

92-022



DISCUSSION DOCUMENT



INTRODUCTION

Within this folder is a discussion document produced as part of the process of putting together a national strategy for the arts and media. It does not form part of the strategy. Neither does it express any sort of 'official' view. It was written in order to focus discussion and stimulate ideas.

WHY?

The arts and media in Britain are in renaissance. Over the last decade, they have shown a confidence and diversity never seen before. In quality of work and audience demand, the arts and media have never looked healthier or more central to people's lives. More than ever before, the arts are a source of civic pride as well as personal enrichment.

The arts and media in Britain are in crisis. Scarcely a day goes by without press stories of theatres facing closure, grants being cut or audiences declining; of a lack of good innovative work in all art forms; of the absence of a sense of direction, purpose and adventure.

These views may not be incompatible, and each has some truth. What is beyond doubt is that ideas of what is art have expanded; that demand has rightly grown for access to the arts, film and broadcasting to be the right of all rather than the privilege of the few; and that resources, both public and private, have struggled to keep up. Growth in the variety of the arts contains its own problems. So how can the strategic injection of public money, and the growth of partnership with the private sector, encourage new developments? What should the priorities be? How do we make sure that the opportunity to enjoy the arts is spread ever more widely throughout society?

This is where the national arts and media strategy comes in. In 1990, the Minister for the Arts asked the arts and media funding bodies (the Arts Council of Great Britain, the British Film Institute, the Crafts Council and the Regional Arts Associations/ Regional Arts Boards) to prepare a national strategy. One of its purposes is to provide the basic framework for their work. The Scottish and Welsh Arts Councils are conducting parallel exercises; and the local authorities and museums funding bodies are also associated with the strategy.

A further purpose is to consider whether the public money spent on the arts and media has been used to best effect, and how those responsible can do better in the future. It is important that all those with experience of and a passion for the arts and media provide support, assistance and advice to get the strategy right. Most important, it must be seen as a strategy for the arts and media, not for the bureaucrats.

HOW?

The paper in this folder is part of this process. It is one of a series of discussion documents; each is available free on request. Responses to them will be collated by the National Arts and Media Strategy Unit. Arising from this, a draft of the strategy will be prepared by Spring 1992. This too will be available for comment. The final version of the national arts and media strategy will be completed by Summer 1992. The hope is that the resulting document will be slim, challenging and readable - and that it will provide a mission statement for the arts and media over the next decade, as well as setting out clear goals and targets.

The national arts and media strategy will not write a single novel, put on a single play or make a single film. What it can help bring about, if the funding bodies receive the help of those who care about the arts and media, is the maximum opportunity for such creativity to flourish and for it to enrich the lives of ever more people. Your contribution to this process will be valuable and valued. Please send your views on this discussion document to the address below, to arrive by 30 November 1991.

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**CULTURAL DIVERSITY:
CYPRIOT CULTURAL INTERESTS
AND ASPIRATIONS**

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De uitleentermijn is verstreken op:

11 APR. 1938

**NATIONAL ARTS AND MEDIA STRATEGY: DISCUSSION DOCUMENT
ON CULTURAL DIVERSITY: CYPRIOT CULTURAL INTERESTS AND
ASPIRATIONS**

This paper is intended to complement strategy discussion document number 7, on cultural equity. It is not a chapter of the national arts and media strategy or a definitive statement. The views it expresses are those of its author, Maria Vigar.

We thought that it would be useful to commission a paper about the cultural interests of an ethnic minority group outside the Black and Asian communities, partly for its own sake and partly to consider how the issues that arise in relation to Black and Asian arts practitioners apply to other ethnic minority groups. No group can be treated as in all senses typical of others: if it were, the word 'diversity' would have no real meaning. Ideally, papers should have been commissioned from all minority groups. But that ideal being unrealistic, it was felt better to have at least one such view than to have none. Accordingly, Maria Vigar was commissioned to produce a paper focusing on the Cypriot community. Clearly, the paper will be of particular relevance to those with an interest in Cypriot culture. But there are issues of general interest and relevance which arise from an examination of a particular community.

The paper is being circulated with that on cultural equity. We should like to hear your views on the key issues it raises. Comments may, but need not, follow the format suggested in the questions covering the cultural equity paper.

**NATIONAL ARTS AND MEDIA STRATEGY UNIT
AUGUST 1991**

NATIONAL ARTS AND MEDIA STRATEGY

DISCUSSION DOCUMENT ON CULTURAL DIVERSITY: CYPRIOT CULTURAL INTERESTS AND ASPIRATIONS

MARIA VIGAR

S U M M A R Y

This paper is the first to be commissioned by the Arts Council of Great Britain on the cultural concerns of the Cypriot community. It is a welcome - if limited - opportunity to be involved in the process of discussion which is intended to inform the new National Arts and Media Strategy.

The paper is London-focused and concentrates on the two main Cypriot communities: the Turkish and the Greek. However, it is emphasised that this report is not by any means exhaustive and that further research is required to take account of those areas which have not been covered.

The paper sets out to:

- (a) provide information about the range of cultural activity within the Cypriot community, with reference to specific arts organisations and individual practitioners;
- (b) raise some of the key issues with regard to:
 - (i) the Cypriot community: generational/cultural conflict; Cypriot politics; the absence of women in decision-making positions within arts organisations;
 - (ii) funding: equal opportunities policies; the status of Cypriot arts; and
- (c) draw attention to the fact that definitions of 'ethnicity' are restrictive, divisive and unhelpful in the context of 'cultural diversity', if by that we mean 'an enriching experience for all the people of this country.'

