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Resist, "Resist Newsletter, April 1987" (1987). *Resist Newsletters*. 119.
<https://digitalrepository.trincoll.edu/resistnewsletter/119>

RESIST

Newsletter #195

A Call to Resist Illegitimate Authority

April 1987

Blacks in England: Organizing for Cultural and Political Self-Determination

LINDA THURSTON

It is not often that Black activists in the U.S. have the opportunity to meet with their counterparts in other countries. When we do have that opportunity, it usually arises in the Caribbean or in Latin America. Seldom are we able to share experiences and ideas with Black people in England, a country with both striking cultural and political similarities to the U.S. and stark differences from the situation here.

Black people have lived in England for hundreds of years, but have only come in great numbers in the past forty years. Traveling to the colonial Caribbean's "mother England" during the war and post-war years, Blacks found jobs and housing, education, and the dream of an economically better future. While their numbers and those of other immigrants from British colonies remained small, white England was relatively comfortable with this new presence. But Black protests in the 1950s showed that relations were not as peaceful between Black and white England as whites would have the world believe.

When the Black presence in England proved to be permanent, and Black

people themselves proved determined to retain their own cultural heritage, whites began to fear that their "pure British culture" might be changed forever. Their reactions to the perceived threat were predictably racist, and the Black community fought back. The racism continues, and the fight-back continues.

In December 1986, I was able to travel to England to represent New England prisoner rights activists in meetings with Amnesty International. My meetings with Amnesty completed, I spent a week in the East Midlands (central England) city of Nottingham. While there I had the opportunity to meet with Black community workers, youth, artists, and elders. Despite the short duration of the visit — about ten days — I was able to learn quite a bit about the Black community in England and about its similarities and differences compared to the Black community in the U.S.

For African-Americans of Caribbean heritage, many of whom have family in England, the Black community there is not a complete mystery. Activists here know of the community in England largely through news of the uprisings in Brixton and elsewhere. But for most African-Americans, there are no connections to and no knowledge of

our sister community, the only other in an English-speaking, industrialized country.

Without that knowledge, African-Americans and Blacks in England are unable to learn from and teach one another. Without a clear understanding of the Black community in England, Black and white activists in the U.S. are formulating their opinions on British politics and culture based on an incomplete picture of the country. Despite their small numbers (4% compared to 22% in the U.S.) Afro-Caribbean and African people are very much a part of that picture.

In many ways, Black culture in England is similar to Black culture in the U.S. African-American music is popular among Blacks in England, as are U.S. clothing and hair styles. The Black church, while different in style from that of the U.S., plays a key role in England's Black communities. The family is an important source of strength, particularly the extended family. To cope with housing and job shortages, relatives newly arrived in the country, or traveling from other areas of Britain, often live with whatever family they have in a given city or town. As in the U.S., children are taught to be proud of their heritage,

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and to study in order to bring their people forward into a better life.

If the similarities are striking, so are the differences. Because most Blacks are among the first two or three generations in England, they don't have the experience shared by African-Americans of spending hundreds of years in the same land, with no clear memories of their homeland. For Blacks in England, the Caribbean is a place to look to as "home," in an even greater way than African-Americans look to the Southern United States.

As African-American culture is shaped by the Southern experience, so Black culture in England is strongly shaped by the Caribbean experience. The "down-home" music of Blacks in England is not blues, jazz, and gospel as much as it is calypso, soca, and reggae. While some Black youth in England have taken to the hip-hop, beat box, rap style of young African-Americans, the overwhelming majority of urban youth are into rasta culture. Their dreadlocks and reggae and Caribbean patois set them aside from the rest of British culture and make clear their ties to their own heritage.

For the Afro-Caribbean community in England, patois is the language of choice. The poets and musicians I met during my trip used the language as a way to confirm their pride in their communities and to acknowledge the African influence in their culture.

Some elements of African-American culture are strangely missing from England's Black community. The role played by Islam in the African-American community, for instance, that of a spiritual tie to the African homeland, and of a religious belief which affirms African heritage, has no parallel in England. While some Blacks from Africa, also immigrants to colonialism's "mother country," are Moslem, Islam in the main is seen as the religion of India and the Middle East. It is not, as in the U.S., a path chosen by many Blacks to forge closer cultural and religious links with Africa.

