

LFMC CO OP



42 GLOUCESTER AVENUE, LONDON NW1 8JD

WORKSHOP: 071-722 1728 • ADMINISTRATION & DISTRIBUTION: 071-586 4806 • CINEMA: 071-586 8516

AGENDA FOR THE EMERGENCY GENERAL MEETING CALLED FOR 2ND JUNE 1991 AT THE LONDON FILMMAKERS CO-OP.

12.00. Meeting begins - introduction of new staff to the membership.

12.10. Background information on the reasons for calling an Emergency General Meeting: reports from staff in relation to proposals 1 and 2 below.

1pm. Personal statement from the outgoing Distribution Organiser, Tom Heslop.

1.15. Discussion and vote on Proposal 1 re LFMC's decision-making structure.

3pm. Discussion and vote on Proposal 2 re harrasment and victimisation of LFMC staff.

5pm. Scheduled close of meeting.

EMERGENCY GENERAL MEETINGS ARE ONLY CALLED IN THE MOST EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES WHEN CRISIS SITUATIONS AFFECTING THE CO-OP'S SURVIVAL ARISE. ALL MEMBERS WITH THE INTERESTS OF THE CO-OP AT HEART ARE STRONGLY ADVISED TO ATTEND.

PROPOSAL 1:

A vote of no confidence in the current structure of Executive Committee-Staff relations which has proved unworkable and led to acrimony and disarray. The London Filmmakers Co-op's decision-making structure should move on to the original proposal submitted to the Annual General Meeting of the 12th January 1991 whereby quarterly Executive meetings would outline the overall direction of the Co-op which would be executed by staff OR return to a modified version of the old system with staff and elected members both having voting rights on an Executive Committee meeting monthly whilst non-staff Executive members would meet quarterly as the Co-op's Board of Directors.

IS THIS A CO-OP OR A DICTATORSHIP ?

1. The system instituted in March 1991 constitutes a form of line-management entirely at odds with a co-operative organisation: staff have no part in decisions affecting their working conditions, work practice and their departments relations with outside bodies. This undermines any initiative and energy staff might have to offer and reduces them to being clerical assistants/technicians. Staff are now being dictated to and have no vote at Executive meetings where vital decisions affecting their departments are being made. Time and energy has been fruitlessly spent on bickering over minutiae which could have been better channelled into strengthening and expanding the Co-op. This effectively alters staff job descriptions on the basis of which they were voted in or have had votes of confidence passed at General Meetings. **THIS MEANS THE CO-OP HAS BECOME A REPRESSIVE HIERACHY... FAR WORSE THAN McDONALD'S !!**

2. Decisions are being made by people with no knowledge of the CURRENT challenges to Workshop, Cinema, Courses and Distribution: the contribution of new members with fresh ideas and members with experience of working at the Co-op is invaluable but this can only be DANGEROUSLY FLAWED if the opinions of the staff carry no weight at all.

3. DELEGATION: Outside bodies (funders, clients of all departments) assume the staff they deal with have been mandated to negotiate on behalf of the Co-op. If this is put into question, there will be a total lack of confidence in the organisation.

4. At the time of writing (8th May 1991) the current Executive Committee has failed to implement the few decisions it has made and keep abreast of the business of the Co-op. Surely it is unfair to expect a purely voluntary group to be involved in the minutiae of the day-to-day management of the Co-op ? Surely their energies could be better spent as a general guiding body building on areas such as Equal Opportunities, sponsorship, fundraising etc that staff do not have the time to fully explore ?

IS INTIMIDATION ACCEPTABLE ?

Since the Executive Committee elected in March has refused to address the issue of staff harassment, we demand that the General Membership does so as the daily functioning of the Co-op is being forcibly ground to a halt. Staff have been subject to intimidating and abusive letters ("The LFMC is stashing out money to some people who have no real interest in the place , or are downright capable of running it", Anna Thew, 27th February 1991; "You seem unclear as to what is needed", Martin Lugg to Sandy Weiland, 3rd May 1991 in connection with the Co-op's annual budget), phone-calls intimating embezzlement and mismanagement and have been subject to vilification campaigns. Staff have been hampered in their work by interference from a few Executive members who seem intent on undermining their competence for the jobs.

PROPOSAL 2A: That the Emergency General Membership work out disciplinary procedures to deal with harassment of any staff or members and implement them IMMEDIATELY.

Do members who instigate harassment have the real interests of the Co-op at heart ? Should they not be asked to STAND DOWN from positions of responsibility when they have carried out these extreme abuses of power (out of tune with the Co-op's Equal Opportunities and co-operative philosophy ?) Although this has come to a head now, there is a history of bullying and disruptive behaviour by a very small number of members which has continually undermined the development of the Co-op.

PROPOSAL 2B: Disciplinary procedures must (1) the prevention of people attaining positions of power within the Co-op when charges of harassment have been PROVED against them. (2) in extreme cases, membership may be rescinded.

THE FUTURE OF YOUR CO-OP IS IN JEOPARDY IRONICALLY AT A TIME OF ACTUAL EXPANSION AND AN IMMINENT MOVE TO A NEW BUILDING. PLEASE TURN UP !