The paper includes the following sections:

- (a) brief history of the Cypriot community;

(i)

- (b) appraisal of the last five years, with reference to specific cultural organisations;
- (c) a vision for the future:

For the Cypriot community: a Cypriot cultural centre which will

- (i) encompass, co-ordinate and extend the range of cultural activity (artistic, educational, political, multi-cultural);
- (ii) be representative of the whole community (Greek and Turkish; first generation Cypriots as well as second and third British-born generations);
- (iii) give women and women's issues a high profile.

For the National Arts and Media Strategy: an arts policy which will embrace the challenge of 'cultural diversity' and do what existing funding processes and 'equal opportunities' strategies have failed to do, which is to evolve a more holistic approach to arts funding that recognises and values the cultural contribution of all the peoples of this country.

IN CONCLUSION

The Cypriot community in Britain is at an important stage in terms of cultural development. Underlying recent clashes between different cultural/generational/political views is a process of change; a potential source of considerable energy and creativity for artists which will produce challenging new work. It needs outlets, not only within the Cypriot community itself but within the 'mainstream' which is ultimately where most practitioners wish to succeed.

It is hoped that the Arts Council's interest, indicated by the commissioning of this initial discussion document, will be followed by a serious consideration of the cultural needs and aspirations of the Cypriot community which have been outlined here.

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1. PREFACE

- 1.1 This paper is the first to be commissioned by the Arts Council of Great Britain on the cultural concerns of the Cypriot community.
- 1.2 Obviously this is a welcome - if limited - opportunity to be involved in the process of discussion that is intended to inform the national arts and media strategy. However, it must be recognised that this report is not meant to be exhaustive and does not represent comprehensive coverage of the subject area.
- 1.3 The paper has necessarily had to be London-focused. Most of the community live in London but there are approximately 100,000 Cypriots in the regions, and clearly, further research is required to take account of that.
- 1.4 The various sections of this report have been informed by consultation work with key figures from within the 'organised Cypriot community' and with individual arts practitioners, arts groups and community centres.
- 1.5 Additional meetings with members from funding bodies, borough councils, the media institutions and other cultural centres, have provided valuable insights regarding gaps in provision for those communities that are sometimes referred to as the 'invisible minorities' of which the Cypriots are one.
- 1.6 The Cypriot communities include Greeks, Turks, Armenians and Maronites, all with their own language - although many are bilingual - their own religion and cultural idiosyncrasies.
- However, in terms of their 'cultural interests and aspirations', as British Cypriots, there is considerable overlap and agreement. Furthermore, in the present context: cultural diversity and the national arts and media strategy, the question, where and how do Cypriots fit in? will be as relevant and significant for one Cypriot as for another, if they care about the arts.
- 1.7 This report concentrates on the two main communities, the Turkish and Greek, since all communities could not reasonably be covered in the time available. The term 'Cypriot' is used to refer to both communities unless otherwise specified.

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 This paper sets out to:

- (a) provide information about the range of cultural activity within the Cypriot community, with reference to specific organisations and individual arts practitioners;
- (b) raise some of the key issues with regard to:
 - (i) the Cypriot community: generational/cultural conflict; Cypriot politics; the lack of women in decision-making positions within arts organisations;
 - (ii) funding: equal opportunities policies; the status of Cypriot arts; and
- (c) draw attention to the fact that definitions of 'ethnicity' are restrictive, divisive and unhelpful in the context of "cultural diversity" - if by that we mean "an enriching experience for all the people of this country." [Author's underlining]

2.2 PURPOSE

- (a) To provide a Cypriot perspective on "cultural diversity" so as to inform those involved in developing a national strategy for the arts.
- (b) To further the aim stated: "...to take full account of the richness of cultures of all sorts within Great Britain...", particularly in respect of Cypriots.

2.2.1 The paper is set out as follows:

- brief historical account of the Cypriot community in Britain
- appraisal of the last five years with reference to specific Cypriot cultural organisations
- funding
- the main issues

- a vision for the future.

3. A BRIEF HISTORICAL ACCOUNT OF THE CYPRIOT COMMUNITY IN BRITAIN, WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO LONDON

3.1 POPULATION

There are approximately 250,000 Cypriots in Britain, of whom about 150,000 live in the capital. It is estimated that by the turn of the century, the Cypriot communities in London will grow by 13.6% and will be third in terms of growth after the African-Caribbean communities (16.9%) and the S Asian communities (14.7%). [1]

3.1.2 Where they came from

Most came from rural areas. Cyprus is largely an agricultural island; even those who lived in towns kept close ties with their villages. The men emigrated first and as it became evident that their stay was to be on a more permanent basis, their womenfolk followed.

[1] Greater London Arts: Arts Plan for London 1990-95

3.1.3 The pattern of immigration [2]

1911	208	1941	10,208
1921	334	1961	41,898
1931	1,059	1964	78,476
		1974	120,000

3.2 THE PATTERN OF SETTLEMENT

3.2.1 The Cypriots first settled near the West End of London where they found jobs as dishwashers and waiters in the catering industry. Camden Town was the centre of the first established community in the 30s. Gradually there was a spread towards Hackney and Islington; then north to Haringey and across the river to Southwark and Lambeth.[3] The spread has continued to Enfield and Barnet.

3.2.2 The centre of the Greek Cypriot community is now in Haringey. The Turkish community is concentrated in Hackney.

3.3 EMPLOYMENT

3.3.1 Cypriots are employed in a wide variety of jobs, but most are employed in the service industries.

[2] These figures have been provided by the Cypriot High Commission. Significant periods of immigration were the result of a combination of political and economic factors:

In the early 30s failure of successive harvests, together with civil unrest and heavy taxation by the British colonial government, forced many to emigrate in order to find work.

During the second world war Cypriots fought on the side of Britain and as a result many decided to come to Britain.

The newly created Cyprus Republic in 1960 signalled another period of instability, prompting further emigration. The majority of Cypriots came to Britain in the late 50s and early 60s. These were mostly young married families who were later joined by parents or other relatives.

