. Writing in the November 1982 edition of *Artrage* Errol Lloyd states:

[The Ethnic Arts Sub-Committee's structure] is in marked contrast to the usual situation where one or two token black people are co-opted on to white dominated committees and have to continually raise the issue of ethnic arts.[...] The significance of the intervention of the GLC in the area of ethnic arts cannot be over-emphasised, and the real task of this Sub-Committee will be to go some way towards satisfying the high level of expectation that the GLC's new London arts policy has generated within London's ethnic communities [...].⁷⁴²

It is possible to detect both the sense of excitement, and perhaps a more ominous premonition, in Errol Lloyd's announcement that the GLC were about to embark upon a radical and experimental strategy for supporting and promoting black culture in London. Expectations were high amongst black British cultural producers and communities, when the GLC Arts and Recreation Committee set up a specialist Ethnic Arts Sub-Committee (EAS), following the GLC *Conference on Ethnic Minority Arts* held at County Hall in May 1982.⁷⁴³ The EAS, like its Community Arts Sub-Committee,⁷⁴⁴ was to have its own budget

imagine a public art project today that would not come with perhaps even more detailed requirements of this kind. See Chambers, 1998, p.167.

⁷⁴¹ Lubaina Himid, quotation from catalogue, *5 Black Women*, Africa Centre, 6 September - 14 October, 1983.

⁷⁴² Errol Lloyd, 'The GLC and Ethnic Arts', *Artrage* no. 1, November 1982, (London: MAAS, 1982), p.23.

⁷⁴³ GLC, 'Report on the Conference on Ethnic Minority Arts' County Hall, 28.05.1982. [LMA:GLC/DG/PRE/14/01]. See also Chapter three in this thesis.

⁷⁴⁴ It is possible that setting up an 'Ethnic Arts Sub-Committee' separate from the Community Arts Sub-Committee was an important symbolic gesture, as it was frequently felt that the 'Community Arts' movement had in general been dominated by white people's interests, with community arts centres run by black people such as the Keskidee being

and its own advisory panel, made up of London's black cultural producers.⁷⁴⁵ This in itself represented a radical break from 'the usual situation' involving token black representatives on panels dominated by white advisors, which had hitherto made scant and painfully slow progress in tackling the discrimination faced on many fronts by black cultural producers and arts organisations. In 1982/1983, the EAS were allocated £300,000 for 'the encouragement and development of the Ethnic Arts in London', and the initial budget was to grow considerably to over £2 million in the financial year of the GLC's closure, 1985/6.⁷⁴⁶ Errol Lloyd, speaking at the 1982 conference, stated that this budget that had in fact been fought for by black staff within the GLC, and was not simply the product of 'some people at the top being kind and generous'. The budget's very existence was contingent upon the precarious political situation of the GLC, and Lloyd remarked, 'We need to be aware of this and seize the time now.'⁷⁴⁷

While some within the GLC expressed their reservations about separating black arts sponsorship from the GLC's central arts committee as a potentially marginalising gesture, there was a chance that this new format, supported by a panel of black advisors from literary, theatre, television and filmmaking circles, could help to put into motion much needed changes to cultural policy discourse in relation to black culture, and speed up proceedings.⁷⁴⁸

relatively less common. Parminder Vir, head of the GLC's Arts and Recreations Race Relations Unit for instance said in an interview, 'It says something about the inherent racism in the community arts movement. We have applications which had 'ethnic dimensions' offered to us even from the projects which have been white controlled.' See interview with Parminder Vir, *Artrage* 8, Spring 1985. Further research would be required to ascertain why this was the chosen strategy.

⁷⁴⁵ The panel was to be made up of London's black British cultural producers selected from conference attendees, which initially had, as Errol Lloyd described, 'a strong Afro-Caribbean / Asian bias'. Errol Lloyd, 'The GLC and Ethnic Arts', *Artrage* 1, (November 1982).

⁷⁴⁶ This can be compared to Arts Council figures reported in a 1980-81 survey of concluded that 'ethnic arts' only received £335,000 directly from the Arts Council (excluding the Regional Arts Associations), with the Arts Council acknowledging that 'its contribution to the ethnic arts is less than 0.5% of its total expenditure'. This figure presumably represents its annual national level of sponsorship, whereas the GLC's annual rate of expenditure was to concentrate on Greater London only. See W.V. Baker, 'Ethnic minorities' arts: the agony and the money', *Artrage*, 1, (November 1982). The Arts Council stated their intention to 'incorporate ethnic arts as a specific element' in 1983/4, and Greater London Arts (GLAA) had incorporated an 'Ethnic Arts' staff member in 1982, but the GLC's policy provided black cultural producers on the advisory committee with actual grant-allocating powers, which was different to other models. The Ethnic Arts Sub Committee also had an officer support unit for administrative work, 'to prepare policy papers, produce progress reports, monitor targets', which later developed into the Race Equality Unit of the Arts and Recreation Department as a whole.

⁷⁴⁷ [...] we are not here simply because, out of the kindness of its heart the GLC has made funds available. But that this is a result of struggles within the GLC and that for those funds to be available, it is not just simply a question of some people at the top being kind and generous. We have to recognise the struggles these people are involved in [...] we need to be aware that the present GLC funding is so closely aligned to the political situation so that if there is a change within the structure of the GLC, in say the next three or four years, then there is a serious possibility that there won't be any funds available for minority artists. We need to be aware of this and seize the time now, and take advantage of those funds that are available.' Errol Lloyd, speech transcript, 'Report on the Conference on Ethnic Minority Arts', pp. 11-13 [LMA:GLC/DG/PRE/14/01].

⁷⁴⁸ Peter Pitt was the first chair of the Ethnic Arts Sub-Committee, three other members of the Council, Rodney Gent, Ken Little and Andy Harris also served, along with an initial intake of sixteen non-voting advisory members. These included: Yvonne Brewster (Now OBE, Jamaican-Born theatre director, founded Talawa Theatre Company in 1985); Imruh Caesar (Bakari) (Black British Filmmaker); Jacques Compton (writer, broadcaster, born St Lucia, 1927-2011); Helen Denniston (arts administrator, 1952-2005 see Mike Phillips, *Obituary: Helen Denniston*, 27.07.2005 <<https://www.theguardian.com/news/2005/jun/27/guardianobituaries.artsobituaries3>> [accessed 23.05.2017]) ; Farrukh Dhondy (Indian-Born British writer who had joined *Race Today* collective in the 1970s, resigned from advisory panel November 1983), Prabhu Guptara (writer and broadcaster), Leila Hassan (who became editor of *Race Today* in 1985), Irwin Horsford, Terry Jervis (television and record producer, worked with BBC and Motown), Michael La Rose (currently chair of George Padmore Institute, as well as a director of New Beacon Books, founded by John La Rose), Patricia Y.A. Lee-Sang, Errol Lloyd, Mike Phillips (b. 1952, Guyana, writer and broadcaster, brother of broadcaster Trevor Phillips); Tara Rajkumar (founder of The National Academy of Indian Dance); Amon Saba Saankana (writer); Wilfred A. Walker (Black music promoter who was an organiser of Notting Hill Carnival in the 1970s). Advisors who joined later included: Cassie McFarlane (actor who played the lead role in Menelik Shabazz's 1981 film, *Burning An Illusion*); Carmen Munroe (actor, stage and television, b. Guyana 1932); Anton Phillips (actor, b. 1943, Kingston, Jamaica); Remi Kapo (The People's

It would be incorrect to imply that no one in the GLC's arts committees had considered the shortcomings of a separate black arts budget, and particularly its appearance of a tokenistic commitment towards black cultural producers. In a report entitled 'London Against Racism in the Mainstream Arts' (1984) circulated to the various committees engaged in GLC cultural programming for GLC 'Anti-Racist Year', a mixed strategy of incorporating anti-racist elements into the GLC's existing Arts and Recreations programme, as well as sponsoring events led by black cultural producers themselves was advocated, with the aim to avoid what was described as the 'revitalisation of tradition' or 'to import these as exotica for western consumption', instead focusing on that which 'are rooted in the present experience of black and white people in Britain.'⁷⁴⁹ The 'London Against Racism in the Mainstream Arts' report laid out the difficulty of the use and redefinition of terms such as 'ethnic arts', the dangers of its exoticisation, quoting prominent individuals including Kwesi Owusu, Gavin Jantjes and Rasheed Araeen on the issue of the marginalisation of cultural producers through 'ethnic arts' categorisation.⁷⁵⁰ The report acknowledged the shortcomings of forming a separate grant giving committee for the so-called 'ethnic arts', but conveyed that the benefits of self-determination and independence that such a division provided were considered, in that moment, to outweigh the costs of possible marginalisation,

While acknowledging some of the disadvantages of creating a separate sub-committee with its own budget, most notably the ghettoization 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 redefine the notion of ethnic arts; direct funds to art forms which to date have been under funded and under-represented; encouraged new groups and art forms to emerge and most important of all to make decisions without being policed by 'community arts' and 'artists' [...] The Ethnic Arts Sub-Committee has challenged and rejected the notion of 'exotica funding'.⁷⁵¹

Important here is the idea that the committee may have seen itself in the process of *reclaiming* the bureaucratic term 'ethnic arts' through its actions. This suggests that the earmarking of black arts funds was salient for a number of reasons, including a perceived need at that moment to distinguish or protect

Gallery, later director of the Roundhouse); Lubaina Himid (visual artist and curator); Delia Jarret-McCauley (writer, academic and broadcaster of Sierra Leonian heritage) Ahmed A. Jamal (b. 1950, India, film director and producer); Cosmo Laidlaw (Actor, in 1980 film *Babylon*) Keith Waithe; John Akomfrah (filmmaker, Black Audio Film Collective); Junior Douglas (playwright, Arts Council drama officer); Rekha Prashar (Tara Arts); Sita Kumari; Shaan Tandon; Patricia Hilare (Theatre of Black Women, see <<http://www.unfinishedhistories.com/history/companies/theatre-of-black-women/>> [accessed 27.05.2017]); Shakila Maan (Theatre director, founder member of Southall Asian & African Caribbean Arts Collective). At first glance, Black and Asian theatre, dance and film and television professionals seemed to dominate this list, although literary figures are also well represented. It appears that Black and Asian British visual arts were rather less well represented on the panel though further research would be necessary to determine if this was the case. Eddie Chambers hints at this in his thesis, that theatre and performance may have been a focus. Advisory members of the EAS were also sometimes called upon to serve as advisory members on other panels, including the central Arts and Recreation Committee, the South Bank Committee, or the committee for the Roundhouse Arts Centre project. Parminder Vir was another significant figure, head of the Arts and Recreations Committee's own Race Equality Unit. While only basic biographical detail can be given here, a future iteration of this research could seek to interview many more of these participants. This chapter is necessarily narrowly focused upon the GLC's archive material at the LMA.

⁷⁴⁹ 'Generally the present programme of festivals, concerts, theatre programmes, exhibitions, competitions and special events should all incorporate the theme of anti-racism. In addition, [...] the Council should also sponsor events that would enable black artists to have their own platform. The aim of these initiatives within Anti-Racism Year should be to encourage the 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 revitalise purely traditional cultural forms from the countries of origin or to import these as exotica for western consumption.' GLC Anti-Racist Sub-Committee Papers, Report 12.03.1984, 'London Against Racism in the Mainstream Arts: Policies and Programming', [LMA:GLC/DG/PRE/50/01].

⁷⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁷⁵¹ Ibid. p.8.

sponsorship of black cultural producers from the demands of an overwhelmingly white community arts movement. The report also highlighted the work that needed to be done to put pressure on mainstream arts organisations to recognise and take action against institutional racism, and suggested that the GLC's grant awarding powers could be used to this effect- though expressed caution that such efforts could easily be misconstrued,

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 GLC. It will be important to make representations to such bodies in terms which define clearly this Council's intentions, whilst avoiding any suggestion 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.⁷⁵²

This report from the GLC's archive provides evidence that the GLC's Arts and Recreation Committee and its Principal Race Relations Advisor were well aware of the problems that were likely to arise from the EAS and its interventions. It demonstrates awareness that a separate committee could give the impression of 'ghettoizing' black arts practices, might be in danger of placing emphasis on 'traditional cultures' rather than supporting contemporary and progressive practices, and could be misinterpreted if the GLC appeared to be making a 'political interference' in equality policies of its funded organisations and institutions. The fact remains that in setting up a separate EAS in 1982, the Arts and Recreation Committee felt that this 'positive action' strategy came with risks, but may have been seen as a necessary and salient step at the moment of its inception in 1982, to hasten change for black cultural producers, while there was a window of opportunity to do so. Subsequent readings by Hylton and Chambers focus on the 'essentialising' and 'exoticising' longer term effects of the GLC's implementation of a separate 'Ethnic Arts' policy, but the GLC's archive actually reveals that a different discourse was emerging at the GLC, perhaps for the first time in a local government setting, even if its implementation would be far from perfect.⁷⁵³ As such, the archive of the GLC's EAS evidences a moment of discourse in transition, which would come to directly influence future policy in the cultural field.

The EAS, as a new departure, was a work in progress. Its priorities were regularly redefined so as to reserve its budget for black cultural producers' own innovative and contemporary projects, rather than simply funding all applicants seeking money for an 'ethnic arts element' to their community arts programme.⁷⁵⁴ Many arts organisations sponsored by the GLC had been making attempts to include cultural provision for London's black communities, and the EAS frequently refused applications where it suspected they were for one-off 'exotica' events, which did not treat black cultural production as part of

⁷⁵² ibid.

⁷⁵³ This imperfect implementation was not limited to the GLC: it continued as a theme in Hylton's account of the Arts Council's 'imperfect implementation' of more integrationist approaches into the 1990s, which noted an 'old guard' still enamoured of separatist 'ethnic arts' approaches influenced by Naseem Khan's *The Arts Britain Ignores*. Richard Hylton, 2007, p.69.

⁷⁵⁴ On 23 June 1983, the EAS minutes record advisors being 'disturbed at the number of applications that the Ethnic Arts Sub-Committee is receiving from arts organisations who identify an 'ethnic' element in their work.' Reminding the AR and CAS and Women's Committee that EAS budget was set aside to fund ethnic artists and organisations and 'not for mainly white controlled and managed organisations to apply for the ethnic dimension of their programme.' [LMA: GLC/DG/MIN/014].

the organisation's mainstream programme. For example, in 1983 the EAS recommended that no grant be awarded to Sadler's Wells Theatre for their 'Multi Ethnic Arts Festival', on account of the company's 'poor record' on employing black people and because 'Ethnic arts should be part of the mainstream programming of an organisation like Sadler's Wells and the Council should not encourage the marginalisation of ethnic arts and culture.'⁷⁵⁵ In this example, the EAS also saw the value of the GLC's role in educating mainstream institutions on appropriate responses to the issue. This stance was reinforced in April 1984, when the Committee further clarified its priorities, seeking to focus on 'those art forms that depend for their survival and development on encouragement and support from the communities living in Britain against those which have a long and continuing history in other parts of the world', stating that 'The funding for traditional ethnic arts activities should be sought from the main Arts and Recreation Committee.'⁷⁵⁶ This distinction suggests that the Arts and Recreation Committees and Sub-Committees had to respond to a wide variety of requests for financial assistance, with some proposals more 'traditional' and perhaps less radical than others, as would be expected given the broad remit of the Committees to sponsor 'popular culture'.⁷⁵⁷ The press reaction to the GLC's announcement of increased sponsorship for black cultural organisations often characterised the Ethnic Arts Sub-Committee as some kind of free-for all.⁷⁵⁸ The minutes of the EAS tell a different story, with long lists of applicants 'awarded no grant' and many recommended to reapply with more reasonable requests, better documentation, or following a site visit from a GLC representative. Grants were legally dependent upon conditions being met, such as a number of performances or workshops run in a year, with repayment required in cases that did not deliver their stated aims. Grants covered items such as a salary for a member of staff, technical equipment for live performance or filmmaking, and more everyday items such as building repair and office furniture. The GLC also funded courses to train black candidates for jobs in arts administration. Despite the media focus on its use of taxpayer's money, the EAS did not see its role as simply to hand out cash to black cultural organisations. It had an advisory role on cultural policy across the Council and contributed to research and reports, and its independence of central government funding bodies such as the Arts Council afforded its advisors a more critical position. The yearly revisions to its aims recorded in the minutes, and policy papers in its archive evidence a complex developing trajectory cut short by the closure of the GLC in 1986. While it is not possible in the scope of this chapter to cover all of the areas in which the EAS became involved, the following section will aim to draw attention to some of the variety of visual arts, photography, film and video projects that the EAS directly sponsored, in evidence from their applications in the GLCs archive, which were given little consideration in Eddie Chambers's account. It will also explore how the GLC attempted to use its strategic position to put pressure on mainstream arts institutions to include black cultural production in their programmes and to support conferences pertinent to the interests of black artists and filmmakers.

