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RECOMMENDATIONS AND RESOLUTIONS ARISING FROM MEETING

BETWEEN THE ECC, DEPT OF ARTS & CULTURE & AMANDLA

CHAIR: Cde Pallo Jordan

PRESENT: ECC: Cdes James Stuart, Koos Segola & Mamatho

DAC: Cdes Barbara Masekela, Willy Kgositsile, Thele, Angela & Bachana

AMANDLA: Cdes Ndonga, Skulu, Xolisile, Thobeka & Dikeledi

This meeting was held at the request of the DAC to try and solve the problems of AMANDLA. The DAC and Amandla representatives presented proposals arising out of meetings held together and a memorandum was presented by Amandla.

Cde Barbara objected to the fact that a memorandum from Amandla was presented to the meeting with no prior consultation with the Department, particularly in light of the frank and open meetings held and the fact that the proposals were jointly discussed, agreed and presented.

As the memorandum was only a 'fleshing out' of the proposals with no point of conflict, both it and the proposal were read and discussed together.

The following topics and plans of action were discussed and agreed:

A. AMANDLA ADMINISTRATION

1. By virtue of the fact that AMANDLA is the National Cultural Ensemble of the ANC it falls under the DAC.
2. Owing to its placement in Luanda the troupe automatically subordinates to the Regional Command structures and the Chief Reps Office on matters related to regional administration. Should a regional Cultural Committee be established, which would be answerable to the DAC, Amandla would not fall under it but would be expected to help in the cultural work of the committee.
3. The DAC, through its Liaison Officer, is overall responsible for Amandla.
4. Lines of communication are to be kept open. Amandla is to send written minutes and requisitions through the Liaison Officer.
5. The DAC must be consulted by other Departments and structures and Amandla members before making or acting on any decisions.
6. Scholarship applications must go through the DAC. Should scholarships be made available through other Departments the DAC should be given adequate notice to find replacements and make arrangements. 6 months is suggested.
7. Leadership from the DAC other than the Liaison Officer should visit Amandla at least every 6 months.

ACTION POINT:

Due to a lack of clearly defined chain of command it is necessary that the DAC role of authority be agreed by higher structures, in accordance with the PMC.

B. JOB DESCRIPTION OF ADMINISTRATIVE PERSONNEL

1. LIAISON OFFICER: as appointed by the DAC, whose responsibilities are:

- i) To liaise between the DAC and Amandla
- ii) To visit Amandla regularly and spend time with Amandla well ahead of tours so as to make adequate preparations.
- iii) To see to the needs of Amandla and to take responsibility for fulfilling them and requisitions.
- iv) To give advice on artistic matters and keep the group informed on artistic and cultural developments inside South Africa, internationally and of the Movement.
- v) To take charge and act as political spokesperson on tours
- vi) On behalf of the DAC and Amandla to make contact with outside groups when on tour.

2. ARTISTIC DIRECTOR:

Should this be a permanent position then the artistic director falls under ANC rules and can only take on outside work in consultation with the structure he/she falls under. Once that person is absent on outside work consultation is neither practical nor necessary.

Artistic directors can be called upon on a temporary basis to come and work with Amandla on a specific project. This can only enrich Amandla. Preferably such a person should come from within the ANC, but if this is not feasible, then outsiders can be invited once the necessary security precautions and arrangements have been made.

The artistic director is appointed by the DAC and whose duties are:

- i) To be overall artistic and music head as far as the show is concerned.
- ii) To work closely with the liaison officer in interviews related to the artistic nature of the show.
- iii) To liaise with the DAC through the liaison officer on the selection of an advance party to make pre-tour arrangements.
- iv) To consult with the DAC on matters related to tours, publicity, media, performances, recordings and copyright material.

3. COMMANDER: per appointment of Regional Command structures, whose duties are:

- i) To be overall head of the unit in day to day administration and responsible to the DAC through the liaison officer.
- ii) To be responsible for the troupe as RPMC authority over the unit.

4. COMMISSAR: per appointment of Regional Command structures, whose duties are:

- i) To be political head of the unit as appointed by RPMC structures.
- ii) To help conduct interviews during tours and extra-ordinary occasions.
- iii) To be responsible for the political upgrading of the group and organise political and educational classes.

5. SECURITY OFFICER: per appointment of Security, whose duties are:

- i) To be part of the administration of Amandla i.e. to work in close consultation with administrative members.
- ii) To be responsible for the security of the group, including passports and immigration etc..
- iii) To liaise with ANC relevant structures on all above matters.