In 1974 the invasion of Cyprus by Turkey effectively divided the island in two, creating thousands of displaced and dispossessed people. Many of these came to Britain where they already had family connections. About 10,000 Greek Cypriots and an estimated 12,000 Turkish Cypriots came.

[3] The availability of cheap housing and easy access to jobs in the West End determined the pattern of settlement.

- 3.3.2 Some 20% of Cypriots work in Cypriot-owned restaurants: an interesting response to job availability, since catering has no roots in Cypriot culture. The Cypriot clothing industry, however, is based on a long tradition of tailoring and dressmaking. Two-thirds of Cypriot working women are employed in this industry.
- 3.3.3 Over 20% of Cypriots are self-employed - twice the national average. Since the 60s, an increasing number of Cypriots have also entered the professions.
- 3.3.4 Cypriot communities tend to be remarkably self-sufficient: "The strength and value of the Cypriot community...lies in its family/community structure and there is much good within the community which has hitherto protected it...The people are hardworking and work long hours to make a living to support their families...they are versatile and practical...In the community network, appears a work support which helps youngsters find jobs...as trainees within the clothing industry, bakery/confectionery trade, etc." [4]
- 3.3.5 Despite the cumulative corrosive effects of urban life, this description of Cypriots still generally applies. They are a stable, productive and easy-going community, making an important contribution to the economy and to the general fabric of society.
- 3.3.6 Of course, as an evolving community, there are inevitably some areas of conflict: the 'community' has always sought to maintain and rigidly enforce traditional cultural values; each new generation of British-born Cypriots has tended to be more open, more responsive to other cultural influences; consequently, generational/cultural conflicts have sometimes ensued. When such conflict occurs within the 'family', there are various agencies available to address the problems; when it erupts within the 'community', there seems to be no easy strategy for dealing with the issues. Recent events surrounding the Camden Cypriot Festival are a case in point.

[4] Susie Constantinides: "The Cypriots in Haringey"; Council publication, 1981, p2.

4. AN APPRAISAL OF THE LAST FIVE YEARS

4.1. This section is set out as follows:

- overview
- purpose of arts activity within the community with reference to specific arts organisations

4.2 OVERVIEW

The last five years have seen a proliferation of cultural activity within the Cypriot community: from amateur theatre groups such as L.E.L.A., playing to capacity audiences in the Cypriot languages, to exciting new bands of poet/musicians like 'Haji-Mike/'Cypriot Harmony' whose fusing of rap-reggae rhythms and Cypriot lyrics has created something of a minor cult with a following that includes Black and Asian as well as Cypriot youths across London. There has been fresh innovative film-making by Lucy Panteli; award-winning poetry by Nese Yasin; Cypriot writers and performers have played on the fringe and in community theatre; in schools and colleges; a few have managed to penetrate national networks on radio and television. All this despite a funding system which at local level - although sympathetic - is increasingly limited, and at national level is generally indifferent to Cypriot art.

4.2.1 Much of this activity has been initiated from within the Cypriot community itself. That there should be so much activity is evidence of the community's growing need to enjoy and to celebrate its culture; of a wide cultural interest within the community and of the existence of a number of fine arts practitioners who, as British Cypriots, want to make their contribution to the cultural life of this country.

4.3 Reference to specific Cypriot organisations [5] will indicate the extent to which arts activity has fulfilled its purpose; where there are gaps in provision; what issues emerge.

[5] The radio stations: London Greek Radio and Spectrum Radio provide some air time for the Cypriot community. This is a new and developing outlet requiring coverage and research more specific to this area.

4.4 ARTS ACTIVITY IN THE CYPRIOT COMMUNITY

4.4.1 'The organised Cypriot community' [6] refers to all the different organisations which formally exist to bring Cypriots together in various cultural, educational and political contexts.

4.4.1.1 (a) The Federation - Omospondia - is an umbrella organisation comprising some 68 associations including political parties. Although its raison d'être is political [7], through its member groups it has a commitment to a wide cultural programme.

4.4.1.2 The Federation tends to represent the more affluent middle-class Cypriots who constitute a considerable source of business, commercial and professional expertise.

4.4.1.3 What it doesn't adequately represent, is women in its own management structure [8] and young British-born Cypriots in its overall membership.

4.4.1.4 Mr Andreas Karaolis (Secretary of The Federation) says: "...our concern is with the adolescent Cypriot youth...after 16 we have nothing to offer them."

4.4.1.5 Recent cultural events organised by "The Brotherhood" (the largest association in Omospondia) included an impressive cartographic exhibition: "Cartography of Cyprus", at the Royal Institute of British Architects (November 1988) and a grand concert by the 60-member Aris Choir organised by The Federation at the Friends' House, NW1 (July 1990). Neither of these events would appear to have immediate appeal to the 'adolescent Cypriot youth' but both were warmly received by members of the 'organised community'.

[6] It has been easier to obtain information about Greek Cypriot examples so the focus is on these.

[7] Omospondia was formed in 1974 following the invasion of Cyprus by Turkey. Its chief purpose is to act as a pressure group in Britain in order to focus attention on the extant political situation in Cyprus. To this end it organises marches and demonstrations to mark key dates in the invasion's history; it also organises a biennial world conference on Cyprus, and is concerned with broad cultural issues.

[8] At present only three out of a total of 31 are women.