⁷⁵⁵ EAS minutes, 'Sadler's Wells' 16.02.1983, [LMA:GLC/DG/MIN/014].

⁷⁵⁶ EAS minutes 18.04.1984, [LMA:GLC/DG/MIN/014].

⁷⁵⁷ This may not have looked like good practice to those who considered 'Black Arts' to be a radical avant-garde. However, it is comparable to the work of the Arts and Recreations Committee in general, which sponsored everything from the Easter Parade for children, to radical gay theatre.

⁷⁵⁸ See James Curran, 2005.

5.7 Sponsorship

In its first year, the GLC's Ethnic Arts Sub-Committee (EAS) mostly responded to applications for sponsorship theatre and performing arts groups.⁷⁵⁹ These included Temba Theatre Company,⁷⁶⁰ Theatre Centre,⁷⁶¹ Staunch Poets and Players,⁷⁶² Theatro Technis,⁷⁶³ Black Theatre Co-Op,⁷⁶⁴ Theatre of Black Women;⁷⁶⁵ Carib Theatre; Black Mime Theatre; the Asian theatre company Tara Arts; Talawa Theatre;⁷⁶⁶ and African Dawn.⁷⁶⁷ Literary organisations, such as Black Ink writing workshop in Brixton were also sponsored, as well as community history projects and African crafts fairs, which reflected the Arts and Recreations Committee's broad remit to support popular culture in its many forms. In the EAS's revision of its priorities in April 1984, it was acknowledged that the performing arts had benefitted most from GLC funding, and that 'visual arts, films and literature' would be regarded as higher priority in future, as would 'writing requiring in-depth research', 'investment to secure the permanency of facilities' and 'strategic resources'. Women's and youth participation was emphasised as a new priority, as were projects with a technical or administrative training element. Preference was also expressed for projects with longer term commercial viability or ability to attract funding from other sources, as well as those 'with a specific product from which the GLC gets specific returns such as theatre production, painting [...].' Emphasis was put on festival audience sizes and lasting effects, as well as those festivals which were aimed at 'helping artists understand what they are doing'- presumably, those which incorporated artists talks or conference elements.⁷⁶⁸ The GLC attempted to support the development of discourses and strategies relating to cultural policy in support of black cultural producers, audiences and the role of mainstream arts institutions, by funding a number of conferences, events and journals. In addition to the GLC's initial consultative conference with black cultural producers in May 1982, and the 'Third Eye Festival of Third World Cinema' Symposium in November 1983 [Figure 94], the GLC provided funds to support the

⁷⁵⁹ Kwesi Owusu's account gives some detail about the history of black British theatre and the GLC's interventions, See Owusu, 1987, pp. 91-98.

⁷⁶⁰ In 1984, Temba Theatre staged the play 'Back Street Mammy' about teenage pregnancy in a Catholic Caribbean family, <<http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/articles/b/history-of-black-and-asian-performance-in-britain/>> [accessed 01.11.16].

⁷⁶¹ 'Theatre Centre' <<http://www.unfinishedhistories.com/history/companies/theatre-centre-3/>> [accessed 01.11.16].

⁷⁶² 'Staunch Poets and Players', <<http://www.blackplaysarchive.org.uk/explore/companies/staunch-poets-and-players>>.

⁷⁶³ Theatro Technis, founded 1957 to create theatre for London's Cypriot community <<http://www.unfinishedhistories.com/history/companies/theatro-technis/>> [accessed 01.11.16].

⁷⁶⁴ 'Black Theatre Co-operative', founded in 1978 by Charlie Hanson and Mustapha Matura to perform plays by black writers, <<http://www.unfinishedhistories.com/history/companies/black-theatre-co-operative/>> [accessed 01.11.16].

⁷⁶⁵ Founded in 1982 by Bernardine Evaristo and Patricia Hilaire who both served on the EAS, and Paulette Randall. Theatre of Black Women sought to explore the experience of black and Asian women through theatre, <<http://www.unfinishedhistories.com/history/companies/theatre-of-black-women/>>

⁷⁶⁶ 'Talawa', a black theatre company founded in 1985 by Yvonne Brewster, Mona Hammond Carmen Monroe and Inigo Espel, see <http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/articles/b/history-of-black-and-asian-performance-in-britain/>.

⁷⁶⁷ The EAS would also put pressure on the Southbank Concert Halls to change their programming to include black artists' concerts, though little change was achieved at on the issue of black representation in their management. Black concerts were also supported by the GLC through music promoter Wilf Walker, which, Kwesi Owusu qualified, 'may have given black music a higher profile, they in no way started to deal with the more structural issues faced by black musicians'. Owusu contrasts the GLC's record on supporting Black music with the *Live Aid* concert in 1985, which he noted, had a 'striking lack of Black musicians.' The GLC also funded a report, 'The Black Music and Record Industry in London', which Owusu states, led to the formation of the Black Music Association UK. See Owusu, 1987 p.99-103.

⁷⁶⁸ EAS minutes, April 1984. [LMA:GLC/DG/MIN/014].

‘Black Artists White Institutions’ conference at the Riverside theatre on 4th November 1985.⁷⁶⁹ It also provided additional funding to the Minority Arts Advisory Service (MAAS), which itself held annual conferences and printed a magazine, *Artrage*,⁷⁷⁰ which published opinion pieces and conference reports on the direction of cultural policy affecting black organisations, including the work of the GLC, alongside showcases of black writing, arts reviews and listings. In 1985 the ‘Black Arts: Future Policies and Priorities’ report further refined the Committee’s focus towards organisations ‘[...] whose work reflects the contemporary political issues and experience of London’s black communities.’⁷⁷¹ The final year’s strategy for targeted funding was aimed at groups previously funded who were ‘demonstrating ability to achieve their stated aims [...] have established a wide funding base and can show they might continue arts activities if council funding is no longer available [...]’. More proposals and revised priorities for funding black film and video, music, visual arts and theatre were put forward. In the case of visual arts, it was even proposed that the Council establish a permanent collection of Black Art work, conduct a research project on black visual art of the last 45 years, fund exhibitions of documentation around the theme of this research and a series of seminars on black visual arts from historical and contemporary perspectives. This was to be done in conjunction with a new organisation set up by the GLC in 1985, ‘The Black Visual Arts Forum’.⁷⁷² This suggests that the EAS may have been late to develop sufficient policies to support black visual arts in particular.

5.8 Art Exhibitions and Mainstream Arts Institutions

Throughout the 1980s, black cultural producers and their work were frequently ignored by both mainstream arts venues and arts sponsors.⁷⁷³ Speaking at the MAAS Annual conference in November 1983, only a year after the formation of the EAS, Kwesi Owusu stated,

[...] because of a lack of organisation we have been unable to put enough pressure on the state for a real restructuring of funding institutions, with the result that we are being put into the ethnic arts ghetto. When you go to some funding bodies, irrespective of your art form, the moment they see a black face they send you to the GLC.⁷⁷⁴

⁷⁶⁹ A transcript of which featured in MAAS’s *Artrage* 12, Spring 1986. See also GLC *Third Eye: Struggle for Black and Third World Cinema, Conference report* (London: GLC Race Equality Unit, 1986).

⁷⁷⁰ While containing elements of interest to this research, the MAAS magazine was labelled as ‘depressing’ by Rasheed Araeen. See Rasheed Araeen ‘Black Art: A discussion with Eddie Chambers’, *Third Text* 5, (1988).

⁷⁷¹ EAS minutes, 27.03.1985, ‘Black Arts- Future policies and priorities’ [LMA:GLC/DG/MIN/014].

⁷⁷² The ‘Black Visual Arts Forum’: On 26 June 1985, the GLC allocated £11,510 in research fees to set up a ‘Black Visual Arts Forum’, consisting of following consultants: Rasheed Araeen, Amal Ghosh, Chila Kumari Burman, David Bailey, Mona Hatoum, Les Johnson, to undertake a feasibility study in order to develop a framework of policies and practices for black visual arts. It is not known what became of this initiative, however. See EAS, 26.06.1985, [LMA: GLC/DG/MIN/014].

⁷⁷³ Although hardly an excuse, it is plausible to consider that a new climate of economic self-sufficiency being forced on mainstream arts venues under the climate of Thatcherism may have made them more risk-adverse in their programming, which would not have assisted black cultural producers inclusion, or in their aims to transcend the racist disinterest of these institutions.

⁷⁷⁴ Kwesi Owusu, ‘On liberal multi-culturalism, the State and Black Arts’, MAAS National Conference 1983 Report, Commonwealth Institute, November 1983.

Clearly, it was not the intention of the GLC to allow mainstream institutions to absolve themselves of the responsibility for including black artists in their programmes and sponsorship and something had to be done. The aforementioned 1984 'Mainstream Arts and their Challenge to Racism' report recommended that major institutions which received £2.75 million of the Arts and Recreation committee's funds - including the London Festival Ballet, National Theatre, English National Opera - be required to submit written statements of equal opportunity and anti-racist policy, and detailed proposals for their implementation.⁷⁷⁵ All new applicants to the GLC were formally required to make a statement on their equal opportunities policy.⁷⁷⁶ It also proposed to set up a scheme for black candidates to receive certified training in arts administration procedures, to support black candidates when competing for work in major arts organisations. The report also criticised the Arts Council's decision to devolve resources to its Regional Arts Associations, as 'the level of representation of black people on the various panel structures is abysmal' with only a few token appointments.⁷⁷⁷ It reserved particular criticism for the severe lack of black representation on the GLAA, and no black representation on the GLAA executive committee, even proposing that it learn from the GLC's example on cultural policy for London's black communities.⁷⁷⁸

Following its popular 'open foyer' policy at the Royal Festival Hall, the GLC organised a number of black cultural events itself at the RFH, presumably as this was one major venue over which it had some control. These included an open exhibition of black art and crafts entitled 'New Horizons' (18th January- 5th February 1985). [Figure 92] Amongst the visual artists were Sokari Douglas Camp, Horace Opio Donovan, Lubaina Himid, Emmanuel Taiwo Jegede, George Kelly (Onar-F'owokan), Waheed Pall, Keith Piper and Veronica Ryan. The exhibition was accompanied by a catalogue produced by the GLC, which included entries written by the artists themselves.⁷⁷⁹

⁷⁷⁵ GLC EAS papers, 'Mainstream arts and their challenge to racism', 20.9.84, [LMA:GLC/DG/PRE/14/07]. The report named major grant recipients, but also included Riverside Studios, ICA, Hayward Gallery, Albany, GLAA, Battersea Arts Centre, Combination Theatre Company and Sadler's Wells.

⁷⁷⁶ Parminder Vir, interviewed in 1985: 'I would say very little [impact has been made] but a report was taken to Committee which outlined what the GLC itself could do and expect in terms of Black representation in management programming and employment. This report was endorsed and all the leaders of these institutions were asked to provide written statements on their Equal Opportunity and Anti-Racist Policies and how they generally proposed to redress these imbalances. I would see the results in the next long months but this issue has certainly been a major concern for the Arts and Recreation department. Certainly there have already been some changes in programming at the South Bank [...]'. Interview with Parminder Vir, *Artrage* 8, Spring 1985, MAAS.

⁷⁷⁷ Ibid., 'Mainstream arts and their challenge to Racism' Report, pp.8-10. It states that Arts Council clients Tara Arts, Steel n' Skin, Aklowa and Ekome, faced being devolved, as well as significant organisations playing a national role, such as Temba Theatre Company, Minority Arts Advisory Service, and National Association for Asian Youth which faced cuts, as well as its intention to devolve responsibility for Carnival – an event of national significance, to its local RAA. See Arts Council report, 'The Glory of the Garden: The Development of the Arts in England', Arts Council, 1985.

⁷⁷⁸ It also challenged the Arts Council on its lack of strategy to achieve support for black arts despite its' statements on 'multiculturalism', and argued that no black arts groups were consulted for its 'Glory of the Garden' policy. On London, it stated that neither the Arts Council or the Regional Association GLA (Greater London Arts Association) was prepared to continue the GLC's level of support for black culture. It proposed that the GLA creating a separate budget, specialist 'Ethnic Arts development' posts and posts for black arts officers, a steering group for 'ethnic arts' and black representatives on all specialist panels. It also proposed that it should reduce some of the revenue funding to its established clients to make way for new black arts clients. In another instance, GLA arts policy was discussed at the EAS on 25.01.1984, GLC advisors wished to ascertain why the GLAA appeared to be turning down black arts organisations, and sending them to the GLC instead, see [LMA:GLC/DG/MIN/014].

⁷⁷⁹ GLC, *New Horizons: An exhibition of Arts*, 18th January 1985, Royal Festival Hall (London: GLC, 1985).