And in England, there is no Latino culture, or virtually none. That means no salsa music, no Mexican or Cuban or Puerto Rican language, music, food, or dance to intermingle with African culture as it does in the United States. I felt this absence acutely, and was only partially soothed by the Latin influences in Caribbean culture.

That Indians and Pakistanis are often called "Black" is another cultural difference for African-Americans. Many of us are of mixed white and African heritage, the result largely of the rape of African women slaves by whites. For the community here, an African background, rather than color, is the determining factor in "Blackness."

The "down-home" music of Blacks in England is not blues, jazz, and gospel as much as it is calypso, soca, and reggae . . . The overwhelming majority of urban youth are into rasta culture.

England also, perhaps fortunately, lacks a Mason-Dixon line. (Some say that the U.S. does also — Malcolm X once said that the real Mason-Dixon line is at the U.S.-Canadian border.) While there is a clear distinction made between North and South in England, with the North, interestingly enough, the economically and socially stigmatized area, there is no history of Black flight and migration from South to North. There are cities with large concentrations of Blacks, but in England there is no Mississippi, no Alabama.

The ways in which Blacks contributed to England's economic and industrial power are also different. For Blacks now in England, that contribution was largely made from afar, with over three hundred years of slave labor on British-owned plantations generating wealth which returned to England. For African-Americans, the plantations were in the United States, the country in which we still live. Because of this, we have a clearer sense of ownership of the land here. Even though many of us have lost our traditional farmlands, working with the land remains a part of the African-American heritage not paralleled in the experience of Black people in England.

Community Resources

As I met with dozens of Black community workers, I was often reminded of the Robin Hood legend for which the city of Nottingham is best known. The image of taking from the rich to

benefit the poor is particularly appropriate for the city's Black community, which struggled long and hard with city and county government in order to secure funding for community programs.

As part of the fightback against British racism, Blacks in Nottingham have demanded, and have gained, several community centers and social service agencies, as well as government offices monitoring racism in housing and employment. Staffed largely by young Black activists, these community resources are in a position similar to that of Black institutions in the U.S. during the late 1970s. Dependent on government funds, they face the same threat of cutbacks.

As an African-American who grew up during the 1960s and '70s, I felt a strange kind of déjà vu as I looked at the state of the Black inner-city community in England. Despite constant threats from the Thatcher government, social welfare programs haven't yet been cut back into nonexistence. There is a job placement program in Nottingham called the Marcus Garvey CETA program, nearly identical to the CETA jobs programs which once provided employment for inner-city people here. And as was true in the U.S. program, CETA workers often staff community organizations in Nottingham, such as Ukaidi Welfare Rights Organization, and Matsimela (Roots), a community advocacy group.

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RESIST



ILLEGITIMATE AUTHORITY

Funding social change since 1967

The Resist Newsletter is published ten times a year by Resist, Inc., One Summer Street, Somerville, MA 02144. (617) 623-5110.

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Printing: Red Sun Press

Alliance for Cultural Democracy —Artists Imagining a Just Society

MATTHEW KOPKA AND
JUDY BRANFMAN

"We must recognize the inadequacy of the commitment . . . solely to political and economic democracies . . . as a world view, and to add a third commitment — the achievement of cultural democracy."

Arlene Goldbard

The woman (or man) of the future shall not live by her fair share of the bread alone. Nor by her ideology, needless to say. The arts must play an integral role in our formulation of a more just society. Many artists, long aware of that fact, have come to call this goal *cultural democracy*.

Cultural democracy, as the community activists, performing and visual artists, poets, writers and musicians, feminists, educators, and other members of the Alliance for Cultural Democracy have come to define it, means:

. . . that culture is an essential human need, and that each person and community has the right to a culture or cultures of their choice . . . that all communities should have equitable access to the material resources of the commonwealth for their cultural expression . . . that cultural values and policies should be decided in public debate with the guaranteed participation of all communities . . . [and] that the government does not have the right to favor one culture or form of culture over another.

While political organizers still tend to think of progressive arts work as that entertainment which keeps crowds from drifting away between speakers, and of community arts as expendable social work, the Alliance for Cultural Democracy seeks to provide new and more fruitful models for collaboration between progressive organizations and cultural workers.