- 4.4.1.6 (b) The Independent Greek Schools [9] have a new perspective on cultural activity and young Cypriots.
- 4.4.1.7 Mr Andreas Ekeshis (Chair): "...In the past the Church was the focal point of schools' ethnic and cultural activities. Greek school was 'compulsory' in a way... it considered that it taught the only true cultural identity. This didn't work. It didn't take into account the fact that our children live in a multi-cultural environment. The Independent schools begin with that reality: we live in a multi-cultural, multi-racial society and Cypriot culture has to fit into that...We [the Independent schools] have tried to develop ties with the local community by making ourselves more open and willing to participate in the schools where Greek is taught in the evenings..."
- 4.4.1.8 Within this framework there is considerable scope for cultural exchange and integration: from joint school outings to joint cultural events. Earlier this year a very successful cultural evening was organised at Potters Bar School and was highly commended both by the English headmaster and the Cypriot High Commission as a most valuable cultural experience for both Cypriot children and their non-Cypriot peer group. [10]
- 4.4.1.9 Mr Ekeshis: "From such events, our children can see that their 'Cypriotness' is accepted and valued within their community...if they understand that early on, there is less likelihood of cultural alienation later, perhaps..."

[9] There are three kinds of 'Greek schools' of which the Independent schools are the most recent (set up 1980) and fewest in number (six out of a total of about 150). 'Greek schools' are in fact Greek language classes which are held once or twice a week in the evening or on Saturdays in an English school building. All the Greek schools are members of The Federation and all have a cultural programme which includes dance, songs, poetry, theatre and Cypriot history.

[10] It should be noted, however, that the Potters Bar initiative was not immediately embraced by the 'wider community'. The English head, his staff and the PTA, ultimately had to accept that they were dealing with professional individuals who were both ready and able to argue their case for cultural recognition.

4.4.1.10 Certainly the Independent schools' approach has met with approval from Dr Elli Papafoti, Inspector at the Education Mission [11], who is trying to set up a Common Education Committee to co-ordinate the work of all the Greek schools in Britain, and sees this approach as a positive way forward.

4.4.1.11 It is important to capitalise on these grass roots initiatives and aid them to develop within the wider community. Local arts funding should try to include Greek schools in local festivals so that cultural exchange is facilitated at grass-roots level.

4.4.2 The Turkish Youth Association is located in Haringey. It began as a response to an educational problem which was referred to in an ILEA report (1981) and in the Swann Report (1985): Turkish pupils were found to be the lowest achievers in ILEA schools.

4.4.2.1 Amber Cemal (Counsellor at T.Y.A.): "...We discovered that in class Turkish Cypriot children were treated as though they were invisible...they were neither black nor white so they were mostly ignored. In the end, this created feelings of being invisible and affected their learning...they didn't engage in any activity in a confident or assertive way. They kept failing. What we tried to do was to sort out the educational problems by building up their confidence..." Counselling is a vital part of this confidence-building approach. [12]

4.4.2.2 The T.Y.A. works in an imaginative way. It attempts to teach young people about their culture and history "...so that they can know who they are and be proud."

4.4.2.3 The aim is not to duplicate language teaching but, like the Independent Greek schools, to begin with the premise that young people's experience is multi-cultural and their Turkish Cypriot culture is a part of that reality.

This creates a meaningful process of self-awareness and self-development which may benefit performance in other areas.

[11] The Education Mission is located in Palmers Green, North London, and provides an official base for teachers who are seconded by the Ministry of Education in Cyprus to teach in the Greek schools here.

[12] Underlying T.Y.A.'s educational/cultural work is a structured counselling programme which is offered on a one-to-one basis or within the family if necessary.

4.4.2.4 In practical terms this has taken the form of D.J. workshops which combined reggae and rap with Turkish Cypriot lyrics. 'Cypriot Harmony', a band which pioneered this 'cultural mix', says: ..."it's a way of meeting cultural influences and changing them to make them your own. It's integration..."

T.Y.A.'s cultural programme benefits from regular outreach work which:

- (a) reinforces traditional cultural skills by passing them on to the younger generation; [13]
- (b) uses theatre in the Turkish Cypriot language to explore difficult social issues concerning the community. [14]

4.4.2.5 In the last five years, the T.Y.A. has grown from strength to strength. This year it has secured £200,000 (Inner Area Programme) to refurbish and extend its premises which will include a recording and video studio to provide new skills; a cafe; a book and record shop specialising in Turkish publications/Turkish music, and a conference hall - all of which will serve both as facilities and as income-generating operations.

4.4.2.6 The T.Y.A. considers that its growth has been facilitated by:

- (i) committed team work;
- (ii) independence of any one particular source of funding - T.Y.A. applies to various trusts and charities;
- (iii) avoiding Cypriot politics.

4.4.2.7 Staffing: There are three full-time staff. [15] The counsellor post is funded through the London Borough Grants Scheme; the other two are posts seconded by Haringey Youth Services.

[13] Last year, it was discovered that there were only two musicians left in the whole community who could play the 'fatul' and 'zurma'. Since these instruments traditionally play in the bride and groom at the beginning of a Turkish wedding reception, the skills, if lost, would be sorely missed. T.Y.A. set up classes to teach these skills to younger players. Three more have now been trained and further training sessions are planned for the future.

[14] For example, "Iste Hayat" - a devised play dealing with the theme of generational conflict.

[15] In addition, there are two part-time sessional workers.

4.4.2.8 This arrangement has two significant advantages:

- (a) all the staff are trained, qualified individuals who have access to and are also accountable to a separate professional body or social services department; and
- (b) in being seconded, two of the full-time staff do not have to rely on local authorities to fund them year by year, which gives their work a sense of security and continuity.

4.4.3 Theatro Technis, based in Camden, began as a theatre group in 1957. From the beginning, it evolved an innovative 'political' theatre which closely linked its two areas of concern: community arts and community welfare. [16]

4.4.3.1 In 1987 Theatro Technis secured the freehold of its present home, the old St Pancras Church House, with generous assistance from Camden Council. [17] In 1989 Theatro Technis reached its peak in terms of funding: £108,540 (Camden) and £41,000 (GLA), only to fall to its lowest for nearly 30 years by having its entire funding completely withdrawn a few months later.