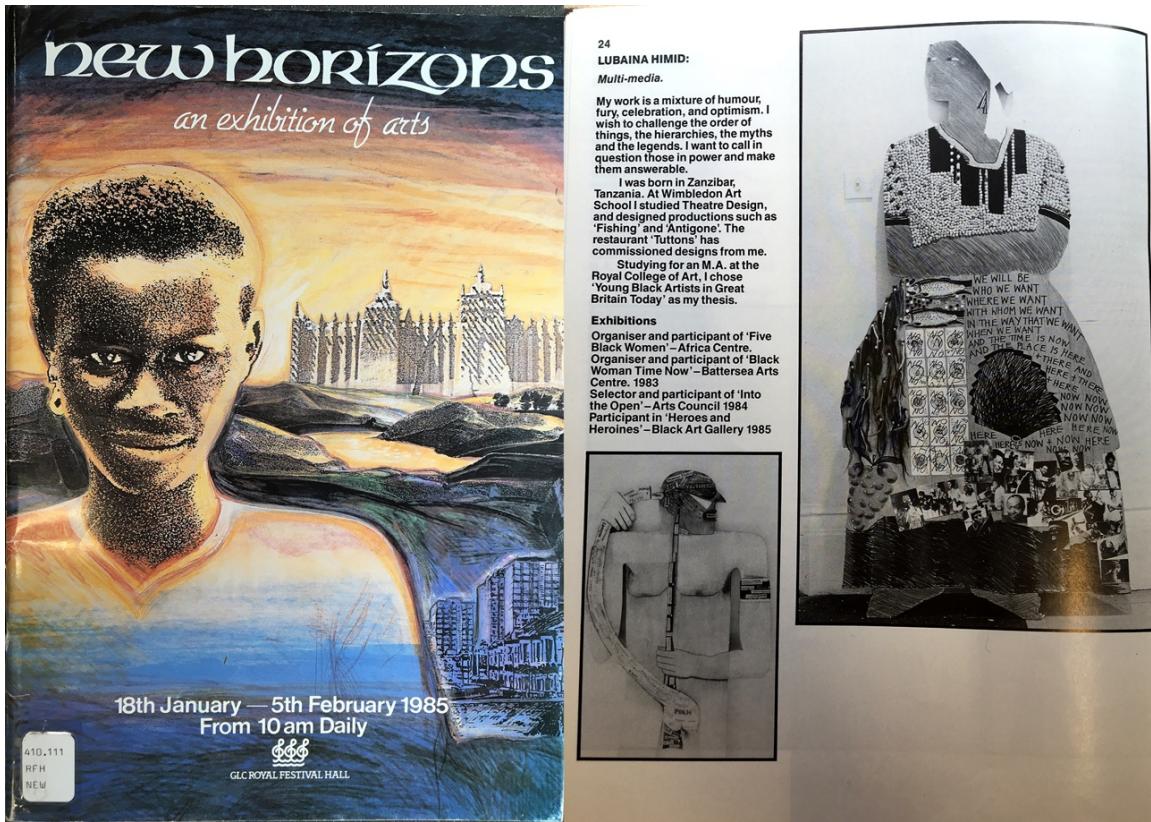


Figure 92: GLC New Horizons Exhibition (1985), catalogue cover and p.24, featuring artist statement and artwork by Lubaina Himid.

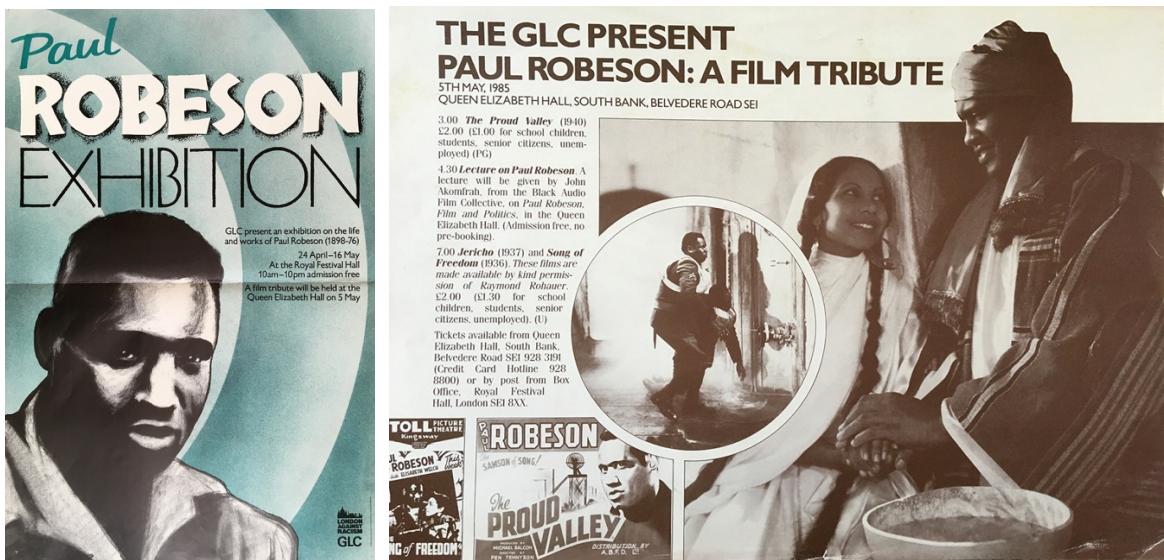


Figure 93: GLC Paul Robeson Exhibition Poster and Film Programme, Royal Festival Hall/ Queen Elizabeth Hall, Southbank, April-May 1985. Collection of Alan Tomkins.

While Nigel Pollitt writing in *City Limits* deemed this exhibition a success,⁷⁸⁰ it was clear that from the perspective of those in the exhibition who were seeking to be ‘taken seriously’ by mainstream ‘art world’ institutions, the idea of exhibiting in a survey show alongside craft work such as textiles or pottery was problematically ‘ethnicising’ in its effect, as Chambers has argued.⁷⁸¹ Other GLC exhibits at the Royal Festival Hall included a historical exhibition to reassess the life, work and politics of black actor Paul Robeson (1898-1976), on account of his importance for contemporary black theatre.⁷⁸² [Figure 93]

It was apparent that the GLC’s EAS was frustrated by slow progress on the issue of discriminatory practices in mainstream arts venues. Though as previously described, there was emphasis on bringing sponsored cultural production closer to working class communities rather than duplicating Arts Council funding for mainstream arts venues which, as the GLC’s own research had confirmed, largely appealed to white middle class audiences. One story of success, if limited, was artist and GLC EAS advisor Lubaina Himid’s exhibition, *Thin Black Line* of eleven Black women artists held at the ICA in 1985. Infamously, the exhibition only came about because the GLC had threatened to withdraw the ICA’s funding if it did not have an exhibition for black artists, and consequently, all eleven artists’ work was crammed into the ICA’s corridors, while a single white male artist enjoyed sole occupation of the gallery spaces.⁷⁸³ Himid had also curated a GLC-funded art exhibition at the multi-disciplinary festival of Black women’s creativity, *Black Women Time Now* at the Battersea Arts Centre in 1983-4, at which Himid exhibited the work *We Will Be*.⁷⁸⁴

As previously stated, the EAS was able to sponsor individual artists only in particular contexts, as either ‘artists in residence’ in community centres and galleries, to complete a number of artworks for a public exhibition, or to create a publication. Aubrey Williams was one of the artists allocated sponsorship of

⁷⁸⁰ Nigel Pollitt, ‘Review: New Horizons, Royal Festival Hall.’ *City Limits*, 25-31 Jan 1985. Pollitt’s review immediately sets up a contrast between this exhibition and ‘the spectacular international contemporary art fair at Olympia [...] And where white walls give most galleries the air of frosty silent shrines, some speedy carpentry and needlework transformed the [Royal Festival Hall] foyer into a seductive blue tent filled with a series of attractive arch-windowed kiosks. With Olympia in mind, the most striking feature of work by many young black artists is their independence from mainstream art fashions - which seem to be used rather than followed.’

⁷⁸¹ How far the exhibition organisers were sensitive to this issue is unknown, it would require further research. See Owusu, 1986, p.83.; Eddie Chambers, extract from *The ArtPack: A History of Black Artists in Britain* (1988) recalls ‘One such project was an exhibition held at the Royal Festival Hall, blandly titled ‘New Horizons’. The exhibition was shabby and amateurish, though it featured the work of some fine practitioners [...].’ <<http://www.eddiechambers.com/archive/artpack/>> [accessed 16.11.2016].

⁷⁸² See Kwesi Owusu, 1986, p.93.

⁷⁸³ A fact often returned to, mentioned recently at the *Now and then, Here and Now: Black Artists and Modernism Conference*, 6-8 October 2016, Tate Britain. See also Eddie Chambers, 1998, p.162, ‘The GLC had threatened to withdraw its considerable contribution to the ICA if something black did not appear in that [1985/6] financial year.’ See also exhibition catalogue: Lubaina Himid, *The Thin Black Line: An Exhibition [at the] ICA, 1985* (Hebden Bridge, West Yorkshire: Urban Fox Press, 1989). A re-visiting of this exhibition occurred at Tate Britain in 2011, curated by Paul Goodwin and Lubaina Himid, see Biswas, Sutapa, Sonia Boyce, Lubaina Himid, Claudette Johnson, Ingrid Pollard, Veronica Ryan, and others, *Thin Black Line(s)* (London: Making Histories Visible Project, Centre for Contemporary Art, UCLAN, 2011).

⁷⁸⁴ The EAS agreed a grant for £16,300 for this festival on 23 July 1983 [LMA:GLC/DG/PRE/014/003]. The exhibition featured Ingrid Pollard, Veronica Ryan, Claudette Johnson, Sonia Boyce, Lubaina Himid, Chila Burman, Mumtaz Karimjee, Houria Nati, Jean Campbell, Andrea Telman, Margaret Cooper, Elizabeth Eugene, Leslee Wills, Cherry Lawrence and Brenda Agard. The exhibition also featured GLC-sponsored Black women’s theatre company Talawa. See Lubaina Himid, ‘Exhibiting Black Women’s Art in the 1980s’, in Angela Dimitrakaki, and Lara Perry, *Politis in a Glass Case: Feminism, Exhibition Cultures and Curatorial Transgressions* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2013). See also: <http://lubainahimid.uk/portfolio/black-women-time-now/> [accessed 16.11.16]; see also Alison Donnell, *Companion to Contemporary Black British Culture* (London: Routledge, 2002), p.49.

£15,790 for the completion of what the minutes refer to as a 38 paintings 'for the Mayan art exhibition' between 1984 and 1986.⁷⁸⁵ This may refer to the work which formed Williams's 1985 exhibition, *The Olmec-Maya and Now* held at the Commonwealth Institute. Similarly, the Westbourne Gallery was sponsored to hold a touring exhibition of works by Emmanuel Taiwo Jegede,⁷⁸⁶ with the artist commissioned to make 35 paintings for it as an 'artist in residence' in 1985-6; and it was also agreed in principle to sponsor artist Uzo Egonu to mount two exhibitions during the residency.⁷⁸⁷

5.9 Film and Video



Figure 94 : Catalogue Cover Detail, Third Eye Festival of Third World Cinema 1983, published 1986.

In 1983-4 there was a focus on applications from black film and video collectives, workshops and film festivals. The *Third Eye Festival of Third World Cinema* [Figure 94] was one significant GLC-organised event, taking place on 28 October - 12 November 1983 at the British Film Institute on the South Bank. The festival was organised by Parminder Vir, head of what was to become the Race Equality Unit for the Arts and Recreation Committee, and an advisory committee including figures such as Prabhu Guptara, Mike

⁷⁸⁵ It appears this exhibition was perceived by the council as a commercial venture, as the conditions of this grant required that the council be repaid as from commission taken from sales. See EAS minutes, 27.07.1983 and 30.03.1984, [LMA:GLC/DG/MIN/014].

⁷⁸⁶ Nigerian-born Emmanuel Taiwo Jegede had been an artist in residence in the 1970s at the Keskidee Centre in Islington, the first black community arts centre in the UK. Most recently his work was featured in an important exhibition at the Guildhall Gallery, *No Colour Bar: Black British Art in Action 1960–1990*, based on the Huntley archive at the London Metropolitan Archive, see Huntley Archive, <<http://huntleysonline.com/f-h-a-l-m-a/exhibition/>> [accessed 01.11.2016].

⁷⁸⁷ Around £5000 was agreed in principle, See EAS minutes, 16.10.1985, [LMA:GLC/DG/MIN/014]. The EAS supported a number of smaller black artists' gallery spaces. While not many visual artists directly received sponsorship from the GLC for reasons already suggested, some were able to take advantage of some of the GLC funded exhibition spaces. The People's Gallery in Greenwich was able to expand its space through a GLC grant, see: 'Visual Arts Roundup', *Artrage* 6, Spring 1984. OBAALA (Organisation for Black Arts Advancement and Leisure Activities) which ran The Black-Art Gallery, held the exhibition 'Keith Piper: Past Imperfect, Future Tense' in 1984 and the 'From Generation to Generation' in 1986, featuring David A. Bailey, Sonia Boyce, Keith Piper, and others. Creation for Liberation also received funding, an organisation that arranged an annual open exhibition at the Brixton Recreation Centre and the Brixton Gallery. EAS also funded items such as exhibition catalogues, including: Rasheed Araeen's *Making Myself Visible* (Kala Press, 1985) for which EAS minutes (on 03.04.84 and 23.05.04) detail a grant of £6200 and Gavin Jantjes was sponsored for the production of catalogue and publicity for an art exhibition in February 1986. Funding exhibition catalogues was a matter of significance, particularly as small organisations and galleries could not necessarily afford to do so. The catalogues of galleries such as the Brixton Gallery are very ephemeral photocopies, for example. In some cases these photocopies stand as the only records of exhibitions for future researchers, See Frances Dupré, *Brixton Calling!* (2011); Archive of the Brixton Gallery, Tate Archive, Tate Britain. The EAS also organised a number of art exhibitions itself, including: *The Colours Of Black: A Black Arts Showcase* at the GLC Conference Hall, County Hall, 20 February – 3 March 1986, Artists included Rasheed Araeen, Chila Burman, Uzo Egonu, Armet Francis, Gavin Jantjes, Emmanuel Taiwo Jegede, George Kelly, Shaheen Merali, Fitzroy Sang and Aubrey Williams. See EAS minutes, [LMA:GLC/DG/MIN/014].

Phillips, Imruh Caesar, H.O. Nazareth and Lionel Ngkane.⁷⁸⁸ The programme included an important conference, the keynote address given by exiled Chilean film director Miguel Littín,⁷⁸⁹ and brought discussions of Indian and African cinema and issues such as the representation of women and cinema and imperialism, together with a symposium on the black film sector in the UK, with contributions from GLC-funded black film and video workshops and collectives, discussions on the potential of the new technology of ‘cable television’ for community programming,⁷⁹⁰ and strategies for intervention. A publication recording this symposium was published by the GLC’s Race Equality Unit in 1986.⁷⁹¹ A number of London’s black film workshops, including Sankofa, Ceddo, Black Audio Film Collective, and Retake, the first Asian video collective, were allocated significant funds in 1984 to pay for equipment for their film and video production workshops.⁷⁹² Isaac Julien co-founded Sankofa with Martina Attilé, Maureen Blackwood, Nadine Marsh-Edwards, while he was studying at Central St Martins where he produced the films *Who Killed Colin Roach?* (1983) and experimental documentary about Notting Hill Carnival, *Territories* (1984). Sankofa received capital and revenue grants from the GLC to secure a premises, equipment and salaries for workers, and also was awarded funds by Channel 4 and Camden Council.⁷⁹³ Ceddo Film and Video’s application for a capital grant for equipment to support their programme of training workshops was considered in March 1984.⁷⁹⁴ In 1985 the EAS made a significant sponsorship of the new group Black Audio Film Collective, founded by John Akomfrah, Eddie George, Avril Johnson and Lina Gopaul, to produce films and run screenings and educational workshops.⁷⁹⁵ As Gopaul recalls,

⁷⁸⁸ Filmmaker Imruh Caesar, born in St Kitts, also known as Imruh Bakari. He went on to make ‘Mark of the Hand’, a film about artist Aubrey Williams for the Arts Council in 1986. ‘Mark of the Hand’, Imruh Caesar, UK, 1986, colour, 52 mins. <<http://artsonfilm.wmin.ac.uk/films.php?a=view&recid=162>> [accessed 01.11.2016]. Also: Lionel Ngkane, South African filmmaker and actor. H. O. Nazareth, see Chapter 4.

⁷⁸⁹ Prior to the release of his film made clandestinely in Chile: Miguel Littín, *Acta General de Chile* (General Report on Chile) (1986) which documented life under the Pinochet regime.

