



***Black Workers'
Conference
2007***

Report

***of the TUC Race Relations
Committee 2006-07***

TUC Black Workers' Conference 2007

at-bristol

Friday 20 April	14.00 to 17.30
-----------------	----------------

Saturday 21 April	09.30 to 17.30
-------------------	----------------

Sunday 22 April	from 09.15
-----------------	------------

REPORT	Page(s)
<i>1 Race Relations Committee</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>2 TUC/CRE Liaison Committee</i>	<i>5-6</i>
<i>3 Commission for Equality and Human Rights</i>	<i>6-7</i>
<i>4 Commission on Integration and Cohesion</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>5 Ethnic minority employment</i>	<i>7-8</i>
<i>6 TUC Equality Audit</i>	<i>8-9</i>
<i>7 Equalities Review</i>	<i>9-10</i>
<i>8 Campaign against the far right</i>	<i>10-11</i>
<i>9 Redwatch</i>	<i>11-12</i>
<i>10 Bicentenary</i>	<i>12-13</i>
<i>11 Muslim communities</i>	<i>13-14</i>
<i>12 Migrant workers</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>13 Asylum seekers and refugees</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>14 Organising black workers</i>	<i>15-16</i>
<i>15 HIV/AIDS</i>	<i>16</i>
<i>16 TUC Structures Review</i>	<i>17</i>
<i>17 International matters</i>	<i>17-18</i>
<i>18 International development</i>	<i>18</i>
<i>19 Committee attendance 2006-2007</i>	<i>19</i>

1 RACE RELATIONS COMMITTEE

The General Council has been represented on the Race Relations Committee during the year by:

Brian Caton	Paul Mackney	Tim Poil	Mohammad Taj
John Hannett	Leslie Manasseh	Sue Rogers	Sofi Taylor
Billy Hayes	Gloria Mills.		

Members elected to serve on the Race Relations Committee at the 2006 Conference were:

Mohamed Benkharmaz	Amicus
Gargi Bhattacharyya	Association of University Teachers
Freddie Brown	Prospect
Lorna Campbell	Public and Commercial Services Union
Suresh Chawla	Broadcasting, Entertainment and Cinematograph Trade Union
Collette Cork-Hurst	Transport and General Workers' Union
Sybil Dilworth	Amicus
Peter Foley	GMB
Maureen Henry-Johnson	University and Colleges Union
Simon Hinds	National Union of Journalists
Zita Holbourne	Public and Commercial Services Union
Rosalind Kamara	National Association of Probation Officers
Roger King	National Union of Teachers
Susie Mwasambili	Communication Workers' Union
Michael Nicholas	Fire Brigades' Union
Harish Patel	Transport and General Workers' Union
Eleanor Smith	Unison
Ian Taylor	Communication Workers' Union
Patrick Williams	LGBT Committee Co-optee
Sukhvinder Singh	CRE Observer

Gloria Mills was elected as Chair and Sarah Veale, Head of the Equality and Employment Rights Department, served as Secretary. Members of the Equality and Employment Rights Department working with the Committee during the year were Wilf Sullivan, TUC Race Equality Officer, and Jane Cook, Administrative Assistant.

2 TUC/CRE LIAISON COMMITTEE

A resolution carried at the 2006 TUC Black Workers Conference highlighted the need to work with the CRE to ensure that the provisions of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 were implemented across the public sector.

The TUC has continued to work with the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE), through regular meetings of the TUC/CRE Liaison Committee. The TUC has pressed the CRE to take enforcement action against public sector bodies that have not met the requirements of the legislation.

The CRE has worked with the Fire Brigades' Union and the University and Colleges Union through training union representatives to assess their employers' race equality schemes using the CRE's assessment tools. This has resulted in a number of employers in both sectors being identified as failing to meet their obligations under the Race Relations Act and has allowed the CRE to take enforcement action against them.

The TUC highlighted the lack of compliance on impact assessments in Government Departments and this has influenced the CRE to write to all Government Departments asking them for copies of their impact assessments. A number of race equality schemes of Government Departments have also been assessed and been found not to comply with the Race Relations Act. Enforcement action has been taken as a result of this activity.