4.4.3.2 In terms of arts funding/arts provision for the Cypriot community, these developments are undoubtedly the most significant of the last five years. As the longest-running Cypriot arts centre, Theatro Technis represents a considerable achievement for the community despite the fact that it is now deemed to be "an organisation in decline". [18]

[16] Theatro Technis was approached by a local school for assistance with Cypriot children who were under-achieving. This led the group to become involved with social/educational/welfare issues. Simultaneously, the group's director, who had worked with Joan Littlewood at Stratford East and admired her philosophy, incorporated this influence into the work of Theatro Technis. The result was powerful, hard-hitting theatre which related directly to the experience of the Cypriot community.

[17] Donations were also made by the Cypriot community and by the Cypriot government.

[18] London Borough of Camden report of Director of Law and Administration, Theatro Technis Grants Unit (17.7.90)

4.4.3.3 The achievements of Theatro Technis

- (a) Theatro Technis brought some recognition on a national level for Cypriots and for Cypriot culture. [19]
- (b) It brought together a whole number of Cypriot arts practitioners.
- (c) It created links between Cypriots in London and in the regions. It also promoted cultural exchange between Cypriots in Britain and in Cyprus.
- (d) It created links with other minority groups. [20]
- (e) Theatro Technis represents a considerable asset to the community in terms of its facilities.

4.4.3.4 Whilst the growth of Theatro Technis is to a large extent attributable to the single-mindedness and determination of its artistic director, its 'decline' is seen partly as the result of a too centralised/undemocratic system of operation [21] causing the following effects: [22]

[19] Through media coverage which:

- (i) Highlighted Theatro Technis's struggle to find a permanent building base in Camden, "Open Door", BBC TV 1978.
- (ii) Drew attention to the plight of Cypriot refugees by campaigning on behalf of Vasilis and Katerina Nicola who in 1985 sought sanctuary in St Mary's Church, Euston, in an attempt to persuade the Home Office to reconsider its decision to deport them. The couple was subsequently the subject of a play written by the director, which was later shown on Channel 4 TV.
- (iii) Following the "Open Door" programme, officers from the Arts Council of Great Britain visited Theatro Technis for the first time to see their work and proceeded to fund them for specific projects, until 1987. The publication of Naseem Khan's "The Arts Britain Ignores" (CRE 1978) may also have positively influenced the Arts Council's decision.

[20] The Annual Black Theatre Festival was hosted by Theatro Technis; various minority groups including Cutting Edge, Tara Arts, Temba, Clean Break, Ventrua, also performed regularly at Theatro Technis.

[21] Report on recent developments at Theatro Technis (3/10/89) signed by Eleni Diakon, Aydin Mehmet Ali and Maria Shurety.

[22] London Borough of Camden report on Theatro Technis - Grants Unit (17/7/90).

- (i) no outreach work to ascertain audience demand; interpretation of needs was made by the artistic director; not enough variety in Theatro Technis programmes; audience numbers fell.
- (ii) no delegation of responsibility; no sense of a collective group feeling;
- (iii) only tokenistic representation of women and Turkish Cypriots; no women directors until two were elected in 1988, who resigned a year later; no Turkish Cypriot worker at Theatro Technis; and
- (iv) no provision for new or experimental work by Cypriot practitioners, if the work was independent of 'official' Theatro Technis artistic policy.

4.4.3.5 Theatro Technis is still operating as an arts centre with some assistance from the 'organised Cypriot community', although its activities are now much reduced.

4.4.3.6 Camden Council's decision to withdraw funding prompts a number of questions:

- (a) Was complete withdrawal of funding the most appropriate course of action for dealing with 'management' problems in a community organisation?
- (b) Why did monitoring and accountability procedures fail to detect the problems which by all accounts had existed for years?
- (c) Who in effect is being penalised by the withdrawal of funding - recalcitrant management or the Cypriot community?

The fact that Camden began funding the newly formed Cypriot Arts Forum when it had ceased to fund Theatro Technis does not represent adequate compensation for the loss of provision, neither can it obscure what amounts to a deft cost-cutting exercise on the part of the Council: from £108,540 for Technis to £28,000 for the Forum.

4.4.4 Individual arts practitioners

- 4.4.4.1 Within the last five years there has been an increasing number of Cypriots who have looked to the arts for a career. [23] What emerges is a tremendous energy and creativity which needs to be harnessed and given outlet, not only within the Cypriot community but also within the mainstream.
- 4.4.4.2 Most work by Cypriot arts practitioners finds outlet only within the Cypriot community: via community centres, Cypriot arts organisations, fundraising events, or through local community festivals and 'Cyprus Weeks'. This is particularly frustrating for visual artists and photographers who need to exhibit their work in adequate spaces. Hire cost of appropriate space can be prohibitive, and Cypriot community centres, though cheaper, tend to be too cramped for exhibiting some work. [24]
- 4.4.4.3 Those practitioners who manage to penetrate the mainstream invariably become assimilated, partly because their colour makes them 'invisible' and partly because there is neither kudos nor enhancement of career prospects in proclaiming one's Cypriotness. Consequently, there seem to be no role models for other Cypriots and no apparent track record for recognised Cypriot artistic achievement.
- 4.4.5 The following statements identify some of the main obstacles for Cypriot practitioners:
- 4.4.5.1 Alev Adiloglu: "...I don't have a problem with my work unless I want to involve myself in my 'Cypriotness'then immediately my work is marginalised."