⁷⁹⁰ The potential of ‘cable television’ for local community broadcast or ‘public access’ television was an exciting prospect for independent video workshops in the mid 1980s, though due to the way in which the cable networks were sold during the Thatcher years, access to cable networks for community programmes was not forthcoming and was instead dominated by the pay-tv model, based on commercial interest alone. See the GLC draft report which outlines the projected impact of pay-tv models on future UK popular culture: GLC ARC Committee papers, Bob Hills, ‘Cable and Culture Local Initiatives’ 22.3.1983, [LMA:GLC/DG/PRE/013].

⁷⁹¹ See conference report, GLC, *Third Eye: The Struggle for Black and Third World Cinema*, (1986). The printed catalogue for this film festival recently featured in an exhibition, *The 1980s: Today’s Beginnings* at the Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven (April - September 2016), see <<https://vanabbemuseum.nl/en/programme/programme/the-1980s/>> [accessed 01.11.16].

⁷⁹² This development occurred alongside the ACTT’s Workshop Declaration (1984) and the new Channel 4, which supported independent producers. For more information, see Margaret Dickinson, *Rogue Reels*, p.178.

⁷⁹³ Sankofa film and video, *Who Killed Colin Roach?*, Colour super-8 video transfer, 45mins; *Territories*, 1984, 25mins, Colour, 16mm. See <<http://www.screenonline.org.uk/film/id/570442/>> [accessed 01.11.16]. Julien went on to produce films for cinema, television and art installations and was nominated for the Turner Prize in 2001. Sankofa was awarded a capital grant of up to £22,396 and a revenue grant of £13,000 to cover operating costs in 1984-5, according to GLC minutes. Grants for equipment were subject to repayment if the organisation ceased operation within five years, or equipment would be redistributed to other organisations. See also, Isaac Julien and Mark Nash, ‘Dialogues with Stuart Hall’, in David Morley and Kuan Hsing Chen eds., *Stuart Hall: Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies* (London: Routledge, 1996) p. 477.

⁷⁹⁴ Ceddo included filmmakers Menelik Shabazz, Milton Bryan and Imruh Bakari Caesar (previously of Kuumba Productions, Glenn Ujebe Masokoane and Roy Cornwall. Ceddo produced a film for Channel 4 on the Broadwater Farm uprising in Tottenham, entitled *The People’s Account*, (1985) but this was never broadcast due to its contentious portrayal of the police. As stated on the BFI website, ‘Ceddo stood out among the other collectives because of its experienced personnel and because of its genuinely African and Caribbean make-up.’ Ann Ogidi, ‘Ceddo’, *BFI Screen Online*, <<http://www.screenonline.org.uk/people/id/569785/>> [accessed 01.11.16]. Ceddo was to be awarded up to £46,172 in 1984 to purchase capital items- film and video editing equipment. GLC EAS Papers, ‘Ceddo Application for a Capital Grant’, 07.03.1984, [LMA:GLC/DG/PRE/14/05].

⁷⁹⁵ For example, on 28 November 1984, it was agreed at a meeting of the EAS that Black Audio Film Collective (hereafter BAFC) were to be awarded over £21,000 for a Steenbeck for 16mm editing, equipment for sound recording and mixing and an alarm system for their premises. It was also allocated £11,425 to cover operating costs for 1984/5 and a salary for

in 1982 the group couldn't afford film, and consequently their first grant applications to GLC, BFI and GLAA were not taken seriously, so members of the collective embarked on tape/slide productions as their only affordable option while working on other productions for experience.⁷⁹⁶ GLC funding secured the collective's premises and equipment, and their first film, *Handsworth Songs* (1986),⁷⁹⁷ was funded through a combination of self-financing, exhibiting their tape-slide work and money received from the GLC for doing research work. *Handsworth Songs* (1987) also features shots panning across Gavin Jantjes's aforementioned mural, 'The Dream, The Rumour and the Poet's Song' [Figure 95].

The GLC was important to us, because there was the ethnic-minorities unit which began to nurture black arts as well as putting money into established black art forms and we were one of the nurturing projects. In 1985 we got a small grant and it enabled us to get premises and set up a very small training course and an exhibition programme. The GLC was putting together the Third Eye Film Festival and we helped with the programme and writing the programme notes. [...] It was a time when lots of things were bubbling and you felt you could engage in those debates and have some kind of influence.⁷⁹⁸

The funding the GLC provided allowed these organisations, and the wider network of filmmakers they assisted, to acquire their means of production and enabling them a level of independence from the commercial film and television industry.⁷⁹⁹ The EAS also sponsored work on particular film projects, including Divemay Films (dir. Lionel Ngakane) for their documentary *Mandela* (1986), and Kuumba Productions was supported to create a film record of the Third Eye Festival.

one worker, provided they delivered a public programme. The public programme stipulated their work must include four 12-day training courses in 16mm film making for black Londoners (one exclusively for black women), organising two film seasons on 'Cinema and black representation' and 'rethinking resistance' at cinemas in Hackney and Tower Hamlets, the touring of two BAFC tape-slide shows to 26 venues, hiring out their equipment and detailed consultation and advice for black Londoners producing films, the continuation of making films, writing and publishing articles on the themes of black film making in Britain, and acting as a strategic resource for black filmmakers. BAFC requested that the amount of funding they received not be published in Margaret Dickinson's book, *Rogue Reels*, and the reasons for this were not given. However, it is important to this argument to identify that the GLC did allocate a significant level of support to black film workshops, and to note that this information is in the public domain already, accessible through open archives at the LMA. It is difficult to definitively identify exactly how much any group received by following what allocation was agreed by the committees, but the figures at least give an indication of the GLC's commitment. See Margaret Dickinson, 1999, p.315.

⁷⁹⁶ See Black Audio Film Collective interviews, 1996 in *Rogue Reels*, p. 309-310.

⁷⁹⁷ *Handsworth Songs*, director, John Akomfrah, producer, Lina Gopaul, Black Audio Film Collective, 1986. Colour 16mm, 58 minutes. Footage of Handsworth in this film was shot by the Ceddo workshop. Akomfrah was later to join the EAS as an advisory member.

⁷⁹⁸ Margaret Dickinson, 1999, p.211.

⁷⁹⁹ In an *Artrage* interview with Kwesi Owusu, Parminder Vir, head of the Race Equality Unit of the Arts and Recreation Committee stated, 'In addition to established filmmakers like Menelik Shabazz and Horace Ové there has been an influx of people leaving college having studied film. Some have organised themselves into collectives. Our policy of funding strategic resources has enabled us to fund workshops which has enabled these groups to seek a franchise from the ACTT. In London we now have Ceddo as an established workshop with its own resources; Retake, with a film and resources under its belt, whilst Black Audio Film Collective and Sankofa are also running training courses for the community this making the facility more accessible to black people.' See Kwesi Owusu and Parminder Vir, 'Interview with Parminder Vir', *Artrage*, 8, Spring 1985.



Figure 95: Film Stills, Handsworth Songs, BAFC, (1987), Featuring Gavin Jantjes's Brixton mural.

5.10 Photography

On 7th March 1984, the EAS allocated £13,200 to Trinidad-born Horace Ov , the acclaimed director of pioneering Black British film drama *Pressure* (1976), to mount an exhibition of his lesser known photographic work to coincide with the GLC's Anti-Racist Year 1984.⁸⁰⁰ Ov 's biography submitted with his application stated that he had worked as a reportage photographer in London during the 1960s and had hitherto been reluctant to exhibit his photographic collection. The exhibition *Breaking Loose: Horace Ov * took place at the Photographer's Gallery in 1984, and was the gallery's second solo show by a black photographer.⁸⁰¹ The first was Armet Francis's *The Black Triangle* exhibition in 1983, the GLC later agreed to sponsor a book of the same title in 1985-6.⁸⁰²

⁸⁰⁰ See EAS minutes 07.03.1984, 'Application for grant, Anancy Films,' [LMA:GLC/DG/PRE/014/005]. Ov 's most well-known photograph features leading British Black Power Movement figure Michael X arriving into Paddington Station in 1967. See Andrew Pulver, 'Photographer Horace Ov 's Best Shot', *Guardian*, 25 August 2010. <<https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2010/aug/25/photographer-horace-ove-best-shot>>[accessed 17.11.2016]

⁸⁰¹ *Breaking Loose: Horace Ov *, Photographer's Gallery, London, 14 September 1984 – 13 October 1984, See Photographer's Gallery, <http://thephotographersgallery.org.uk/images/exhibitionList_TemporaryFormat_52f50145dfb9a.pdf> [accessed 17.11.2016]. Ov 's photographs have more recently been exhibited in a touring solo show, with a catalogue produced by Nottingham City Council in association with Autograph ABP, featuring the image *Michael X and members of the Black Power movement at Paddington Station* (1968), on the cover.

⁸⁰² Presumably, this is the book: Armet Francis, *The Black Triangle: The People of the African Diaspora* (London: Seed, 1985). See EAS minutes, 'Galva ltd.' 17.07.1985, [LMA:GLC/DG/MIN/014].

David A. Bailey was given a small capital grant for equipment to photograph and print, and running costs to display exhibition entitled *Positive Images of Black People* at the People's Gallery in 1984.⁸⁰³ In Bailey's application statement to the Committee, he conveys the need to make a corrective to negative images in the national press that present Black people as a 'problem', associated with crime and disorder, or 'pornographic' and 'exoticised' images, 'Therefore a positive exhibition of Black people is a radical alternative to these false conceptions.'⁸⁰⁴ Bailey proposed to photograph his subjects, giving them a say in how they are represented, to be displayed alongside a narrative element written by the individuals in each portrait, in response to their views on photographic representation and the media. The portraits, Bailey proposed, would be the product of a 'consensus' between the photographer and the person photographed. The portraits were also intended to demonstrate that photography is not 'high-brow', and 'there are Black people in all aspects of occupational life.' The exhibition was intended to go on tour to other venues, including Camerawork's Gallery.⁸⁰⁵

Reflections of the Black Experience [Figure 96] was an exhibition of documentary photography selected and commissioned by Monika Baker at the GLC in which nine black and Asian photographers, a mixture of women and men, were invited to 'document the social, cultural, and political changes in Britain today. Their brief was defined in four broad categories, economic, cultural, political, sexuality/gender.' Selected photographers were Marc Booth, Vanley Burke, Sunil Gupta, Mumtaz Karimjee, David Lewis, Zak Ové, Ingrid Pollard, Suzanne Roden, Madahi Sharak, and the GLC funded print catalogue also included a selection of work by Armet Francis. The catalogue had a directory listing around seventy black and Asian artists and photographers along with their contact details [Figure 97]. As Sunil Gupta has recalled, this exhibition was a foundational event in the formation of Autograph ABP in 1988.⁸⁰⁶ Autograph was itself important in attracting Stuart Hall's interest in the social and ideological significance of photography and art as Hall noted,

Sometime in the 1980s I was invited by David Bailey [David A. Bailey] to launch Autograph[...]. The chair of Autograph at that stage was a wonderful West African [...] photographer called Rotimi Fani-Kayode. People like Sunil Gupta were associated with it. This was the beginning of the struggle over representation and race, a struggle over visibility, a struggle to put the black body in the frame where it had never been, from which it had been excluded or marginalized [...] I began to understand that this had also generated a body of work [that was] not just a general discourse of imagery in society which was significant ideologically, but ... which might be significant aesthetically. So that took me into photography[...]and the art world.⁸⁰⁷

⁸⁰³ The modest running costs for the touring exhibition amounted to £1780, and the grant for equipment came to £420. Exhibition catalogue: David Bailey, *Positive Images of Black People: Recent Photographs by David Bailey* (London: Peoples' Gallery, 1984).

⁸⁰⁴ GLC EAS Papers, 'Application E/AR217, David A. Bailey, Positive Images of Blacks', [LMA:GLC/DG/PRE/014/007]. While the idea that a black photographer necessarily produces, or should produce, 'positive images' is debatable, this is the statement that Bailey made to the GLC. See Chambers in Rasheed Araeen, 'Black Art – A discussion with Eddie Chambers' in Owusu, Kwesi, ed., *Black British Culture and Society: A Text Reader*, Comedia (London: Routledge, 1999), p.250.

⁸⁰⁵ The idea for the project fit well with contemporaneous debates in photography at the time, particularly those centred around the politics of representation in journals such as *Camerawork* and *TEN.8*.

⁸⁰⁶ See Sunil Gupta, 'The Foundation of Autograph ABP: Diary Notes', *Autograph ABP Newspaper*, October 2007, <http://www.autograph-abp-shop.co.uk/files/Newspapers/Autograph_newspaper-Rivington_Place.pdf>, [accessed 16.11.2016]. Exhibition catalogue: <<http://brixton50.co.uk/black-experience-photographers/>> [accessed 16.11.2016].

⁸⁰⁷ Stuart Hall, quoted in Glenn Jordan, 2016, p.17.

The *Reflections of the Black Experience* photography exhibition also formed part of a city-wide festival, *The Black Experience Arts Programme*, described as ‘reflecting historical and contemporary black experiences through a variety of art forms’, and co-ordinated by Parminder Vir at the GLC. [Figure 98] The opening speech was given by Stuart Hall, who was reported to have ‘praised the GLC’s role as an enabler of Black Arts through its funding and through providing the infrastructure for projects.’⁸⁰⁸ The festival was to coincide with the final months of the GLC’s operation. The festival programme drew together a variety of cultural events commissioned from many of the black cultural organisations with which the GLC was in contact. It included exhibitions on struggles against racism organised by the Institute of Race Relations, exhibitions about figures such as C.L.R. James, Rajani Palme Dutt, and on Caribbean labour history [Figure 99], oral history projects by the Black Cultural Archives and the Southall Afro-Caribbean Asian Artists collective, a various theatre and dance performances, a film programme organised by the Association of Black Workshops, and a series of seminars on black visual arts organised by the GLC’s Black Visual Arts Forum.⁸⁰⁹ This account of the GLC’s black cultural sponsorship activities attests to the fact that the GLC was not solely engaged in GLC-initiated black ‘showcase’ projects and exhibitions, but rather that it engaged in a number of different strategies, including directly funding black cultural producer’s own projects and organisations between 1981 and 1986.