The idea of the arts as an essential component of cultural democracy is not new. With or without official sup-



port, artists, community activists and cultural policy experts have for years considered community cultural projects crucial to communities' ability to define ourselves in our own terms. The 1982 Declaration of the UNESCO conference on Cultural Policies is a document rich with the issues and demands of diverse nations and peoples concerned with their right to cultural self-determination. For example:

Every culture represents a unique and irreplaceable body of values since each people's traditions and forms of expression are its most effective means of demonstrating its presence in the world.

The assertion of cultural identity therefore contributes to the liberation of peoples. Conversely, any form of domination constitutes a denial or an impairment of that identity.

Any cultural policy should restore to the development process its profound, human significance. New models are required. And it is in the sphere of culture and education that they are to be found.

While many countries have developed formal strategies to involve arts workers in addressing these issues, the United States has been peculiarly isolated from this exchange — and virtually cut off since its withdrawal from UNESCO in 1985. As President

Reagan took office in 1980, the Heritage Foundation presented him with an advisory paper identifying arts funding as a "funnel to subversive activity throughout the U.S.," and recommended that funds for the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) be cut.

While Mr. Reagan has claimed that the United States in fact has no cultural policy, *all* policy has cultural effects. This fact was brought home during a participatory event at ACD's recent national conference in Boston, when Sula Rose Shepard, a Black woman who founded and directs Tucson's "Funding Consultants," insisted, "When the grandmother of my grandmother's grandmother was brought to this country she was told, 'Do not speak your language! Do not practice your religion! Do not wear your native dress! Do not braid your hair with beads!' Now, that's cultural policy."

ACD's History

The Neighborhood Arts Programs National Organizing Committee (NAPNOC) was formed to address the issues common to the community arts programs which had sprung up, often aided by government programs, through the mid-'70s. One of its chief early undertakings was a study of the impact of the Community Education and Training Act (CETA) on neighborhood arts development. Later, with the demise of such federal funding, NAPNOC emerged as an independent body and developed a more activist stance. The concept of cultural democracy was elaborated more fully (as was happening in a number of other parts of the world) and, largely through the efforts of Don Adams and Arlene Goldbard, who had been hired to run the organization and who wrote and edited its influential magazine *Cultural Democracy*, it came to be recognized both as a "universal right and a tool of analysis."

The group has since come to include both performing and visual artists, poets, writers and musicians, educators, students, political

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organizers, and other activists. Its activities fall into two broad areas — a national yearly conference, where issues and work are examined, and both networking and vital educational exchanges take place; and publication of *Cultural Democracy* and the ACD *Bulletin*, with one issue per year of the latter produced by each of the group's six geographic regions.



alternative art and culture, members attended slideshows, video and film screenings, a cabaret, and tours of Boston public art projects and community arts and cultural centers. There were workshops on popular art and mass culture, Black music and dance, street theater, artists' housing and communities, theater work with inner-city teens, and the integration of the arts in labor history education.

Guests included singer and cultural animator Jane Sapp, political activist and theorist Mel King, Laurel Chiten (director and producer of the lesbian soap opera "Two in Twenty"), Australian muralist Anne Morris and Helmut Angula, a representative of SWAPO. Organizations represented included the Artists Call Against Intervention in Central America, the United Mime Workers, the United Fruit Co. (a Boston-based gay theater collective), Washington, D.C.'s Black Artist/White Artist Collective, Canada's Association for Native Development in the Performing and Visual Arts, Boston's Asian American Resource Workshop, and the African National Congress.

In 1985, ACD's conference had been built around three definitions of community: community as defined by where we live; by common issues or concerns; and by the constituencies we are part of and work with.

Regardless of such affiliations, members have become increasingly aware of how vulnerable their communities are, particularly in the cities, where limited room for expansion has made areas in which we live and work suddenly economically desirable again, and prey to exploitation. Whether it be Roxbury's initiative to secede from the city of Boston and become "Mandela" or the battle of New York City's Interarts theater and other cultural institutions to maintain facilities for alternative, low-income arts organizations — it seemed essential that the 1986 conference address the issue of self-determination in community development.