[23] About 20-30 years ago very few Cypriots involved themselves professionally in the arts. Needs were prioritised according to economic circumstances:

- (i) Lucy Panteli, film-maker: "Most important for our parents was how to survive. Arts were a luxury in that context and their children were indoctrinated in the same manner... 'get a proper job' was the thing"... Together with economic considerations was a fear of losing control over one's children, in a foreign country. "...there were restrictions, particularly on daughters, but most people can't cope with excommunication from the family."
- (ii) Alev Adiloglu, performance poet: "...I felt restricted in every way...the arts allow you to question. That wasn't on for my parents."

[24] Recently, the Cypriot High Commission organised an exhibition of work by Cypriot artists in Britain and in Cyprus at the Commonwealth Institute and in Bristol: "Exhibition of Contemporary Cypriot Art". This is an important initiative which needs to be repeated on a more regular basis and with a commitment to tour more extensively.

- 4.4.5.2 Similarly, Lucy Panteli, who has received grants from the Arts Council and from GLA, is aware that the 'Cypriotness' in her work had to be tempered in relation to its innovative/ experimental approach which is what the funders were prepared to recognise as worth funding.
- 4.4.5.3 Ayse Raif, writer: "...I know several Turkish and Turkish Cypriot actors who've had to leave Britain because they couldn't find work or because they were fed up with token parts in 'EastEnders'...some change their name and drop the Turkish connection altogether..."
- 4.4.5.4 Ayse Gul, Women's Unit in Southwark: "...There were two Turkish Cypriot actors at 'The National' but they got no further than spear-carrying..."
- 4.4.5.5 Eve Adam, singer/actress: "...You have to go through the process of explaining yourself stereotypically before you can show who you are..."
- 4.4.5.6 Representation on television and radio is generally seen as reinforcing these obstacles [25] since there are no Cypriot programme-makers who could provide more insight and speak with more authority on Cypriot issues.
- 4.4.5.7 At the same time, not all practitioners feel compelled to speak on behalf of their community or to represent it.
- 4.4.5.8 Ayse Raif: "...I don't hold with Cypriot writers being expected to reflect their Cypriotness in whatever they write...my plays are about Cockney characters...I mirror the society I live in."
- 4.4.5.9 For some practitioners it is important to challenge received notions of 'Cypriotness' from within the community, so that a new identity can evolve which takes into account a broader, more universal reference of British Cypriots:
- 4.4.5.10 Lysandros Pytharas' poem "I am the Twentieth Century" and Mike Poubouris' song "I am a modern day Mangas" are examples of work in this vein.

[25] Michael Angelis as the academic/poet Martin Niarchos in Alan Bleasdale's 'G.B.H.' is noted as a welcome departure from this general tendency.

- 4.4.5.11 Soteris Kyriakos, journalist: "...Generally the Cypriot conception of art is conservative...it is about recording reality...constantly referring to the past...consolidating meaning rather than challenging values."
- 4.4.5.12 It is not surprising that 'non-conformists' such as Pytharas and Poubouris are not easily accommodated within existing 'Cypriot' arts organisations.
- 4.4.5.13 Clearly there is a gap in provision here, which has only partially been addressed with the founding of the Cypriot Arts Forum two years ago.

5. FUNDING

- 5.1 Funding processes are bureaucratic and generate their own culture which is difficult to penetrate. The system of funding 'priority' areas becomes too limiting and too prescriptive on the work of artists and organisations.
- 5.1.1 (a) Individual practitioners. Apart from individual bursaries and awards which are extremely competitive, there is very little support for individual artists. Haringey Arts Council seems to be the only organisation which recognises this as an area needing support. Cypriot practitioners have been resourceful and formed small groups here and there in order to comply with funding requirements. In the long term this does not necessarily benefit the individual artist since the emphasis is on shaping a project to suit funders' requirements rather than developing personal work; neither does it usually benefit the community since the project is rarely the result of outreach work intended to meet actual need in the community.
- 5.1.2 (b) The Cypriot community. There has never been any government policy on arts funding for the Cypriot community; consequently, provision is patchy and variable, being dependent on the particular relationship between a borough council and its Cypriot community. Certainly provision does not appear to relate to numbers.
- 5.1.2.1 Over the last five years, the Cypriot Festival, or 'Cyprus Week', has become increasingly established as an annual event in most of the North London Boroughs where the majority of Cypriots live. These are important events, both on the community level because they promote cultural exchange, and for individual Cypriot artists for whom the festival becomes an opportunity to define their art in their own terms and make their individual statements on a variety of issues.

- 5.1.2.2 The Enfield 'Cyprus Week' offers an important perspective on the relationship between funder and funded. The event was organised by the Arts and Entertainments Department together with a group of Cypriots which included performers, a councillor and members of the borough.
- 5.1.2.3 This was the first Cypriot festival to be held in Enfield, where there are about 30,000 Cypriots. The 'Week' included a wealth of events [26], some of which were popular enough to require additional performances which were staged outdoors because audience demand far out-stripped auditorium space. [27] The 'Week' drew audiences from various cultural groups within the borough and from Cypriots all over London.
- 5.1.2.4 Important as these achievements are, the most valuable spin-off was the experience of the funder and funded working side by side; having to deal with each other's limitations, aspirations and frustration. Claire Chidley, the Arts and Entertainments Officer, confessed to not knowing a great deal about the Cypriot community prior to the festival. She now knows and has contacts with numerous Cypriots within the borough and within the 'organised Cypriot community'. The Cypriot group with whom she worked has acquired new organisational skills and contacts which can be exploited for subsequent cultural events independently of the Arts and Entertainments Department.
- 5.1.2.5 This kind of initiative brings the community and funding body into a working relationship which is productive and mutually rewarding. The next step would be a multi-cultural festival which could bring together 'organisers' from several cultural communities and possibly two or three funding agencies. In this way one moves from a detached/disinterested system of funding where money is the central focus, to one where the funders' aim is on building bridges between communities, empowering them with new skills and confidence, so that other independent and multi-cultural projects can be initiated by and for the community itself. The funders' role is then much more concerned with enabling art to happen than with prescribing or controlling arts activity.