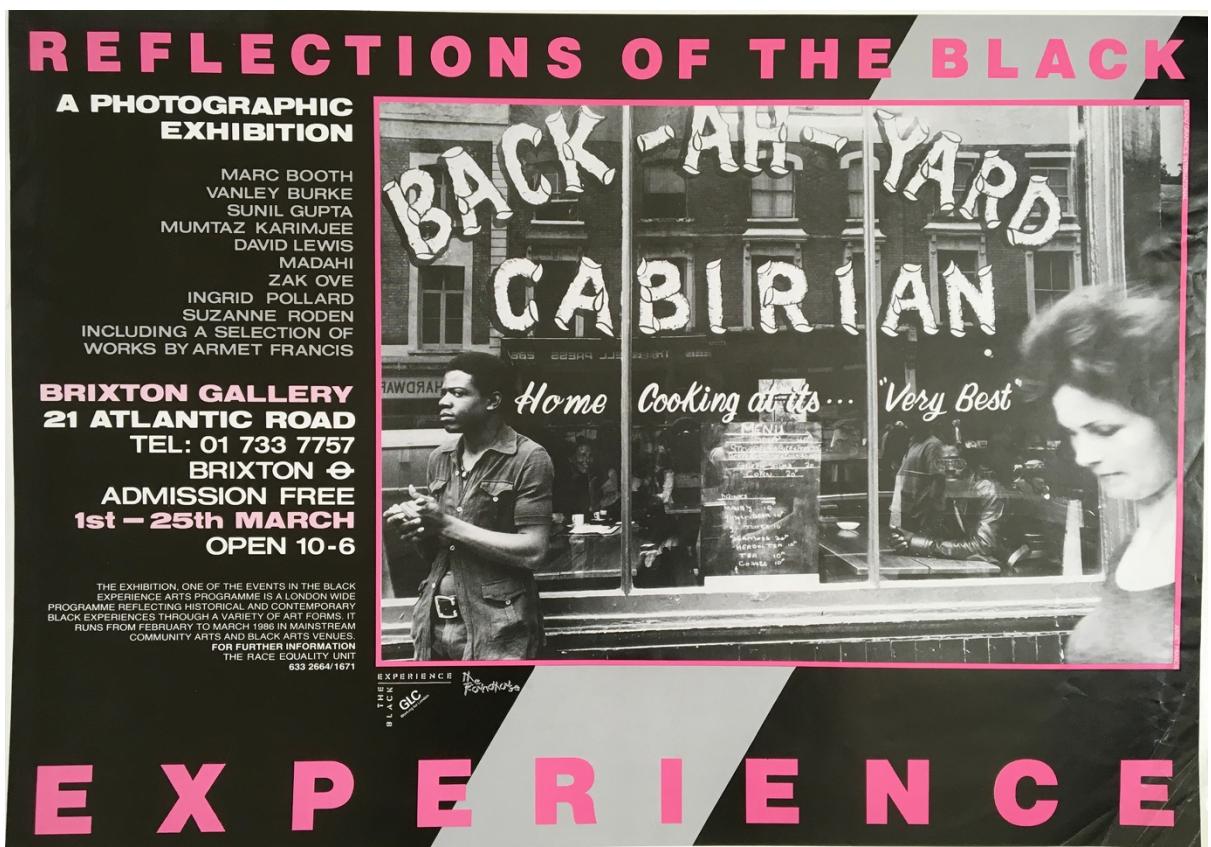


Figure 96: Poster, *Reflections of the Black Experience Photography Exhibition*, Brixton Art Gallery, 1986. Poster features photograph by Armet Francis. Collection of Alan Tomkins.

⁸⁰⁸ Stuart Hall, quoted in *Black Arts In London*, no. 49, (20 February-3 March 1986), p.11.

⁸⁰⁹ See GLC, *The Black Experience Arts Programme* (London: GLC 1986).



Figure 97: *Reflections of the Black Experience*, exhibition catalogue, 1986. Cover features photograph by Vanley Burke; double page spread (right) featuring photographs by Sunil Gupta.

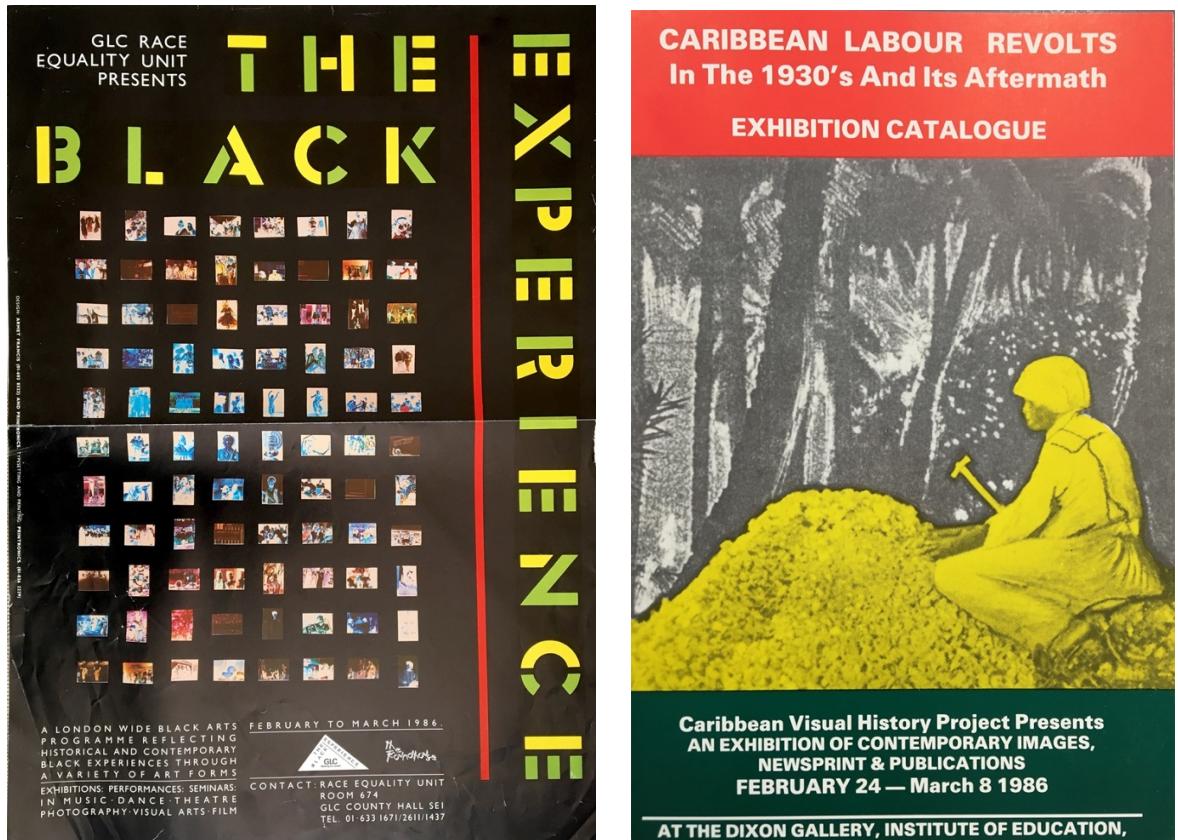


Figure 98: Poster, GLC Race Equality Unit Presents 'The Black Experience Arts Programme', 1986.

Figure 99: Publicity Materials for a historical exhibition, 'Caribbean Labour Revolts in the 1930s and its Aftermath.' Institute of Education, 1986. Chelsea Archive.

5.11 The Roundhouse: a failed 'Black Arts Centre'



Figure 100: Image of the Roundhouse with murals installed, Kentish Town, from the film Signs of Resistance



Figure 101: Roundhouse Murals, from the film 'Signs of Resistance'. (Right) Is a detail of one mural by Chila Kumari Burman.

Despite the many smaller cultural initiatives supported by the EAS, it was the failed grand gestures orchestrated by the GLC which would dictate how its work for black British Londoners would be remembered. Emblematic of this difference between GLC sponsorship of pre-existing successful black cultural organisations to expand the possibilities of their work and the projects the GLC initiated itself, was the expensive and ill-fated scheme to buy and convert the Roundhouse in Kentish Town, formerly Arnold Wesker's radical 'Centre 42',⁸¹⁰ into a permanent Black Arts Centre to present a challenge to London's existing cultural 'centres of excellence', intended as 'a venue primarily for Afro-Caribbean, Asian and non-European performers from Britain and the Third World.'⁸¹¹ The perhaps over-ambitious arts centre was designed to contain everything from a theatre, to a dance studio, workshop spaces, recording studio, an art gallery, a library, a crèche, and was to be made accessible to disabled visitors-building upon the radical ideals of *Centre 42*, within the new context of showcasing and acting as a resource for black British culture.⁸¹² Niru Ratnam noted the similarities between the stated aims of the Roundhouse project and Naseem Khan's 1976 recommendations for Indian and Afro-Caribbean arts centres, stating that '[...] although the GLC moved beyond Khan's limiting discrete and fixed ethnic grouping to a more fluid conception of Black identity, its thinking on the arts did not move on from what Khan articulated in that Ethnic Arts was still an all-inclusive field, encompassing different art forms.'⁸¹³ As noted previously, this all-encompassing 'arts centre' model may also have reflected the GLC's broad approach to cultural production and the creation of local cultural resources and community-access facilities, rather than any particular commitment to the 'visual arts' field alone.

The Black Arts Centre opened with a display of murals on hoardings in front of the building, on themes of multi-cultural performing arts, painted by some of the same muralists chosen for the Anti-Racist mural project, forming part of its opening celebration, a series of events, *Twelve Days at the Roundhouse*. These murals feature images of performing arts from around the world, suggesting an attempt to represent, in a literal way, a unified concept of 'Black Art' across varied cultures, and the ambitions of the Black Arts Centre. One artist's design also featured symbols of new media technology in its collage, including a television and a VCR, suggesting a desire to look to the future of artistic practice, in contrast to the more 'traditional' cultural practices depicted. However, despite appearances, the Black Arts Centre would never fulfil its considerable ambitions. [Figure 100] [Figure 101]

From the outset suspicion arose amongst some that the Black Arts Centre was a GLC vanity project, a short-sighted grand gesture of benevolence rather than a true commitment to the longevity of black cultural organisations across London. Farrukh Dhondy resigned from the EAS as he could see that the Roundhouse would be a huge bureaucratic project that would not have the long term support from black communities, as it was not a self-generated, and Rasheed Araeen also resigned from an advisory role on

⁸¹⁰ See Oliver Peterson Gilbert, *Pop Art Redefined* [...] (doctoral thesis, University of Southampton, 2016).

⁸¹¹ Ansell Wong, 'GLC, MAAS National Conference Report 1983', *Artrage* no. 6, Spring 1984.

⁸¹² GLC, *12 Days at the Roundhouse*, The Black Arts Centre, Festival Programme, 1985, [Chelsea Archive].

⁸¹³ Niru Ratnam, 2004, p.73.

the Roundhouse Committee.⁸¹⁴ One of the key complaints, made by Kwesi Owusu and others as early as 1983 at the MAAS national conference, was of a lack of consultation with black cultural producers from the early stages, which gave rise to a great sense of distrust, with filmmaker Imruh Caesar bitterly expressing that 'The Roundhouse is a burden [...] all because somebody wants to go down in history as the philanthropist of 1983.'⁸¹⁵ While these criticisms seem to centre upon GLC self-aggrandisement, they also suggest that many practitioners felt that the need was not for a centralised resource, but rather highly localised interventions to support existing organisations and small scale cultural enterprises, within particular communities across London.⁸¹⁶ The Black Arts Centre's problems were to be compounded by the abolition of the GLC in April 1986 and the unwillingness of the Arts Council to financially support the centre. Tony Banks made an appeal in the House of Commons on behalf of Roundhouse Co-ordinator, Remi Kapo in June 1986,

Last Monday I asked the Minister a question about the black arts centre at the Roundhouse. I have received a letter from Remi Kapo who is doing his best to get things going at the Roundhouse. He says: 'I feel that it is unrealistic of the Arts Minister to expect a centre like the Roundhouse, in the light of the social situation that exists in Britain today, to be able to raise £8.5 million without the direct assistance of the state.' Now that the GLC has gone, the only source in London of capital money for the arts has also gone. The Arts Council has got rid of its Housing The Arts budget. Capital constraints on local authorities are such that they cannot make capital contributions. Where can the black arts centre at the Roundhouse go for the money?

Despite Tony Banks's pleas, The Black Arts Centre closed later that year, with the Roundhouse itself sold off by Camden Council in the mid 1990s.⁸¹⁷ As Richard Hylton has noted, the Roundhouse would not be the last arts centre to suffer such a fate,

[...]the demise of Camerawork, the LUX and the Centre for Visual Arts in Cardiff suggests that some capital projects are built on shifting sands, subject to the vagaries of both the funding system and the political climate. In light of this, organisations being used to deliver the Arts Council's cultural diversity agenda by proxy seem all the more vulnerable.⁸¹⁸

⁸¹⁴ The format of the following article that quotes Farrukh Dhondy is recorded in a confusing mixture of quotation and reported speech, which this author has not altered: 'I resigned from the GLC's Ethnic Arts Committee, Farrukh Dhondy explained, which was buying the Roundhouse, because I didn't feel that this was a positive step; not that I didn't want a building, he said, but simply because I think that once again we are getting advertisements, committees, politics and substitute political organisations for what we should be generating ourselves. I think, [...] the healthiest development in the black cultural field would be for the political organisation of black culture to be there as an infrastructure to support the creative activity of it.' He didn't see that happening with the black arts centre. He said that the committee for the Roundhouse 'would not have an organic connection with the black people who create things and want the black community to come and see them. That is my chief fear about the Roundhouse[...]. If it was up to me, he said, I would take and already existing organisation, like the Black Theatre Co-Op, [...] if you give to an organisation like this, he continued, and several exist, the money and encouragement to set up their own building, it would contribute to the political development of black arts. He didn't like, he said, manifestoes substituting for that development.' Farrukh Dhondy, 'Minority Arts Advisory Service (MAAS) National Conference report', 26 November 1983, Commonwealth Institute' *Artrage* 6, Spring 1984, p. 29. The problem of the Roundhouse's lack of 'organic connection' with black people, that Dhondy identifies, is a problem that *any* large arts organisation might also have faced. Rasheed Araeen also resigned from the Roundhouse project panel for similar reasons, see Rasheed Araeen, 'Black Art – A discussion' [1988] reproduced in Owusu, Kwesi, ed., 1999, p.250.

⁸¹⁵ That unspecified 'somebody' might be referring to Ken Livingstone. See 'MAAS Conference report, Commonwealth Institute, 26.11.1983', in *Artrage*, 6, (Spring 1984).

⁸¹⁶ When the Roundhouse closed shortly after it opened in 1986, undoubtedly it was viewed as a wasted opportunity, and a huge waste of funds that might have brought great benefit to existing smaller, localised cultural enterprises.

⁸¹⁷ See also Emily Kerr, 'The Black Arts Centre: A Home for the Art Britain Ignores?', 2016. Roundhouse website, <https://50.roundhouse.org.uk/content-items/black-arts-centre-home-art-britain-ignores>, [accessed 11.11. 2016].

⁸¹⁸ Richard Hylton, 2007, p.131.

Some of the money allocated for the Roundhouse was eventually used in the development of a new arts organisation similarly focused on cultural diversity, the Institute of New International Visual Arts (INIVA, later inIVA which opened in 1994), but clearly, much had already gone to waste.⁸¹⁹

How would the GLC's black arts strategy have developed, had the GLC not been working in the shadow of its impending closure? Parminder Vir, head of the Race Relations Unit of the Arts and Recreations Committee, hinted at a potential change in strategy towards a more integrationist approach, in an interview with Kwesi Owusu in early 1985,

We have made it clear what the responsibility of community artists is to Black arts. The question to ask now is whether these committees have outlived their roles and whether we shouldn't be thinking of new structures to carry out new policies. For the ethnic minorities unit we need to rethink funding criteria and priorities in the light of developments over the last two years. A question to ask is where are the art forms which are challenging the status quo emerging from? [...] If we are also saying that community arts needs to strengthen Black representation within its structures then these committee divisions may not be necessary. I think it is time to review the two committees and think which one sees Black arts as part of mainstream arts. Within the mainstream however it is crucial to recognise that Black arts start from a disadvantaged position in terms of access and lack of adequate facilities.⁸²⁰

Vir's response implies that key staff had already perceived that the separation of the various arts committees was proving counter-productive, failing to present enough of a challenge to 'mainstream' arts institutions policy on integrating black culture equally within their programmes. Time was not on their side to make the necessary changes, however. Initial examination of the GLC's archive suggests that the formation of the EAS should be viewed as a transitional experiment, with evidence of changing discourses and regular revision of its aims and remit, as it operated under unknown pressures exerted upon it from the threat of the GLC's closure.⁸²¹ Moreover, it is not entirely correct to view the EAS's work as simply a continuation of Naseem Kahn's 1986 Arts Council report, 'The Arts Britain Ignores', as there is evidence within the Council's archive that changes in the discourse and critical voices were beginning to emerge at the GLC, presenting views which may not have been aired at all in Arts Council settings. As Parminder Vir states, the GLC was attempting to lead by example.⁸²²

⁸¹⁹ See Niru Ratnam, 2004, p. 69. 'The inadvertent heir of the GLC's doomed flagship Black Arts Centre, The Roundhouse, was the INIVA, later renamed inIVA after some wrangling around the term 'internationalism'. Furthermore, Hylton notes that inIVA's focus may have inadvertently promoted the idea of black culture's 'separate development', see Richard Hylton, 2007, pp. 65, 70.