In a plenary session devoted to "The Essential Link: Culture and Community Development," a discussion between two English community arts workers, an Appalachian theater director and two Boston area arts administrators highlighted, among many issues, opposing viewpoints on the role of the arts in neighborhood development. One view sees art's role as essentially one of beautification (or, at times, as documentary), while another demands the right to community-based participatory projects that address issues going far beyond art alone. When is the placement of public art in a neighborhood undergoing gentrification simply "gilding the ghettos,"

Writing in the *Village Voice*, Lucy Lippard communicated some of the excitement of one of the conferences, in 1982 in Omaha, calling the group's politics a "highly-sophisticated populism," with members' views ranging "from liberal to solid left" but "without rhetoric or sectarian bickering," "political disagreements acknowledged and worked with, but not allowed to divide." Members, she wrote, had discovered that "artistic collaboration need not replace individual work, but can enrich and expand it."

Lippard noted Los Angeles muralist Judy Baca's model "four steps" through which cultural work might engender political change — by "restoring lost information" (including our own history), by "creating moral indignation," by "conceiving new visions or alternatives" and by "taking action." In Ms. Baca's own work, the steps had been integral in the creation of a quarter-mile long mural depicting the "people's history" of California, designed cooperatively through oral history and study, and painted with the help of many L.A. youths over eight years' span.

The group's tenth anniversary conference (entitled "Imagination") was held in Boston this past November, co-sponsored by the host Roxbury Community College in a pilot attempt to integrate ACD concerns with those of the community in which its yearly meeting took place. In a three-day festival of

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members wondered, and when is it part of the struggle to combat it?

As ACD grows, several discussions within the organization have become more sharply focused. The government shift away from the kind of support that arts organizations received in the 1970s has left fewer organizations intact and more individual artists searching for suitable means of political expression. ACD has thus become an alliance not only of arts organizations but of individual arts and cultural workers. Looking towards serving this changing alliance — and building not just a network of individuals but a basis for trust among them — has cast into sharp relief the question of whether the organization should content itself with facilitating development of that network (no mean feat in itself during political and economic hard times) or develop a stronger project orientation, with greater emphasis on education and leadership training. The difficulties involved in reaching consensus, let alone carrying out its resolutions, in a group as diverse and far-flung and as bereft of social and monetary supports as ACD can seem overwhelming.

“We have to go and rediscover in our communities what so many years of oppression has buried. We have to give new life to what once had been our own, and to displace what is not ours.”

Forging Links

At recent conferences, ACD members have seen some strikingly beautiful examples of the power of both individuals *and* organizations in the development of grass-roots cultural initiatives, throughout this country and the world.

Dudley Cocke is one of the founders of “Appalshop,” an arts and education center in Whitesburg, Kentucky which evolved out of an Office of Economic Opportunity project for communities with high unemployment. Today, Appalshop holds video and film training workshops, has built a recording studio, and recently opened its own FM radio station, the first such



Photos by Bill Short, Dennis Fieldler, Angel Moreno, Sal Salerno, Jubilee Arts Team

non-commercial venture in the Eastern Kentucky/Western Virginia region that it serves. “Bad art,” as Cocke noted Tolstoy once said, “keeps the privileged from questioning their privilege,” whereas good art “should embody the highest perceptions and ideals of its age. . . . The subject matter of the art of the future will be either feelings drawing men toward union, or such as already unite them; and the forms of art will be such as will be open to everyone.”

During her 1985 visit, Nidia Bustos said, “When I listen to the people in the Alliance . . . I feel like I’m in Nicaragua,” — finding the same urgency in members’ discussions about the democratizing role art can and should play in our society. She described her own work as director of MECATE, her country’s rural workers’ movement for expression in theater and the arts. “In the majority of countries, artistic work is an elitist work — this is the reproduction of what the society is. In MECATE we always get the community to participate. This method of creation is a way of avoiding the way elitism gets reproduced on a micro level as happens in other places.”

“We have to go and rediscover in our communities what so many years of oppression has buried. We have to give new life to what once had been our own, and to displace what is not ours,” Bustos said.