[26] Visual arts exhibition: 'Cypriot Life'; talk on Thalassaemia; musical extravaganza; poetry; dance; Cypriot cuisine; Cypriot books; children's theatre. Participants included professional and amateur performers.

[27] L.E.L.A. amateur theatre group which presented plays in the Cypriot languages.

6. ISSUES

6.1 This section deals with the following issues:

- generational
- women
- Cypriot politics
- ethnicity.

6.2 THE GENERATIONAL ISSUE

The generational issue has become one of the most divisive within the community, especially since the Theatro Technis conflict erupted two years ago.

6.2.1 Part of Theatro Technis' problem was that it had alienated its youth theatre and had cultivated its own generational dispute which eventually became another factor in its 'decline'. The Cypriot Arts Forum, which describes itself pointedly as a "collection of primarily second and third generation Cypriot artists" was set up - also in Camden - following withdrawal of funding from Theatro Technis. The Cypriot and local press have not missed their opportunity to rake up hostility and polarise the conflict.

6.2.2 That generational conflict should exist within the community is inevitable: first generation Cypriots tend to maintain the traditional and patriarchal values, whereas subsequent generations have been brought up in a culture that emphasises the individual and the freedom of choice. The clash of cultural values is something which the community itself has to work through: a process of evolving. It is not something the community should be penalised for. After all, conflict can be dynamic, positive and regenerative. The generational issue offers one of the richest source areas for creative work, and is likely to be one of the most exciting, if problematic, in the next few years.

6.3 THE ISSUE OF WOMEN

6.3.1 "...In the 30s many women found themselves working day and night while their men played the entrepreneurs." [28] In so far as Cypriot women are still expected to play supportive roles to Cypriot men, it is true to say that the situation has not altered a great deal in the 50 or so intervening years.

[28] "Laying the Foundations" by Haris Pellapaisiotis.

- 6.3.2 There are numerous women practitioners who work in and care about the arts, but significantly only one is actually running a cultural group. Maria Spyrou is Chair of L.E.L.A., an amateur theatre group with an enormous community following: "...it is difficult to win the respect of male colleagues," she explains, "but sometimes it is other women who say to me, how can you go to all these meetings if you have a family? That upsets me more."
- 6.3.3 Aydin Mehmet Ali, who ran the Turkish Education Group for six years, was the driving force behind several women's projects, all of which still exist. In spite of being successful, she was criticised for being 'dictatorial' in her methods and she resigned.
- 6.3.4 Generally speaking, women's projects are promoted and organised by male practitioners, primarily because it is they who are running the organisations and women's issues are known to be a priority area for funding.
- 6.3.5 As a body of practitioners, Cypriot women cover a wide range of cultural and artistic experience: from acting to photography, poetry to painting, film-making to script-writing, singing and drumming. Many of these practitioners work in relative isolation. A women's project which offers an opportunity for collaboration seems very long overdue.

6.4 THE ISSUE OF CYPRIOT POLITICS

- 6.4.1 Recent events in Europe, in the Gulf and in the Middle East, have renewed fervour for a settlement of the political situation in Cyprus which is now being approached in the spirit of 'rapprochement'.
- 6.4.2 In Britain, relations between Greek and Turkish Cypriots are generally held to be friendly, but as Aydin Mehmet Ali points out: "We have never managed to really come together. Why? There is no green line to divide us here. What is it that stops us, after all this time?" These questions, together with issues of identity and culture, have become more pressing recently, and need to be addressed through open, constructive dialogue and through cultural and artistic endeavour. In the past, attempts to create structures that would enable Greek and Turkish Cypriots to work together over a period of time have not lasted. Amongst arts practitioners, many are of the opinion that now is a good time to try to facilitate a genuine coming-together, but there is need of a neutral base for this to happen.

- 6.5 THE ISSUE OF 'ETHNICITY'
- 6.5.1 Current definitions of 'ethnicity' are confusing. In attempting to right past wrongs, with regard to some unrepresented groups, a new system of discrimination has been created with regard to other unrepresented groups.
- 6.5.2 Equal opportunities strategies and processes, which in name exist to facilitate access for all minority groups, are being used to discriminate against those groups who are not 'black' (Afro-Caribbean and Asian) by excluding them. Exclusion operates on two fronts:
- (a) from mainstream institutions, including the Arts Council; borough councils; the media, etc.
 - (b) from some sections within the Afro-Caribbean and Asian communities.
- 6.5.3 Non-'black' minority groups like the Cypriots are consequently made to fall between all stools. The following excerpts illustrate how equal opportunities policies are currently interpreted by mainstream institutions:
- 6.5.4 "At its meetings in December 1985 and January 1986 the Arts Council confirmed...in its development strategy, The Glory of the Garden, that consideration must be given as a priority to the work of ethnic minority artists and arts organisations...the many fine Afro-Caribbean and Asian artists working in this country and to their valuable contribution to the nation's cultural life." [Towards Cultural Diversity - the Arts Council's Ethnic Minority Arts Action Plan]
- 6.5.5 "...the views of practitioners and of funding agencies suggest that the first priorities for development should be: ethnic minority facilities, specifically drama, jazz and literature for Africans and Caribbeans, and museums, art galleries and exhibitions, classical concerts and cinema for Asians." [p.27, "Arts for London 1990-95, GLA]
- 6.5.6 "...Specific trawling for more black and Asian members of BBC staff [is] required and there [is] a need for more audience research to indicate the proportion of black and Asian listeners and how they reacted to the output..." [On Black and Ethnic Minorities: a recommendation from an internal report documenting the BBC's Equal Opportunities Seminar: Fair Representation on Air, held on 27 November 1990]