⁸²⁰ Kwesi Owusu, 'Interview with Parminder Vir', *Artrage*, 8, (Spring 1985).

⁸²¹ These pressures may have had something to do with the wrong roads being taken in particular instances, which in the longer term have undermined the positive work it was beginning to do elsewhere. The likelihood of abolition may have also directed the GLC towards projects which would appear to be making grand public gestures or statements, undermining longer term strategy.

⁸²² Khan's 'The Arts Britain Ignores' (1976) has been criticised not only for 'ethnicising' attitudes in relation to black cultural production, but also for its failure to identify the racism of mainstream institutions. See Karin Woodley, 'After the Placebos - A Response', 'Black Artists White Institutions Conference Report', *Artrage*, 12, (Spring 1986) p.38. As Richard Hylton has also subsequently categorised the GLC's work as a straightforward continuation from Khan's ideology, under the chapter title, 'exotica funding', which itself conveys its general argument. See Richard Hylton, 2007.

Kwesi Owusu - GLC policies are further ahead than those of the Arts Council. Is there any way of reconciling them?

Parminder Vir - There are two ways of dealing with the Arts Council. One is to hit one's head against a brick wall and try to change their attitudes. Maybe if some of us tried that as people who sat on some of the panels. The other is to set an example as to what happens when you put resources into a starved community. I think the GLC has done this and the Arts Council has to take notice of the groups who have had a taste of funding and know that with some resources they can organise effectively and make an impact.⁸²³

While Vir and Owusu's discussion in 1985 presents a view that the GLC was 'further ahead' in its approach to black culture than the Arts Council, a conflict had also emerged that year within the Greater London Arts Association (The Arts Council's Regional Association for London, GLAA), in which the one newly appointed black woman 'Ethnic Arts Officer, Delia Jarett-Macauley, resigned after less than a year in the post. Two further members of staff resigned in solidarity, stating in an article, 'Racism at the GLAA', published in *Race Today* that 'The management of the GLAA has no understanding of the issues and is showing a determined unwillingness to learn', referring to the GLAA as a place where 'tokenism continued to be the order of the day' by comparison to the GLC, where 'for the first time, black artists and other previously unfunded groups in the community were influencing policy and making some decisions on spending.'⁸²⁴ Supporting this view, Karin Woodley, in a speech to the *Black Artists White Institutions* conference in 1985, argued that Naseem Khan's by this time decade-old report had only led to 'structurally powerless' token appointments of a single 'ethnic arts officer' onto funding panels, and despite the increase in organised action by black artists, they now faced an uncertain future with the GLC's demise:

The GLC's Ethnic Arts Sub Committee has supported some important areas of growth within the black arts sector. Unfortunately its policies have not yet been taken up effectively by any other funding body and post-abolition, Black Artists in London will find themselves no better off than in 1980. [...] The last ten years since publication of *The Arts Britain Ignores* [Khan, 1976] can be seen to have been a 'liberal' diversion. The GLC may have developed some sound policies as regards Black Arts, however, these have been unrepresentative of the rest of the arts world who have stuck firmly to their 'ethnic arts' guns, and continued to treat Black Arts as fringe exotica.⁸²⁵

In a more recent brief commentary by Alison Donnell on the role of the GLC in black visual arts asserts that its new openness to the demands of black cultural producers actually *influenced* the Arts Council's future policy, Donnell writes, 'By 1986, the Arts Council had begun to adopt some of the initiatives developed by the GLC, through the Directorship of Sandy Nairne.'⁸²⁶ As Niru Ratnam's account concurs, '...] after the [GLC's] disbanding, the legacy its arts policy left behind forced the hand of other arts administration bodies, particularly the Arts Council, to articulate a policy on Black Arts, although it should be noted that the Arts Council never used that particular term.'⁸²⁷

⁸²³ Kwesi Owusu, 'Interview with Parminder Vir', *Artrage* 8, (Spring 1985).

⁸²⁴ See Olwen Ellis, 'Racism at the GLA: Greater London Arts Association and Black Artistic Activity', *Race Today Review*, 1986. The episode was even reported in: *Guardian*, November 12 1985.

⁸²⁵ Karin Woodley, 'After the Placebos - A Response', *Artrage* 12, (Spring 1986), p.38.

⁸²⁶ See 'Visual and Plastic Arts', in Alison Donnell, *Companion to Contemporary Black British Culture* (London: Routledge, 2002).

⁸²⁷ Niru Ratnam, 2004, p.69. Ratnam identifies that 'The first indication that the Arts Council were taking on board GLC policy [...] came in 1984. The report *Glory of the Garden* recognised 'the implications for the arts of a developing multi-cultural society.' See also: Arts Council of Great Britain, *The Glory of the Garden: The Development of the Arts in England*, A

The GLC's record was not perfect, but some commentators recognised that it's EAS had a different approach, when compared to the many organisations that seemed content to 'treat Black Arts as fringe exotica.' In 1985, there was something about the GLC's EAS work which, in the view of some commentators, did appear to be a step in the right direction. Stuart Hall expressed a different view of the GLC's efforts to 'talk culturally' to black Londoners:

With respect to some of the more 'targeted audiences' [...] well although the GLC's success may look modest, I think it's important. Before the GLC, nobody in this country had ever been able to talk culturally to some of these groups. If you think of blacks, for instance, before that they were just totally outside the political mechanism, except tiny groupings in Local labour parties. I am not saying that it has been a great success. But if you look at some of the people who have been willing to come in and fight for the GLC around the anti-racist policy, they would never have touched an elected politician before.⁸²⁸

Hall suggests that the GLC's cultural interventions may have encouraged at least some towards democratic participation for the first time, a perspective not frequently considered in accounts which focus on impacts upon the black arts sector specifically.⁸²⁹ From the GLC's favourable comparisons to contemporaneous Arts Council and GLAA strategy, it can be inferred at least that none of the alternative arts sponsorship organisations were any closer than the GLC to finding the right approach to improve their practices in support of black cultural producers. Overall, this would suggest that not *all* black cultural producers and arts administrators shared Eddie Chambers's predominantly negative view of the GLC's interventions.

Strategy for a Decade, ACGB, 1984, p.4. It is interesting to note that Richard Hylton appears more willing to present a forgiving consideration of the Arts Council's record on support for black visual artists, than of the GLC's record in this respect: 'Although the Arts Council's arguably faltering strategies have not done it any favours, to adopt an entirely jaundiced view would be to overlook the critical moments during the late 1980s and early 1990s when the [Arts Council's] Visual Arts Department offered a debatably more progressive engagement with Black visual artists.' Richard Hylton, 2007, p. 66.

⁸²⁸ Stuart Hall, interview with Franco Bianchini, 1985, in Bianchini, 1995, p. 241.

⁸²⁹ As filmmaker and founder of Sankofa, Isaac Julien recalled, Stuart Hall was broadly supportive of the EAS, 'Stuart was an active supporter of the Ethnic Minority Committee [Ethnic Arts Sub-Committee] of the Greater London Council, who funded Sankofa originally. In particular, he had argued politically for the support of the black arts in London.' Isaac Julien and Mark Nash, 'Dialogues with Stuart Hall' in Stuart Hall, David Morley and Kuan-Hsing Chen eds., *Stuart Hall: Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies* (London: Routledge, 1996), p. 477.

5.12 Summary

This chapter began by examining some of the black cultural production funded by the GLC's Ethnic Arts Sub-Committee, and proceeded to analyse the emergence of a nascent change in discourses surrounding black culture and state sponsorship which *began* to afford changes in funding practices and in institutions. Subtle and hard won changes to cultural policy discourses, away from the hegemonic 'ethnic arts' discourses of the late 1970s and towards a counter-hegemonic discourse of an increased understanding of the necessity of inclusivity, were in fact beginning to emerge, in spite of bureaucratic limitations. Significantly, these changes in the discourse were not the work of the GLC itself, though it was likely that a certain openness to dialogue, at certain points, on the part of *some* within the GLC, may have helped. Rather, the work of a number of black activists and cultural producers may have contributed towards these changes, those who perceived that dialogue with an institution of the State could form at least *part* of a strategy in the wider struggle for the counter-hegemonic discourse in recognition of black culture as a foundational component of British history. Subsequent accounts attest to the fact this strategy was not universally accepted and in some respects the GLC-organised exclusive black 'showcase' exhibitions may well have sent marginalising and counterproductive messages to the wider art world. These failed experiments have reinforced arguments over the longer term which have called for more integrated approaches to make progress on equal representation. Significant cultural policy failures of the GLC's experiment confirmed the suspicions of many that the State did not, and could, not have all of the answers. Anti-racist social movement struggles, including those in the cultural field were to continue, with or without the State. Thirty years on, gradual improvements in how black Britain is represented have occurred through the continuing work of black academics, curators and cultural organisations. Many long-established museums, galleries, and cultural policies however still have some way to go, both to recognise that British culture is in fact built upon its complex history of hybridity, and to act accordingly. Furthermore, the gains that have been made are in no way guaranteed, and their maintenance must be continually fought for. The sinister character of the current resurgence of populist Right discourses on 'race' and migration both Britain and the United States renders this difficult task all the more urgent.

It has been the intention of this chapter to consider what new knowledge might be gained from a more open-ended reading of this complex moment in which the ideas drawn from anti-racist social movement activism momentarily brought a different kind of focus, and a different way of operating, to the cultural policy of the local State. The influence of ideas from anti-racist social movement activism, developed over decades of campaigning by black British communities and cultural producers, combined with an increase in black political involvement in local state during the 1980s, brought new interests and voices to the practice of local governance and its cultural and community policies. As discussed in previous chapters, the GLC's cultural policies, including its interventions into black cultural sponsorship, were influenced by ideas relating to the 'politics of representation', drawn from discussions of cultural politics from contemporaneous academic publications and a consideration of how these theories could impact upon

radical cultural policy in practice.⁸³⁰ In particular, Stuart Hall's call for the left to form counter-hegemonic discourses challenge to the 'New Times' of Thatcherism was of importance. Indeed, it could be argued that some of those working for the EAS perceived that an anti-racist battle fought on the *cultural* front, at the level of ideas, their communication, and its attention to *who* was to given space to speak, were as important as developing legislation for countering Thatcherism's hegemony over discourses of 'race', to thereby improve the lives of black Londoners. The road to addressing social inequality and racism turned out to be far more complex than a matter of sponsoring and promoting more positive representations of black communities, but this was one of many possible fronts upon which the GLC's Ethnic Arts Sub-Committee did attempt to make a stand, amplifying the voices of those already asking the pertinent questions of mainstream institutions and British society at large.

This chapter has sought to re-examine the few existing accounts of GLC sponsorship of black cultural producers, and particularly those conducted through its Ethnic Arts Sub-Committee. It has identified the insufficiency of existing histories of the EAS's work which examine its legacy for only a narrow formation of black visual artists and therefore recounts only a partial story. A re-examination of the GLC-initiated 'Anti-Racist Murals', as a project in which visual artists were commissioned to work to communicate a particular theme, raises the question of artists' agency within the limitations of public works commissioned by the local State, and begins to add complexity to existing arguments. Archival research has identified a variety of black organisations working across many different media, in performing arts, visual arts, film and video which did benefit, albeit briefly, from GLC sponsorship. In some cases, GLC sponsorship enabled groups who very likely would not otherwise have been considered for Arts Council sponsorship to secure premises and means of production thereby creating a network of valuable resources. The EAS also supported a number of significant exhibitions, conferences and journals relating to black British culture in London which became part of its strategy for developing new discourses and ideas that began to look beyond 1970s 'ethnic arts' discourses and would come to influence future mainstream cultural policy in the longer term. However, this chapter in no way wishes to defend the GLC against accusations of instances of tokenism, nor to elide some of the more negative longer term effects of GLC EAS interventions. Rather it is hoped that it presents a more nuanced account that can acknowledge the contradictions that existed within this particular organisation of the State. While alert to the danger of over-inflating the GLC's contribution or giving it undue credit for 'creating' achievements which were in fact the product of a long-term struggle of black British people for their cultural representation, the GLC's Ethnic Arts Sub-Committee's intervention stands as an important moment in British cultural history, that was, as artist Sonia Boyce commented, at once a 'hindrance' and a 'help'.

⁸³⁰ For instance, the journal *Screen Education* was important in forming GLC's praxis: 'The board of *Screen Education* had tried to develop a notion of cultural politics and carried it over into the journal's specific involvement with teaching and pedagogy. [...] Alan Tompkins [sic.] and the GLC's efforts to think out the operation of a radicalising cultural policy, and about the way these notions of the politics of representation then came into play.' See John Tagg, 'Practising Theories: An Interview with Joanne Lukitsh' in John Tagg, *Grounds of Dispute: Art History, Cultural Politics and the Discursive Field* (Hounds Mill, Basingstoke, Hampshire; London: Macmillan Education, 1992), p.79.

Chapter Six: Conclusion: The GLC 'Beyond Our Ken': abolition and legacy



Figure 102: *Beyond Our Ken*, 1984, Tony Dowmunt, Andy Porter and John White, Albany Video, VHS, BFI Archive.



Figure 103: Video sequence about GLC abolition, featuring County Hall. VHS Video Still, *Despite TV 2*, 1984. Despite TV Community Video group, Tower Hamlets Arts Project, BFI Archive/ Mark Saunders.

The Greater London Council and all six of the Metropolitan Counties (MCCs) were first threatened with abolition in the Conservative election manifesto of 1983.⁸³¹ Following Labour's catastrophic general election defeat, the Conservative government produced a White Paper, *Streamlining the Cities*, which presented the argument that the GLC and other MCCs were an inefficient level of bureaucracy. The GLC responded with a two-year anti-abolition publicity campaign, described by Tony Travers as 'effective and popular', deploying the advertising agency Boase Massimi Pollitt to produce a series of memorable billboard advertisements.⁸³² [Figure 104] The Arts and Recreations Committee's work was used as part of a broader publicity campaign to encourage the public to support the GLC against Thatcher's plans, and the committee published a document in response in December 1983, *A New Dark Age for the Arts in London*, highlighting the likely loss of sponsorship to the nearly 400 smaller arts organisations on the GLC's books.⁸³³ Other documents included a plea on behalf of over 1000 GLC-owned historic buildings and archaeological sites which would require maintenance, *London's Heritage the Road to Destruction*,⁸³⁴ and *Recreation In Ruins*,⁸³⁵ which highlighted the White Paper's scarce mention of what would happen to the GLC's many responsibilities in Arts and Recreation. Sponsored organisations were invited to respond and participate in a public campaign, through arts projects such as documentary films and public events [Figure 103].⁸³⁶ Tony Dowmunt, Andy Porter and John White at Albany Video produced a short documentary featuring interviews with local people to bring to public attention how this decision by politicians in Westminster would affect local voluntary services dependent upon GLC funds.⁸³⁷ The documentary was broadcast on Channel 4's *People to People* programme in April 1985.⁸³⁸ These included voluntary organisations and worker cooperatives, as varied as a short-stay hostel for homeless young people, a pensioners action group, a mobile crèche and women's employment centre, a black parents group, an Irish social organisation, a dial-a-ride service for disabled people, skills training centres for unemployed youth, a GLC supported co-operative manufacturing recycling products, the Greenwich Lesbian and Gay Rights group, the Lewisham Police Monitoring Group and the Lewisham Academy of Music. [Figure 102]

⁸³¹ MCCs: Tyne and Wear, Greater Manchester, West Yorkshire, South Yorkshire, West Midlands, Merseyside. See Tony Travers, 2004, p.30.