Perhaps the event that caused most excitement at the 1986 conference was the appearance of seven English com-

munity arts workers. Young veterans of England’s ongoing cultural and political struggles, they have clearly evolved a working model worthy of close examination, and brought with them a powerful “Manifesto,” a highly sophisticated critique of the workings of English and international culture and a call for cultural democracy. Clearly, there are differences in the two countries’ political and economic realities. Despite Margaret Thatcher’s very hard-line conservative government, English cultural workers for the moment enjoy local and national support their counterparts in the United States can only dream about. But the issues, As Sylvia King and Karen Merkel told one of the plenary gatherings, are the same. “We think that a global look at what is going on is really important. We can work in our own backyards . . . but we can’t forget the kind of colonial and international influence, the multi-national companies’ influence, that is going on all over. We must make these kinds of links. We must begin to form alliances across national boundaries.”

The ‘Bill of Cultural Rights’

Adams and Goldbard’s expertise in matters of cultural policy meant that the magazine *Cultural Democracy* carried a wealth of in-depth information not only on the nuts and bolts of grass-roots cultural work, but on the vital issues of national cultural planning as well — not just the “stop the NEA cuts” articles many arts magazines

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were running, but a complete analysis of the Reagan administration's program from a progressive and anti-militarist perspective. This essential strand of early Alliance work is being pulled through to the present in the form of a "Bill of Cultural Rights," the first draft of which, after considerable research and consultation, is presently being assembled.

The document will be a flexible one, addressing the basic and specific cultural rights to which all people should be entitled. ACD has and continues to invite other organizations and individuals to participate in the assessment and development of this document.

Looking Ahead

What is required now for the Alliance to become the powerful national force its members are convinced it can be? "A full-time staff," says recently-retired president Lina Newhouse, a painter, farmer, and community organizer — the problem of funding is a great one for a group which has been openly critical of the government, not only for its role in the arts, but for its national and international policies as well. Lots of talk and the generation of many proposals, say Adams and Goldbard, who would also like to see a plank bearing language similar to the "Bill's" definition of the cultural rights of woman and man in the Democratic party's 1988 platform.

The Resist Pledge System

The most important source of Resist's income is monthly pledges. Pledges help us plan ahead by guaranteeing us a minimum monthly income. In turn, pledges receive a monthly reminder letter (in addition to the newsletter) which contains news of recent grants and other Resist activities. So take the plunge and become a Resist pledge!

Yes, I would like to pledge \$ _____ monthly to the work of Resist.

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In any case, some new directions are apparent. An "organizational resource network," a cross-listing of members by skill and areas of artistic endeavor, is being prepared so that members throughout the country can more easily connect. An increased emphasis on and understanding of the role of education in the development of cultural democracy is also apparent. Drafters of the forthcoming "Cultural Bill of Rights" have identified some of the planks of their platform on education: "multi-cultural history and imagery" taught in the schools, with "access to bi-lingual education," "curriculums shaped by local culture and needs," with "critical thinking taught and encouraged."

The group has also recently sought to address issues of racism and sexism more directly, voting greater numbers of people of color to its board and examining its own internal structure as part of that process. And recognizing that outreach to new members of all kinds must ultimately begin at the grass roots, the group has decided to make the year and a half before its next meeting one of intense local activity by each of its regional groups. In several areas, including Boston, one of the first fruits of that effort will be a series of *penas* or salons, gatherings at which local artists and others will present their work, describe their methods, and begin planning of future projects. For further information nationally, please write to the *Alliance for Cultural Democracy*, Box 2478, Station A, Champaign, IL 61820. In Boston, contact Judy Branfman, 327 Summer St., Boston, MA 02210, (617) 423-3711.

Branfman is a community activist, textile artist and a board member of the Alliance. Matthew Kopka is a freelance writer and journalist and Special Projects Consultant to the Hayden School in Dorchester, Massachusetts.

Cultural Democracy: A Reading List

UNESCO Publications — particularly the Final Report of the World Conference on Cultural Policies held in Mexico City in 1982, which summarizes global thinking on cultural issues among policymakers. Available in the U.S. through UNIPUB, 10033-F Martin Luther King Highway, Lanham, MD 20706; call toll-free for the 86-87 UNESCO catalog — (800) 233-0506. Also, check the documents sections of major libraries.