- 6.5.7 From these excerpts it would seem that there is considerable agreement between the Arts Council, Greater London Arts and the BBC that "ethnic minorities/equal opportunities/fair representation" automatically refer primarily/exclusively to the Afro-Caribbean and Asian communities. The Commission for Racial Equality, which supposedly sets the criteria for such definitions, categorically states that "... 'ethnic minority' does not equal 'black'."
- 6.5.8 Clearly this discrepancy needs to be addressed if proper recognition is what we want for all cultural groups, black and non-black. Ultimately definitions of ethnicity are only useful in facilitating the funding process from the funder's point of view. For the artist, such definitions are restrictive and problematic. What is an 'ethnic' artist? Is it someone whose parents were born abroad? Is it someone whose work is rooted in an 'ethnic' tradition? Where then does a poet like Alev Adiloglu fit in, if her father is a Turkish Cypriot, her mother is English and her work is sometimes involved with her 'Cypriotness' and other times not? It has to be understood that ethnic identity is not a static or fixed idea which can be imposed on any artist for the convenience of funders. It is a process of an evolving self definition.
- 6.5.9 Ethnic definitions are connected to limited access and low status. To insist on describing some cultures as 'ethnic' is to insist on perpetuating the idea that there is a British 'mainstream mono-culture' on the one hand and then there is 'all the rest' - what Helen Cartey has described as "the lumping, dumping conspiracy" - a 'them' and 'us' attitude which is contrary to the spirit of 'cultural diversity'.
- 6.5.10 'Cultural diversity' is a term with an obvious pluralistic reference. It acknowledges/encompasses the existence of many and various cultures, in a non-hierarchical structure. To this extent it is a profound challenge to the present cultural system; it offers a more equitable basis for a new national arts strategy.

7. A VISION FOR THE FUTURE

7.1 FOR THE CYPRIOT COMMUNITY: THE CREATION OF A CYPRIOT CULTURAL CENTRE

- 7.1.1
- (i) To encompass, co-ordinate and extend the range of cultural activity (artistic, educational, political, multi-cultural).
 - (ii) To be representative of the whole community (Greek and Turkish; first generation Cypriots as well as second and third British-born generations).

(iii) To give women and women's issues a high profile.

7.1.2 Educational: to create a link between the schools and the centre which could give young Cypriots access to professional work by Cypriot practitioners (performances, films, workshops) and give the centre access to a valuable source of grass-roots developments and contacts.

7.1.3 Social: to provide a wide range of entertainment in order to attract new Cypriot audiences; to inform programmes by regular outreach/consumer research.

7.1.4 Women: to establish a high profile for women both in terms of the Centre's cultural/artistic output and in its management structure.

(i) to provide a balance between a commitment to community arts and support of the individual practitioner and the production of new work;

(ii) to run a series of residencies (2 or 3 each year) for individual practitioners to develop new work; also to run workshops to teach new skills etc; artists would be assisted to give a performance, mount an exhibition or publish work, at the end of their residency;

(iii) to forge links between the individual practitioner and the wider community; this could happen in terms of neighbourhood projects, e.g. a mural painting in a local building, a community play, a community concert;

(iv) to promote Cypriot work to national and international recognition;

(v) to provide a meeting space for practitioners to exchange ideas on new work; and

(vi) to provide a resource and facilities base.

7.1.5 Cultural Diversity:

(i) to include a regular programme of work from other cultural groups and for multi-cultural audiences; and

(ii) to create opportunities for Cypriots to work creatively with other cultural groups on multi-cultural events.

- 7.1.6 To encourage regular cultural exchange between practitioners in Cyprus and in Britain by organising exchange of work and residencies, meetings and joint cultural projects.
- 7.1.7 Funding: the centre would have to be centrally funded so that
- (i) it had a recognised status at national level;
 - (ii) it was not dependent on any one local authority.
- 7.1.8 Funding would be partially through indirect funding of posts; i.e. through long-term secondments. This would have the following advantages:
- (i) Staff would be trained and qualified Cypriot workers with access to and accountable to a separate institution, department or professional body.
 - (ii) Regular direct communication and collaboration between centre and funding body - a sense of both working toward the same goals.
 - (iii) Greater flexibility if changes were necessary.
 - (iv) Less likelihood of problems developing beyond correction.
 - (v) Staff could be seconded to other organisations and vice versa, so that experience was broadened.
- 7.1.9 Central funding would be complemented by sponsorship from within the Cypriot community. The Centre would work closely with advisers drawn from the Cypriot business, commercial and professional communities to facilitate this.
- 7.2 FOR THE NATIONAL ARTS AND MEDIA STRATEGY
- 7.2.1 If the national arts and media strategy were to embrace the challenge of 'cultural diversity', it could achieve what existing funding policies and 'equal opportunities' could not achieve: namely, to move away from an inadequate and unfair 'block' system of funding, which is divisive, and evolve a more holistic approach which takes account of the need to build bridges between cultural groups; to empower communities to generate their own cultural projects; to create exciting possibilities for new work while maintaining a steady provision to meet traditional audience demand. The difference is between developing policies which enable art to happen rather than controlling - in a prescriptive way - how it happens.

The Cypriot community in Britain is at an important stage in terms of cultural development. Underlying recent clashes between different cultural/generational/political views is a process of change; a potential source of considerable energy and creativity for artists which will produce challenging new work. It needs outlets, not only within the Cypriot community itself, but within the 'mainstream' which is ultimately where most practitioners wish to succeed.

It is hoped that the Arts Council's interest, indicated by the commissioning of this initial discussion document, will be followed by a serious consideration of the cultural needs and aspirations of the Cypriot community which have been outlined here.

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