



MARTIAL ARTISTS AGAINST RACISM

STATEMENT OF INTENT AND MANIFESTO

“In a racist society it is not enough to be non-racist, we must be anti-racist.”

— Angela Davis

“Your technique means nothing if you're not using your talents for the betterment of humanity.”

—Gene Dunn

STATEMENT OF INTENT

We note with concern the rise of racist, anti-immigrant and anti-refugee rhetoric across Britain and the rest of the developed world. This has been fuelled by lies and misinformation on social and mainstream media, and intensified by a number of unscrupulous political figures looking to exploit the situation for their own benefit. The August 2024 riots were a warning.

Recent studies have shown that over a third of people from minority groups have experienced racist assaults. 95% of Black British people believe the UK's curriculum neglects Black lives and experiences, while fewer than 2% think educational institutions take racism seriously. 87% expect to receive sub-standard levels of healthcare because of their race, while 79% believe the police still use stop and search unfairly against Black people. (The figures tend strongly to substantiate these beliefs)

We believe that an important part of the struggle against racism is the creation of a pervasive and profound anti-racist culture. The



Martial Arts can play an important role in this project. Nearly one million adults in England practice some form of combat sport on a monthly basis. A huge number of children spend some time in martial arts classes. Martial Arts teachers are often respected figures in their neighbourhoods, and are capable of connecting with some of the sections of society that can be vulnerable to racist influence.

The goal of Martial Artists Against Racism (MAARS) is to leverage that potential and to help create that anti-racist culture. One of the great things about our Marital Arts is that many people are often brought together under one roof whose paths would otherwise not meet: different social classes as well as people of different faiths and ethnic backgrounds.

It is our mission to make the Martial Arts more open and inviting to all; the best dojos do this already, with no discrimination nor bias.

We train together, we live together. And together, we live.

This spirit of the dojo must become the spirit of the community, this is our ultimate goal.

We realise the extent of the challenge, the reward is worth the effort. We will pursue with the awareness that:

“The true work of the martial arts is progress, not perfection”

— Gene Dunn

MANIFESTO

Endorsement of Clubs

Many people are anxious about attending martial arts classes as they feel that their ethnicity, gender or political beliefs could be a problem. Membership of MAARS will tell students that this is an inclusive and safe dojo.

The starter clubs will all endorse the Statement of Intent above.



Following that, other clubs will be invited to join, and others may apply. All clubs will also indicate a commitment to the principles and activities of MAARs and endorse the Statement of Intent.

Member Clubs will be provided with an online logo to indicate their endorsement by the MAARS.

Their websites can also contain or link to the Statement of Intent and the online MAARS document providing responses to the most common myths about immigration, refugees and the various minority groups that form our diverse community. This will also be downloadable for free on the main MAARS website; this website will also contain a list of all member clubs.

MAARs anti-racist material will be regularly updated and propagated.

There will be no membership fees associated with MAARs, either for clubs or students.

Social Media

The forces of racism are strong across the internet and exert a successful, toxic influence. MAARs will form part of the fightback and will make regular posts to encourage the formation of the pervasive and profound anti-racist culture referred to above.

The posts will be mostly positive, and will actively promote the benefits of immigration including the resultant diversity. Sometimes, the posts will address lies and misinformation propagated by racists and related organisations or individuals.

Member clubs will be invited to share MAARs social media posts, and will be encouraged to prepare and share their own such posts.

Seminars

Members of MAARS will look to provide regular seminars aimed at people who train regularly, and at those who are unable to do so. At least initially, we will look to proactively include and prioritise



vulnerable groups (such as Muslim women, young anti-racist activists with no fighting skills) and tailor the seminars to their needs.

Politics

MAARs will not make any party-political endorsements, or take any political positions other than a firm commitment to anti-racism and stances furthering the achievement of a wider, discrimination-free society. A wide variety of political views will be tolerated, but limits will be very clear.

Future Developments

The scope and role of MAARs will develop over time according to the evolving circumstances; as will decision making and management within the organisation. The core purpose and values of the organisation will remain constant.

Stewart McGill

Martial Artists Against Racism

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