⁸³² The GLC's adept deployment of advertising to convey political messages would under fire in the Widdecombe report, which sought to curb such local council 'advertising', see David Widdicombe, *The Conduct of Local Authority Business* (London: H.M.S.O., 1986).

⁸³³ GLC, 'A New Dark Age for the Arts in London', 1985, p.6. [LMA:GLC/DG/PUB/01/158/U0255]. Some documents held in the ACGB archive attest to the scale of the problem, providing 45-page long lists of GLC sponsored groups, see: [V&A:ACGB/1/5865 GLC 1983-4].

⁸³⁴ GLC, 'London's Heritage: The Road to Destruction: First GLC Response to the Government's proposals for Historic Buildings and Archaeology on the Abolition of the Council' (1984), [LMA:GLC/DG/PUB/01/247/U1157].

⁸³⁵ GLC, 'Recreation In Ruins: A GLC Response to the Government's proposals for Recreation and Sport on the Abolition of the Council', (1984), [LMA:GLC/DG/PUB/01/247/U1155].

⁸³⁶ Films include: Parallax Pictures, *Say No to No Say* (1984) dir. Sally Hibbin; *74% Say No* (1986) [LMA:GLC/DG/PRB/11/01/005].

⁸³⁷ The tape's narrator states: 'The debate about the abolition of the GLC is usually presented as a debate between the politicians. This programme looks at how the abolition will affect people in two inner city London boroughs- Lewisham and Greenwich.'

⁸³⁸ A video title still to Albany's 'Beyond Our Ken' was also reproduced in *GLAA Annual report*, 1984, p.8. The following caption accompanied this image: 'Albany Video's controversial production, screened on Channel 4, showed the devastating effect GLC Abolition would have on local groups, Lewisham Pensioners Action, the Black People's Forum and the Police Monitoring Group', indicating that the nature of the documentary was 'controversial' to some.



Figure 104: Boase Massimi Pollitt, GLC Awareness Campaign, 1984 Poster, 'Say No to No Say'.

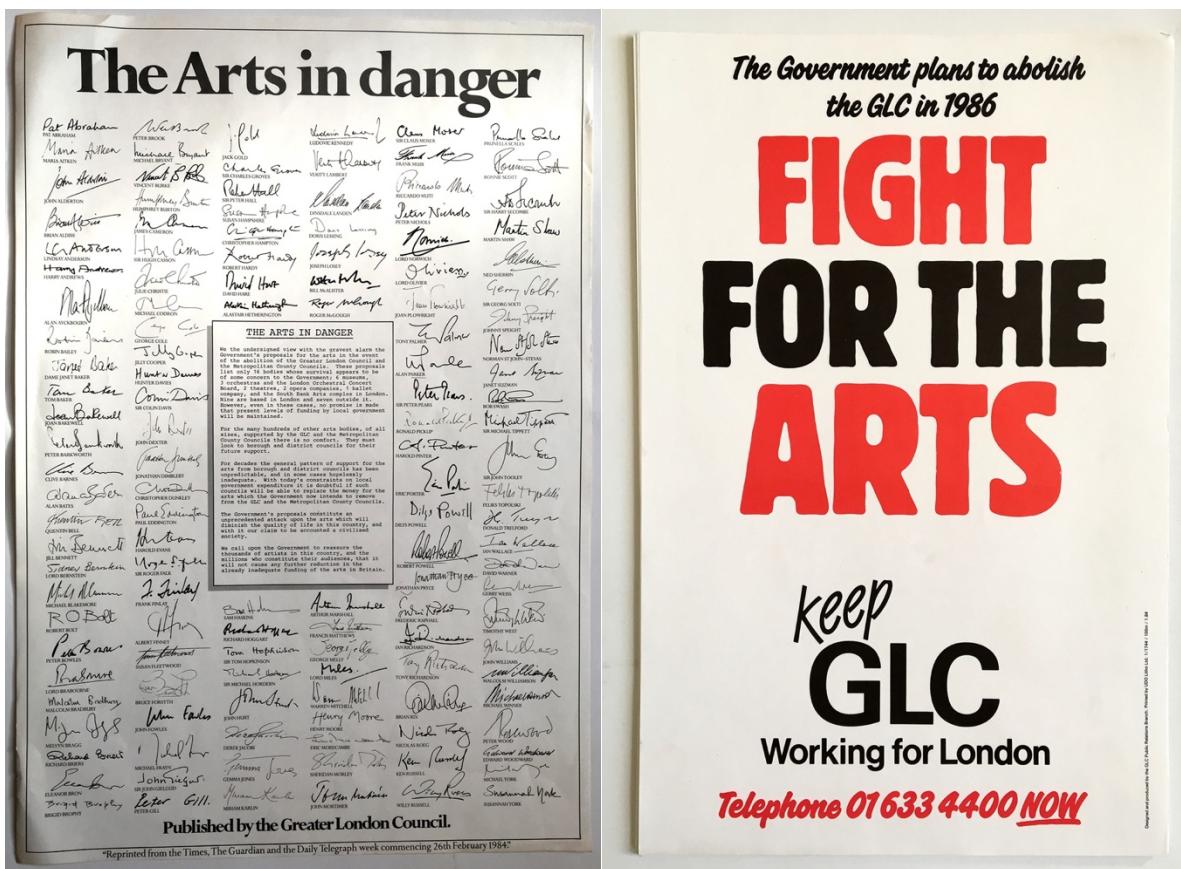


Figure 105: 'The Arts In Danger' Poster reprinting a letter to *Times*, *Guardian* and *Daily Telegraph* in which art world signatories register their objection to the Government's plans for arts funding after the GLC's abolition. Archive of Alan Tomkins.

Figure 106: 'Fight For The Arts: Keep GLC Working For London', GLC poster, archive of Alan Tomkins.

The people and organisations whose voices are recorded in this community media production are examples of the many local ‘social democracy zones’ supported by the GLC, to which Stephen Brooke has referred.⁸³⁹ While some of these ‘social democracy zones’ were more fortunate and would manage to maintain their spaces of operation in the city and continue their work into the 1990s, it is likely that many would have been unable to continue without GLC support.

The proposal to abolish the GLC was implemented in the Local Government Act 1985, which was narrowly passed in parliament.⁸⁴⁰ Michael Hebbert has stated that the GLC’s abolition was ‘[...] widely regarded as an act of political spite [it] appeared in the [1983] general election manifesto out of the blue. [...] The GLC had many critics, but outright abolition of the London-wide local government was right off the normal political agenda and in almost any other European country would have been unconstitutional.’⁸⁴¹ Tony Travers and others have argued that the abolition may have been a personal decision on the part of Prime Minister Thatcher, rather than one based on lengthy consultation.⁸⁴² On 1 April 1986, the GLC was abolished. The GLC’s remaining powers were to be either centralised or devolved to local government, and their more strategic functions replaced by a system of joint authorities. The London Residuary Body was formed to dispose of the GLC’s considerable assets in London. In the area of Arts Recreation, the GLC owned land including 5,500 acres of London’s parks, 11,000 acres of green belt land and around 500 leisure facilities such as sports pitches, as well as property such as historic buildings including much of the South Bank, and County Hall itself.⁸⁴³ Responsibility for certain venues was to be devolved to the Arts Council, and others to local authorities, who were, following the government’s new strict controls on council spending, reluctant to shoulder the future running costs of venues such as historic houses, or the new Black Arts Centre at the Roundhouse.⁸⁴⁴ The London Lesbian and Gay centre did not survive for many years beyond the transferral of its GLC owned premises to the London Residuary Body and the London Women’s Centre opened in March 1986 shortly before the GLC’s abolition and closed by 1998.⁸⁴⁵ Some of those able to secure permanent premises with GLC assistance may have had more assured futures. For example, the educational charity ACAVA (Association of Cultural Advancement through Visual Art) was able to get a mortgage, with GLC assistance, on a property which housed a number of studios rented at affordable rates to artists. In subsequent years, this property was used to secure other sites for similar studios. The GLC’s initial investment in 1983/4 has seen ACAVA grow into a multi-site network of secure and affordable space for artist’s studios across

⁸³⁹ Stephen Brooke, 2014, p. 28.

⁸⁴⁰ See Government White Paper, *Streamlining the Cities*, 1984.

⁸⁴¹ Michael Hebbert *London: More by Fortune than Design* (Chichester: Wiley, 1998), pp. 115-6.

⁸⁴² Tony Travers, 2004, p.30.

⁸⁴³ In his memoirs, Ken Livingstone made the accusation that the chair of the London Residuary Body ‘[Sir Godfrey] Taylor [...] sold off most of our assets and land at low prices, many to firms that funded the Tory party. County Hall was valued at £250 million, but by the time the Tories sold it six years later the property market had collapsed [a Japanese corporation] paid just £50 million for it.’ Ken Livingstone, 2011, p. 263.

⁸⁴⁴ During this period, there was a rate capping rebellion in local government in 1985, which sought to oppose central government’s new restrictions on the spending power of councils by refusing to set budgets for 1985-6. Ken Livingstone wrote that in his view, ‘[...] the worst was the Arts Council, which took over the South Bank Concert Halls and immediately made two thirds of the staff redundant, while doubling the number of senior managers and increasing their pay by 30 percent.’ Ken Livingstone, 2011, p.263.

⁸⁴⁵ See Andy Beckett, 2015, pp. 386-7.

London, arguably an essential resource given rising property prices.⁸⁴⁶ A future research project could seek to trace the GLC's legacy in terms of space, those 'social democracy zones', secured for the future of community organisations, from which they could both assert their existence and continue their work. Large capital grants to secure premises were generally handled by the main Arts and Recreations committee, while the Community Arts Sub-Committees concentrated on grants for equipment, and these resources were shared between organisations, for example, a Comedia report listed around fifty groups who were users of Tower Hamlets Arts Project's (THAP) video facilities in 1985/6.⁸⁴⁷ One can speculate that the equipment purchased for such organisations continued to facilitate their work, at least in the short term following the abolition, as in the case of THAP's video project, *Despite TV*.⁸⁴⁸ [Figure 107]



Figure 107: Despite TV's video equipment, GLC-funded in 1985. Although technology has changed, equipment is sometimes retained to preserve obsolete formats.

The legacy of GLC cultural policy in the 1980s is therefore 'distributed' in nature, existing below the surface of things, rather than immediately apparent. Its residual traces are distributed in London's architecture, in how we experience its cultural venues as public buildings, such as the open foyer at the Southbank Centre, originally a GLC policy to encourage broader concert attendance and a freedom still enjoyed today. Its effects are also distributed in the experiences of those who participated in GLC-sponsored projects, some of whom have used these experiences to gain further employment in the cultural sector. Several people interviewed for this thesis went on to careers in photography, documentary filmmaking and television production, or into education and academia. Neither cultural institutions nor

⁸⁴⁶ For ACAVA, see: <<http://www.acava.org/about/what-we-do>>, [accessed 01.02.2017].

⁸⁴⁷ Stephen Brooke, 2014, p. 28.

⁸⁴⁸ According to the GLC's record, 'A large three storey building in Hackney was purchased to house arts projects [...] several other capital projects including the rebuilding of Jackson's Lane Arts Centre in Haringey, three community cinemas and Tara Arts Centre in Wandsworth [...] (jointly with Camden Council) the Roundhouse at Chalk Farm [...] the Kingsway Centre [...] the BOOKSPACE in the Royal Festival Hall.' GLC, *Campaign for a Popular Culture*, (1986).

cultural producers regularly refer to the GLC's assistance in their histories, or mention it only in passing. Those who do dwell upon it at more length are often those whose projects continued to have a strong political investment in the GLC's ideals. Perhaps for others, it is a phase incompatible with their 'brand' in the present, best omitted for the sake of political neutrality for future funding applications. While it would not be appropriate to suggest a simple causal link between receipt of GLC funds or use of GLC supported facilities and future career progression, at least some would consider the GLC's interventions as significant to the direction their future work took. It is also difficult to measure the distributed effects of the GLC's efforts not only to take black British cultural producers seriously by reserving considerable funding for their organisations for the first time, but also of using its high profile position to raise the question of racism in public cultural organisations more broadly in the mid 1980s. As discussed in chapter five of this thesis, the meagre and mixed immediate results of these brief efforts, and the continuing necessity of struggles for equality in the cultural sector by black cultural producers and communities, have rendered the GLC's legacy problematic in this area for some commentators, though as this thesis argues, further detailed research needs to be done to balance existing accounts. Similar arguments could be made for the distributed effects of GLC policy for other constituencies, including for LGBTQ+ communities, people with disabilities, for unemployed youth, older people or for women, social groups whose cultural needs had scarcely been considered in cultural policy prior to Tony Banks's GLC Arts and Recreations Committee.

One of the desired outcomes of this research project is that the final iteration of the GLC's Arts and Recreation Committee between 1981-1986, and its Community Arts and Ethnic Arts Sub-Committees, be fully recognised and reconsidered for their specificity, rather than their operations being understood only as the actions of 'Ken Livingstone's GLC', as in journalistic fashion. It is essential to acknowledge, following Nicos Poulantzas, that the GLC should not be considered a unified 'thing' in itself, but rather that within this formation of the local state, contradictory elements existed, and the struggles that ensued were formative of policy. Different interests in cultural policy, some from alignment with new social movement activism, others from awareness of the unmet needs of particular communities, competed for attention and funds during the final five years of the GLC's operation, two of which were also spent on the public campaign against, and preparation for the GLC's abolition. While some commentators have focussed on the major failures of GLC arts policy, this thesis presents an argument for the recognition of the significance of its aims, and of what *was* achieved in a short space of time, even if the results were uneven and at times controversial or counterproductive.

The central aim of this thesis has been to bring the GLC Arts and Recreation Committee's cultural policies between 1981-1986 to the attention of historians of art and culture, and to advocate for the value of their archive as an untapped resource for accounts of politicised community arts, new social movement activism and participative cultural practices in 1980s London. The first two chapters provided an introduction to this research project and its central themes, examined with reference to Raymond Williams's *Keywords* method to consider the unstable meanings of terms such as 'community' arising from

the AHRC's research directive, from which this project emerged. It also discussed current approaches to writing the history of 1980s Britain to ascertain how this thesis would approach its subject, with particular reference to 'history of emotions' approaches and those that seek narratives beyond Westminster. The third chapter of this research provided the background to the Labour left Livingstone GLC administration between 1981-1986. It examined how radical cultural policy directions emerged at the GLC during this period, which were distinct from both Central Government's existing cultural policies enacted through the Arts Council, GLAA and those of the Labour party. It discussed the influence of ideas and attitudes towards social change drawn from new social movements of the 1960s and 1970s, concepts of 'popular culture' drawn from cultural studies, and the importance of the appointment of cultural producers as non-voting advisors to new 'Community' and 'Ethnic' arts Sub-Committees. This provided a vital context for the subsequent chapters, but also it is hoped that it will make GLC cultural policy more accessible for future study, beyond the disciplinary bounds of cultural policy analysis. The subsequent case studies in this research project have recorded moments of alignment between the values and aims of the GLC Arts and Recreation Committee, Community Arts and Ethnic Arts Sub-Committees and certain politically active cultural producers and 'creative communities' engaged in social movement activism. Chapter four examined 'GLC Peace Year 1983', an alignment between GLC arts policymakers and the wider peace movement in the production of a cultural programme of nuclear criticism. It considered how the GLC's sponsored 'nuclear culture' promoted 'unofficial' narratives of the British Nuclear State, in defiance of central government policy. It documented some of the many poster campaigns, banners, murals, video documentaries, exhibitions and public events that were commissioned from London's cultural producers to promote the GLC's anti-nuclear message, as well as present a more positive image of women's peace activism. The chapter also considered the campaign's emotional effects, its play upon urban 'nuclear anxieties', and the relationship between local experiences and international nuclear politics in 1980s London. Chapter five presented an argument for a reconsideration of the GLC's 'Ethnic Arts Sub-Committee' and its attempts to support black cultural producers in London. It examined the few existing critical accounts of the Ethnic Arts Sub-Committee against material from the GLC's archive to posit that somewhere between the GLC's many mistakes, a positive change in discourses relating to the support for black culture within public cultural institutions and State cultural policy was beginning to emerge.