C. BUDGET

The DAC does not have a special allocation for its cultural work. Funds received from cultural activities or ear-marked for cultural work (eg. Sun City funds) are put into general treasury funds. Consequently it often happens that Amandla requisitions are not met. Amandla is in dire need of new costumes, props, instruments, instrumental fittings, tape recorders, cassettes etc. The present system of individually requisitioning for items is hopelessly inadequate. Moreover money is needed for the new show, publicity material, workshops, visiting artists working with Amandla and other contingencies. In view of the fact that it is very often a too lengthy process to requisition and obtain items as they are needed for Amandla it was urgently proposed that:

- i) A financial budget for the year be presented to the TGO. On negotiation the agreed money to be made available for Amandla expenses.
- ii) The budget be sufficient to cover the above mentioned and the costs of the new show.
- iii) ANC material presently in stock be requisitioned for costumes.

ACTION POINT:

ECC Secretariat to bring up matter of allocation of funds for culture from cultural sources with TGO and to present the above proposal for an Amandla budget.

D. NEW AMANDLA SHOW

It is strongly and widely felt that Amandla must work on new material. This involves recruitment, new script, involvement of others in artistic direction, new costumes, props and instruments. Obviously this has to be done within financial constraints (see Budget)

1. RECRUITMENT:

There are already 18 male members all of whom are versatile and talented. This number should be closed and new recruits only to replace those leaving.

Of the ten female members most are weak and insufficiently versatile. There is a dire need to recruit new women into the cast, whilst keeping the same numbers.

Auditions in Mazimbu have been unsuccessful due to the fact that comrades cannot be released from their studies, nor has the search been successful. Consequently we propose that:

- i) Amandla should be given an equal chance to recruit female comrades from military structures.
- ii) The DAC work with PMC and recruit women directly from inside South Africa on the understanding that on completion of military training they be released to Amandla.

- iii) That talented school leavers from Mazimbu be released to Amandla, particularly those who want to take up cultural scholarships. Working with Amandla prior to taking up a scholarship would be an invaluable chance to gain experience and give the Department and the individual concerned time to assess their suitability for further studies in the Arts.

ACTION POINT:

1. To approach PMC re recruitment requests i) & ii)
2. ECC Secretariat to approach Dept of Education and discuss possible recruitment from Mazimbu. Should it be possible some Amandla members to go to Mazimbu and Dakawa not only for selection of new members but to hold a workshop.

2. NEW SCRIPT:

Already the Amandla cast has begun working on new material, but outside involvement is needed. It was agreed that:

- i) Cde Willy Kgositsile go and work with Amandla and produce a new script.
- ii) The DAC follow up Dollar Brand's acceptance to come and work with Amandla on his opera - but only if it is properly organised and planned well in advance, so that he can schedule it.
- iii) The DAC look into resource people to work with Amandla in artistic direction of the new show.
- iv) Resources and material be collected from home for future productions (plays, poetry, music, songs etc)

E. AMANDLA TOURS

Programming of tours well in advance is often difficult due to the DAC's dependence on invitations which very often are at the last minute. Cancellation of projected tours are also often at the eleventh hour. However, as far as possible the DAC should work towards a programme - even touting for invitations. Once a tour is confirmed other countries can be approached to host Amandla performances, thereby cutting travel costs which are often too exorbitant, particularly for developing countries. In regard to successfully organising tours the DAC should find its own 'promoters' within the ranks of the ANC, or where feasible approach Governments or Solidarity groups, but any approach to commercial promoters should be made with caution.

Obviously Amandla tours cannot only be viewed in a commercial light and where it is deemed politically important for a tour but the host country cannot foot the whole bill, the ANC should find sponsorship. Such a decision rests with the leadership, once a tour proposal has been mooted.

In order to better organise Amandla and their tours and to prevent the recurrence of problems it was recommended that:

1. There be an Amandla programme which would necessitate advance planning.
2. There be centralised organisation of tours from the DAC in order to save such confusion when embassies make arrangements in Luanda without adequate communication with the DAC.

