

## Free business workshops for '87

While we are all wishing each other **prosperity** for the coming twelve months, Equinox Associates, a Brixton-based black business consultancy, are set on helping at least some of us to achieve it.

Beginning this Saturday (Jan. 10) Equinox are staging three two-day business workshops on successive weekends, designed for people with viable business ideas which are capable of attracting funds.

Sponsored by the MSC, the workshops (which include topics such as Self Employment and Business organisations, Business Records, Financial and Physical Resources and Marketing) are open to both the unwaged and employed.

Interviews began this week for the workshops which take place on 10/11, 17/18 and 24/25 January. Successful participants will be invited to attend a seven week part-time self-employment course to be held during weekends and evenings later this year.

Equinox, which was founded 3½ years ago, has already built a strong track record in business development and connected areas. Consisting of two principal members, Maxine James and Ade Sawyerr, they work

with a network of associates, including many black business professionals who are keen to reinvest the benefit of their experience in to the community.

Apart from workshop/courses, which are a regular feature of their round the year agenda, the Consultancy specialises in the preparatory



**Maxine James of Equinox Associates**

work involved before a business can actually start e.g. business plans, feasibility studies and research work.

Last year, they were involved in helping to relocate the many black employees who were made redundant by the closure of the Greater London Council; they also carried out the Demand Survey for the projected Afro-Caribbean Bank in London.

A major development in this year's programme is the launch of a recruitment consultancy for

black professionals seeking to move into middle/senior management positions.

"The need for black people in the boardroom is strongly recognised," said Maxine James, explaining the logic behind this new direction.

"We want companies to be more aware of the expertise

that exists amongst black professionals and how it can be of use to them."

The equal opportunities policies of most companies is basically not implemented, or else it is applied to sex and not race...we want to help them to implement it."

Both Maxine and Ade are well experienced in business development, although Maxine admits that the 'philosophy' behind Equinox stems from Ade. Last year, the two members went on a field-trip to the USA (sponsored by the

Commission for Racial Equality) where they investigated the various innovations to assist black business.

Although impressed by the involvement of central government over there, Ade was adamant that in principle government involvement in black business development should be restricted to funding people to do research. In essence, black business development agencies themselves, as in the case of Equinox, should be self determined.

"We even set up Equinox as a private company so that we can experience first-hand the real difficulties of being a black business," Maxine told *Caribbean Times*.

The current sequence of courses (which will be held in South Kilburn and Brixton) come recommended by successful trainees on previous courses; they came from a rich array of businesses spanning such industries as catering, publishing, promotion, printing, dress designing etc.

If your intention is to have a prosperous 1987, you have a positive idea and free time at the weekends, contact Maxine James at: **Equinox Associates 467, Brixton Road London SW9 8EA Tel: 01 733 7000**