Council of Europe Publications — particularly *Towards Cultural Democracy* and *Socio-Cultural Animation* (the now universally-accepted term for the process whereby cultural growth is stimulated in communities). Catalog available from Manhattan Publishing, P.O. Box 650, Croton-on-Hudson, NY 10520, or (914) 271-5194.

John Berger — *Ways of Seeing* — an introduction to the critical study of art and culture.

Paulo Freire — particularly his *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* and *Education for Critical Consciousness*.

Cultures in Contention — including *The Sociology of Culture* and *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*.

Directory of Arts Activism: We Will Not Be Disappeared — a listing of activist artist and arts groups and publications from *Cultural Correspondence*, 505 West End Ave. 15C, New York, NY 10024.

Another Standard — The Manifesto — Comedia Publishing Group, London; available from *Cultural Correspondence* (see above).



Illustration by Lincoln Cushing

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The Marcus Garvey Center is run, for the most part, by young Black people, in their twenties and thirties. Most were born and raised, or at least raised, in England, and have only indirect ties to the Caribbean, but they clearly identify as Afro-Caribbean people. The Garvey Center runs an elders activities program, and houses day-care and skills-training programs run by Mat-simela. The large performance hall and recording studio are used regularly by both local performers and major reggae groups.

Like the Garvey Center, the Ukaidi Welfare Rights Organization's building is well-used by the entire community. The average age of welfare counselors is 25, while the average age of the pensioners playing dominoes in the meeting room is considerably higher. Much of the work of the welfare counselors is done out of the office, at the homes and gathering places of Nottingham's Black people.

The vibrancy and effectiveness of these community efforts makes it even more crucial to ensure their continued existence. One problem facing agency administrators is the lack of Black input into British government decision-making. Only one Black sits in Parliament's non-elected House of Lords. Of 625 elected representatives to the House of Commons, none is Black.

During my stay in Nottingham, I spoke at length with Leroy Wallace, director of Ukaidi Welfare Rights Organization. Echoing activists working with youth in the United States, he said, "The key to the oppression of Blacks in England has been the criminalization of Black youth, pushing them into drugs and crime by consistent discrimination in jobs and job levels. Black youth unemployment is now at 50%, as compared to 15% for whites."

Wallace and others spoke to the widespread belief that government funding of programs in the Black community, while somewhat helpful, is basically a failed attempt to buy off the community in order to avoid the kind of uprisings that happened in the U.S. in the '60s. It is expected that, as happened here, funding for these programs will eventually be cut. Wallace told me that funding such as that for CETA jobs is welcomed by the community "not because we believe that these short-term, low-skill jobs can ultimately solve our problems, but



TURBO, the Black Arts Group of Nottingham, performing dub poetry at the Portsmouth Polytechnic. Photo: Linda Thurston.

because they can help to change some of the negative attitudes about Black people's willingness to work, and they do provide some funds for the youth."

Police Harassment

Police harassment, the source of many of the youth uprisings since 1958, has continued. In the four-week period preceding my trip in December 1986, police arrested over 100 Black youth, more than are usually arrested in a year. One community worker told me, "Our concern is with the manner of the arrests, as well as the numbers. People's homes were raided, and the homes of friends and family members. The arrests were supposedly an attempt to curb drug trafficking, but the police know that the trade in this area is controlled by whites, with Blacks making up only a small percentage."

Black conflict with the police, especially in the 1981 uprisings in Brixton, has led to increased attention on police treatment of the Black community. Studies have found an increasing number of Black arrests and increasing numbers of Blacks dying in police custody. Often the threat of deportation is used against Black suspects, including those with British citizenship.

While structures for review of police actions exist, none are independent of

the police departments. Few complaints are filed, and many of those that are filed are withdrawn after police intimidation of the complainant.

As in the U.S., the Black community's problems with the criminal justice system do not stop with the police. Blacks are disproportionately represented in England's prisons and are more likely than whites to be mistreated in those prisons. While at Ukaidi, I met with the Nottingham Black Initiative (NBI), a group of probation and human service advocates working to increase community input in the running of the criminal justice system. The Initiative is founded on the belief that "... white institutions cannot serve the needs of Black offenders on their own. They need to be willing to step outside established boundaries and open themselves up to local Black organizations."