The focus of these case study chapters was intentionally narrow, presenting a sample of the avenues that could have been explored as a starting point for future research. They exist as a snapshot of the wide variety of archive material gathered and people interviewed over the course of an initial explorative research project. Future work emanating from this research project and archive material would include the GLC's support for women's cultural projects, which has been touched upon in both case studies in this research, but could form the focus of a new line of enquiry.⁸⁴⁹ Similarly, further investigation of areas

⁸⁴⁹ A problem of imbalance arose at the GLC in relation to the funding of women's cultural groups. While specially designated budgets were designed to improve equity, bureaucratic complications arose from difficulties of definition. Confusion over whether a women's art group could apply for funds from the Women's Committee, Community Arts or Ethnic Arts Sub-Committees emerged, putting both women's organisations and black women's organisations at a particular disadvantage when seeking sponsorship. Although a policy paper on 'Women In The Arts' was produced by a women's working group at the GLC early on, a lack of co-ordination between the different committees on the funding of

such as GLC support for lesbian and gay men's cultural production which could expand upon existing historical accounts of the GLC's overall relationship to London's Lesbian and Gay communities.⁸⁵⁰ An investigation of the GLC's record on cultural provision for disabled people could also be important for both the history of disability activism and of disabled people's cultural production and consumption. Projects which approach the GLC archive to investigate its record on supporting the development and infrastructure for particular cultural forms could be of interest, but also cultural infrastructure in relation to the concentration of GLC sponsorship within particular boroughs.⁸⁵¹ A research project seeking to examine the history of community arts centres in the 1980s would find invaluable sponsorship applications material amongst the GLC archives. An investigation into the GLC's support for community theatre groups could present a useful snapshot of small production companies operating in London in the mid 1980s, their work and their politics. A focus on an area such as independent or community media, discussed throughout this thesis, could be of use to considering what an understanding of the relationship between such groups and the politics of their local government sponsors can add to existing knowledge of the histories of community photography, community print workshops, video arts or television history. While some of these investigations will be limited by what archival resources are available from groups on the GLC's books, there is some evidence that 'community media' production is beginning to be taken more seriously as a resource worthy of archival conservation by formal institutions, including the new London Community Video Archive at Goldsmiths University in partnership with the BFI and of new interest in some community-based galleries given the recent Tate acquisition of the archive of the Brixton Gallery.⁸⁵² Much needs to be done to recover the history of all aspects of the GLC's work from former GLC employees, and some oral history recordings are currently being conducted by volunteers of the GLC Story project.⁸⁵³ This thesis has sought to provide necessary contextual material and critical methodologies to enable future research projects to interrogate these valuable questions which emanate from this initial investigation.

Remaining with the question of legacy, this section will return to the AHRC's 'connected communities' research questions which have shaped this thesis's analytical approach. The questions presented an interest in how the creation and growth of creative industries could be supported. The GLC Arts and Recreation Committee and its Community Arts and Ethnic Arts Sub-Committees cultural policies

women's projects was exacerbated by the pressures of impending abolition. GLC, *Campaign for a Popular Culture*, 1986, pp. 57-58. Future research could seek to investigate this.

⁸⁵⁰ See Lucy Robinson, *Gay Men and the Left in Post-War Britain* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011).

⁸⁵¹ While, in the GLC's own assessment, 90% of the Community Arts Sub-Committee's budget went to groups in the most deprived fourteen boroughs of London, it identified that South London and the outer London 'working class boroughs' such as Dagenham received proportionally less funding. In fact, as much as half of the budget was spent in Camden, Tower Hamlets, Hackney and Islington, with the highest concentration of 'community arts' organisations located in Camden and Islington, though it is unclear how many of these groups worked London-wide. The GLC's 1986 assessment recognised this as an imbalance and put it down to what they described as the 'reactive' nature of its policies, which was dependent upon receiving applications from suitable groups, and had they not been facing abolition, this perceived imbalance would likely have been addressed in future. GLC, *Campaign for a Popular Culture*, 1986, pp. 47-49.

⁸⁵² The project was recently awarded a grant to begin this work, see Sarah Cox, 'Goldsmiths wins Heritage Lottery Fund support for the London Community Video Archive' *Goldsmiths University News*, 18 April 2016, <<http://www.gold.ac.uk/news/london-community-video-archive-/>> [accessed 01.02.2017]

⁸⁵³ GLC Story Project, led by Deborah Grayson and Natasha Nkonde, see <http://glcstory.co.uk>, [accessed 30.04.2017].

between 1981 and 1986 were, alongside the work of the GLC's separate Cultural Industries department, an experiment in the planned support of small, hitherto underfunded cultural organisations, but also of their infrastructures. As an effect of their adoption of a broader definition of culture and of 'community' participation, the GLC's Arts and Recreation Committees may have also been contributors to future independent 'creative industries' infrastructures and 'creative communities' in ways which have gone unacknowledged in literatures which focus upon the Cultural Industries department. This thesis's focus on 'community' was also deployed to destabilise tendencies within art history that privilege particular artists as individuals, rather than conceiving of the endeavours of small cooperative 'communities' of cultural producers as the product of collective and sometimes highly politicised aims, and indeed the 'ferment' within which certain individuals, who would later rise to notoriety within the so-called 'creative industries', developed their skills.⁸⁵⁴

By focusing on GLC arts policy, this thesis has also drawn attention to the practical considerations of such 'creative communities', and the sometimes difficult relationship between 'community' groups, cultural producers and the State bodies with the facility to sponsor and promote their work. The effects of cultural production on social solidarity, and the relationship between cultural producers and 'community traditions' represented another AHRC research interest. The case studies in this research project have evidenced that while the GLC had aimed to utilise cultural policy in some instances to unite constituents around certain issues, such as their campaign in support of the anti-nuclear and anti-racist movements which were able to unite certain groups, there were distinct limits to these shows of solidarity. Where claims to unified 'community' demands were made by particular spokespersons, or particular cultural organisations, fractures and disagreements soon surfaced. As examined in chapter five of this thesis, disputes emerged within communities regarding what forms of culture ought to be supported, cultural forms derived from ideas of the 'traditions' or 'heritage' of diverse populations, or engagements with cultural hybridity as lived experience in 1980s London. To return to social anthropologist Vered Amit, it could be argued that it was strategically important, in the context of 1980s London, to assert such demands on behalf of 'communities', and the disjunctions that arose provide a fascinating insight into how those limits to solidarity play out in lived experience. To reiterate, this thesis has sought to assert that the presence of these negative experiences should not dissuade future researchers from further examination of the GLC's cultural policies and their effects both for cultural producers and the communities within which they worked, as Amit asserts, such disjunction is 'Good to think with'.⁸⁵⁵

⁸⁵⁴ In the case of Black British Film, as journalist April Wolfe has reported recently, '[...] as these films age, history doesn't quite know how to remember cooperative works of art. At the British Film Institute, where all of these films and videos are now housed in the archive, they're listed with a single director.' April Wolfe, 'What modern Hollywood Can Learn from Britain's Black Film Movement of the 1980s', *LA Weekly*, Wednesday 4th January 2017, <<http://www.laweekly.com/arts/what-modern-hollywood-can-learn-from-britains-black-film-movement-of-the-1980s-7780978>> [accessed 04.01.17].

⁸⁵⁵ Vered Amit, Nigel Rapport, Community, Cosmopolitanism and the Problem of Human Commonality (London; Pluto, 2012).

This thesis has documented some of the work that GLC sponsorship supported particular cultural producers and organisations to do, while being careful to avoid falsely attributing the work of these groups to the GLC itself. It is therefore difficult to identify or make claims for a single 'GLC visual culture', in that parameters would need to be drawn between what the GLC's public relations campaigns produced in-house, what cultural groups co-opted in support of particular social movement messages produced for the GLC's campaigns, and what groups in receipt of GLC arts sponsorship were producing wholly independent of GLC campaigns, distinctions that could be difficult to disentangle. Of more relevance now is to return to the title of GLC's Community Arts publication, *Campaign for a Popular Culture*.⁸⁵⁶ It is possible to align the GLC's work overall with a project of promoting a particular understanding of 'popular culture', which engaged with ideas of 'community', 'activism' and 'cultural democracy', in opposition to the prevailing current in British cultural policy which was seen to be simply reinforcing the dominance of a cultural and political elite.



Figure 108: 'LCC-GLC 95 Years of Working For London' An audio-visual exhibition on the Southbank situated inside a giant 'birthday cake', to celebrate 95 years of London government, prior to the abolition of the GLC. (1985) Archive of Alan Tomkins.

⁸⁵⁶ GLC, *Campaign for a Popular Culture*, (1986).

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Art on the South Bank: An Independent Report Commissioned by the GLC, Richard Cork, with Balraj Kanna and Shirely Read (London: GLC, 1985) [LMA:GLC/DG/PUB/01/240/1672]

About Turn: The Alternative Use of Defence Workers' Skills, Bill Evans and Peter Kennard, (London: Pluto and GLC, 1986) [GLC/DG/PUB/01/257/U1444]

The Black Experience Arts Programme, February-March 1986, (GLC Race Equality Unit, 1985) [LMA:GLC/DG/PUB/01/226/U0818]

Blackout to Whitewash: Civil Defence since 1937: A GLC Exhibition (London: GLC, 1985) [LMA:GLC/DG/PUB/01/247/U1144]

Campaign for a Popular Culture: A Record of Struggle and Achievement: The G.L.C.'s Community Arts Programme 1981-86, (London, GLC, 1986). [LMA:GLC/DG/PUB/01/195/U0499]

Changing the World: A London Charter for Lesbian and Gay Rights (London: GLC, 1984) [LMA:GLC/DG/PRB/08/3534]

Ethnic Minorities in London (London: GLC, 1984)

Film and Video Exhibition and Distribution in London (London: GLC Economic Policy Group, 1983) [LMA:GLC/DG/PUB/01/267/U442]

Films for Peace (London: GLC, 1983) [LMA:GLC/DG/PUB/01/158/U0254]

GLC Grant Aid to Voluntary and Community Organisations (London: GLC, 1983) [LMA:GLC/PUB/1/158/U0256].

Jobs for a Change, illustrations by Peter Kennard (London: GLC, 1983)

The London Industrial Strategy (London: GLC Industry and Employment branch, 1985)

London and Civil Defence: A GLC Fact Pack (London: GLC, 1985) [LMA:GLC/DG/PUB/01/153/U0189]

New Horizons: An exhibition of Arts, 18 January 1985, Royal Festival Hall. (London: GLC, 1985). [LMA:GLC/DG/PUB/01/169/U0426]

Recreation In Ruins: A GLC Response to the Government's proposals for recreation and sport in London on Abolition of the Council (London: GLC, 1985) [LMA:GLC/DG/PUB/01/247/U1155]

Reflections of the Black Experience Photography Exhibition (London: GLC Race Equality Unit, 1986)

The State of the Art or the Art of the State? Strategies for the Cultural Industries in London (London: GLC Industry and Employment branch, 1985) [LMA:GLC/DG/PUB/01/197/1629]

Altered Images: Towards A Strategy for London's Cultural Industries (London: GLC Greater London Enterprise Board, n.d.) [LMA:GLC/DG/PUB/01/286/U1457]

Third Eye: Struggle for Black and Third World Cinema, Conference report (London: GLC Race Equality Unit, 1986) [LMA:GLC/DG/PUB/01/195/U0498]

Working for London: The Final Five Years (London: GLC, 1985) [LMA:GLC/DG/PUB/01/198/U0505]

Other Resources

Film and Video

A Day In May, dir. Sue Sudbury, Red Pictures, 23 minutes, (Concord Media, 1984).

Born 1981: Babies Against the Bomb (Child's Play) dir. Joram Ten Brink and Jini Rawlings, (Moonshine Community Arts Workshop, 1983).

Being White, dir. Tony Dowmunt, Martin Rooney, (Albany Video and Federation of Community Work Training Groups, 1987).

Beyond Our Ken, Albany Video and Channel 4, (1985).

The Brixton Tapes, Greg Lanning, TV History Workshop (1981).

Despite The Sun, Despite TV, (1986) <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lw6hegU4Xm4>> [accessed 08.05.2015]

Despite TV 1-15, video archive <http://www.spectacle.co.uk/catalogue_production.php?id=64> [accessed 08.05.2015]

Handsworth Songs, dir. John Akomfrah, prod. Lina Gopaul, Colour 16mm, 58 mins. (Black Audio Film Collective, 1986).

Talking History, with C.L.R. James and E.P. Thompson, dir. H.O. Nazareth, Penumbra Films, (The Other Cinema, 1983).

Territories, dir. Isaac Julien and Sankofa, (1984).

Ms Taken Identity, Karen Alexander; Helen Petts, Albany Video, (1985).

Signs of Resistance: A Tape-Slide Programme on Anti-Racist Mural Paintings in London, Graham De Smidt, Gavin Jantjes, (Albany Video, 1986).

Unstable Elements- Atomic Stories 1939-85 dir. Paul Morrison and Andy Metcalf (Newsreel Collective, 1985).

Who Killed Colin Roach? dir. Isaac Julien and Sankofa, (1983).

Music

Frankie Armstrong and Women from 'Babies Against the Bomb'. *Shall There Be Womanly Times Or Shall We Die? (B) / Message from Mother Earth (A)*. Vinyl, 7", Single, 45 RPM. Gateway Studio, London, UK: The Plane Label TPLS 03, 1983. <https://mainlynorfolk.info/frankie.armstrong/records/mysongismyown.html> [accessed: 16.03.2016].

Ranking Ann (Swinton), *Kill The Police Bill*, Ranking Ann (Swinton), 'Kill The Police Bill', Ariwa Music, financed by GLC Police Committee Support Unit, 1984. <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4ScdX5YknxQ>> [accessed 27.05.2017].

Exhibitions

Keywords: Art, Culture and Society in 1980s Britain, Tate Liverpool, (28 February – 11 May 2014).

Peter Kennard: Unofficial War Artist, Imperial War Museum, (14 May 2015 – 30 May 2016).

Edward Barber: Peace Signs, Imperial War Museum, (26 May-4 September 2016).

No Colour Bar: Black British Art in Action 1960–1990, Huntley Archive & Guildhall Gallery, (10 July 2015– 24 January 2016).
The 1980s: Today's Beginnings, Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven (April - September 2016).