3. Co-ordination and communication between the DAC and Amandla be improved, through the DAC liaison officer. Amandla must refer any tour requests and plans to the DAC, and the liaison officer must keep the Department fully informed.
4. Amandla members can only telex instructions/requests by collective agreement.
5. The DAC liaison officer to spend time with Amandla well ahead of tours so as to make adequate preparations.
6. Amandla administrators (possibly two) go in advance of group to check out arrangements, publicity, technical requirements, stage facilities and size, halls, acoustics etc - the many things, which if not adequate, severely affect the success of the show.
7. Amandla's own publicity material to be taken or sent in advance.
8. The health of the cast be checked prior to leaving on tours. The show has been disrupted by many illnesses and cases of hospitalisation. Those who are unwell should not tour. Host countries must provide medical attention and facilities should the need arise.
9. The present Amandla cast form a pool of ANC artists, from which smaller groups can present performances other than the whole show. Such a large cast severely restricts their opportunities to perform overseas. If Amandla can offer alternatives with smaller numbers as fitting the needs of the various festivals etc then the Movement will reach a wider international audience. Possibly the smaller group tours will be able to raise funds.
10. An emergency fund be established with the TGO to take with them on tours to cover contingencies. Too often they are caught short which poses serious and unnecessary problems.

ACTION POINT:

The ECC Secretariat to request the TGO for an emergency fund to be taken on each tour. This will be accounted for in the proper manner to the TGO on completion of each tour.

F. ACCOMMODATION

It has been recognised and agreed for some time that the present Amandla accommodation is inadequate, insanitary and badly affecting the health of the cast. But the problem of alternative accommodation has not yet been solved. This is a priority. It was agreed:

1. Accommodation such as a large house should be found where they can live and preferably rehearse, especially as the present stage is collapsing and transport is problematic. However, the hall would still be available for daily rehearsals.
2. If constructing new premises on the plot is the only long term alternative, then accommodation still needs to be sought for the interim period.

ACTION POINT:

The Amandla comrades to look for alternative property to rent, whilst the DAC and ECC Secretariat to make preparations for funds with the TGO.

G. HEALTH

Amandla outlined the serious health problems of the group, explaining how their insanitary living conditions in Luanda and the particular pressures of their work and tours takes its toll on members. They do need special attention.

ACTION POINT:

Arrangements to be made through the ECC Secretariat for Amandla cast to be given thorough medical examinations. The ECC to decide where most appropriate. Mazimbu was suggested.

H. EDUCATION

1. A proposal was agreed for Amandla to spend one year in CUBA (or elsewhere, if not possible) where they can follow further studies, whilst at the same time develop their artistic skills. (See attached proposal) Cde O. R. Tambo took the proposal in order to introduce the matter to the Cuban authorities. The DAC to follow it up through the correct channels.
2. The two sound technicians should be sent on a course to study P.A. systems. At present they are not able to effectively control the Amandla custom made P.A. system, causing serious breakdowns and delays in shows.

I. WORKSHOPS

It was agreed that:

1. Amandla should play an active role as cultural workers and representatives of the DAC to enrich the cultural life of the Movement.
2. Workshops held by Amandla members should be programmed by the DAC in the different ANC regions.
3. Professional artists and resource people should be called to conduct art workshops with Amandla, including script-writers, musical composers, arrangers, producers, actors, directors, choreographers, dancers, costume designers, light and sound technicians etc.

J. FEMALE CAST WITH CHILDREN

According to the ruling that married couples with children must go to East Africa this has been complied. However, Tobeka Lebekeng has a two year old child whom she does not want to leave alone in Mazimbu. She is willing to stay there until the child is four years old, but her participation is absolutely crucial to Amandla. Already the women's section is weak and she is the only soloist remaining. They cannot afford to release her.

Cde Tobeka has made arrangements for someone in Lusaka to look after the child permanently. Given this it was proposed that:

1. The National Women's Secretariat be approached for permission for the child to remain here in Lusaka.
2. If necessary special dispensation be sought from the ECC or NEC Secretariats.

ACTION POINTS:

1. Meet with the Women's Secretariat and if necessary refer them to the ECC.
2. In the case of future cases affecting Amandla the ECC to go to the PMC, noting the problem.

K. BUWA

There has been great discontent at the method of organising and the outcome of BUWA, particularly the incorrect political line being portrayed. This was discussed at length, with the suggestion from the Cde Chair that a separate report be drawn up by the DAC for presentation to the ECC and NEC Secretariats. However, the following recommendations should be noted:

1. Amandla members do not want to participate in any future BUWA performances with the present script.
2. That the DAC should be consulted in any such future shows in which the ANC is involved. Of particular importance is the selection of the artists as this is crucial to the political content of the show.
3. Control should not be in the hands of one person, but of a collective, including someone whom the ANC can politically trust.
4. The ANC leadership should take a position and decision regarding future BUWA performances.