The NBI works to challenge discriminatory prison policies and to monitor and check racist attitudes among guards and other prison personnel. They also advocate bringing Black visitors (prisoner support volunteers) into the prisons to ensure that the needs of Black prisoners are met and that they have adequate contact with their communities. Their effort is a new one, and its potential for success is still unknown. When I met with them,

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GRANTS

Project on Youth and Non-Military Opportunities, P.O. Box 157, Encinitas, CA 92024.

Formed in 1984 by a coalition of anti-militarist, civil rights, and social justice groups in San Diego, the Project on Youth and Non-Military Opportunities (Project YANO) works to inform high school students of alternatives to the military for education and career opportunities. According to the Navy, San Diego is home to the world's largest military complex, and the city is the seventh largest in the country.

Project YANO goes directly into the schools with its program, as opposed to halting at the entrances and relying on leafleting alone to reach students. Focusing on schools with high Latino, Black and Asian enrollment, juvenile hall and court system schools, and schools near military installations, Project YANO does classroom presentations and provides literature to the counseling offices of one-third of the schools in San Diego county. A number of men and women veterans participate in Project YANO's speaker pool.

Project YANO lets students know the realities of military life and recruitment fraud, gives draft counseling information, and emphasizes concrete

civilian alternatives for job training and education. The group has produced materials that reflect its members' concern about the specific impact of military recruitment on people of color. In addition to working with students, Project YANO attempts to educate the counselors, teachers, and administrators in the schools. The group takes a strong stand against the racism, sexism, and sexual harassment prevalent in the military.

RESIST's recent grant of \$500 went to increased outreach efforts to students and community agencies, efforts which include the development of a campaign to promote student involvement in community activism rather than the military, and which encourage young people to believe they can work effectively for social change.

Dorchester Women's Committee, Tenth International Women's Day Celebration, Dorchester, MA.

Ten years ago, a small group of women from Dorchester (one of Boston's largest and poorest neighborhoods, and home to many of the city's people of color) got together to plan a celebration in honor of Internal Working Women's Day. The event brought over 150 women and girls of all colors, cultures and nationalities together to celebrate the achievements of women locally and internationally, and to make visible the many community resources available to poor women and those dealing with the welfare system, drug or alcohol dependency, and sexual and physical abuse.

Since then the Dorchester Women's Committee has continued to organize an International Women's Day celebration each year and has become a community-based group whose goal is to strengthen the women's movement in Dorchester, ensuring that it reflects the community in terms of race, class, nationality, age and sexual preference. The Committee works to end racial violence in Boston and to improve programs for children, including daycare, schools, and jobs for youth.

In its ten years, the Dorchester Women's Committee has intervened in women battering situations, assisted with the opening of a local shelter, established a loan fund for neighborhood women, supported its

members in crisis, and provided help to women new to the community.

The group has also worked to educate itself and collaborate with the organizing efforts of women in Latin America and South Africa, and has donated much of the money raised through grassroots fundraising efforts to prison support groups, the Free South Africa Movement, and the COMADRES (Committee of the Mothers of Disappeared and Political Prisoners in El Salvador).

RESIST's grant of \$250 went towards expenses for the Tenth Annual IWD celebration.

BLACKS IN ENGLAND

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plans were being finalized for meetings with the Probation Service.

Clearly, the problems faced by Black people in England are similar to those faced by African-Americans. Greater communication and solidarity between the two communities could add much to the growth of both their struggles. Blacks in England might learn from the experiences of Black people in the U.S., and African-Americans might gain a new sense of energy from the whirlwind of activism among Blacks in England.

I've brought some of that energy back with me for my work in Boston's Black community and in the state's prisons. Roxbury in Boston is not Brixton in London or Hyson Green in Nottingham, but in many ways we are closer to those English communities than to some several hundred miles closer to us.

Novelist Salman Rushdie has said, "Britain is now two entirely different worlds, and the one you inherit is determined by the colour of your skin." We cannot claim to understand the people of the African diaspora without understanding Blacks in England, and we cannot claim to understand England without understanding both of its "different worlds" — Black and white.

Linda Thurston is a Black community activist, co-producer of WRBB-FM's (Boston) "People on the Front Line," and a long-time advocate for prisoners' rights.



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