The TUC and CRE have produced a joint guide on collective bargaining in the workplace to encourage union activists to engage with employers. The TUC is hoping to secure European Equal funding to develop an online course to go with the guide.

3 COMMISSION FOR EQUALITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

The TUC has continued to lobby the Government on the arrangements for the establishment of the Commission for Equality and Human Rights (CEHR). The TUC was concerned that there was no provision for trade union commissioners, that it was not clear how the needs of the different strands would be reflected in the way that the CEHR would be structured, and that there was no guarantee of adequate funding to enable the new body to develop work on the new areas of responsibility as well as continue with the responsibilities of the current commissions.

Trevor Phillips, the former Chair of the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE), was appointed Chair of the CEHR and Margaret Prosser, former DGS of the TGWU, was appointed as Deputy Chair. Jeannie Drake, (CWU), an existing Commissioner from the Equal Opportunities Commission, was appointed as a transitional EOC Commissioner on the CEHR. Kay Carberry, Assistant General Secretary of the TUC, was appointed as one of the Commissioners, announced in February 2007. It is hoped that the appointment of more Commissioners will ensure that there is adequate representation for black communities among the Commissioners.

Trevor Phillips has announced his intention to set up a number of stakeholders groups, to enhance involvement from all strands and interest groups. The TUC will continue to work to ensure that trade unionists are included in the stakeholder groups.

It is not clear what the balance will be between enforcement and promotion work. Employers' organisations have been lobbying for the CEHR to focus on promotional work and for it to have a very limited enforcement function. The TUC believes that the ability of the CEHR to enforce the law will be an important aspect of its function if it is going to be really effective.

There are no details of how the new strands will be incorporated into the work of the new Commission, as they represent new areas of expertise that do not exist amongst staff in the current Commissions. There was concern that a hierarchy of equality issues may develop as a result. It is also not clear how human rights work will be included in the work of the new Commission. Human rights groups are lobbying the Government to find out the extent of CEHR responsibilities in this area.

The TUC has also been concerned about the staffing implications for the merger and were instrumental in ensuring that a proper negotiating forum was established between recognised unions and those with responsibility for the management for the transition. There are still concerns over the issue of relocation to Manchester and what this will mean for the numbers of black staff employed by the CEHR, as most of the current black staff are based with the CRE in London and are unlikely to relocate with the new Commission to Manchester. The TUC has continued to raise this issue with through the TUC/CRE liaison Committee

The TUC in its submission on the Comprehensive Spending Review currently being carried out by the Government recommended that the CEHR receive considerably greater funding than had been allocated by the Government. The current funding allocation is equivalent to the funding of the three existing commissions. The TUC position on the funding of the CEHR has also been made clear at the quarterly meetings held between the TUC Executive Committee and the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

4 COMMISSION ON INTEGRATION AND COHESION

The TUC Race Relations Committee has worked to influence the debate on integration and cohesion and highlight the need for the Government to tackle racial discrimination in employment as well as in other areas of society. The Committee is concerned that the emphasis in public policy on diversity, integration and cohesion has shifted attention from the need to tackle problems of discrimination in the workplace and that the role of unions in enhancing integration and cohesion is not recognised.

The Committee invited a representative from the Commission on Integration and Cohesion to attend a Race Relations Committee meeting and this was followed up with a meeting between representatives from the Commission, the TUC and members of the Race Relations Committee.

The TUC also submitted a written response to the consultation conducted by the Commission on Integration and Cohesion.

5 ETHNIC MINORITY EMPLOYMENT

Resolutions at the 2006 TUC Black Workers' Conference emphasised the need to work to persuade the Government to use public procurement as a means of advancing social goals - in particular, race equality in the workplace - and to press for the general duties in the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 to be extended to the private and voluntary sectors.

The Race Relations Committee (RRC) has continued to monitor and seek to influence Government policy initiatives on black workers and employment through the Ethnic Minority Employment Taskforce (EMETF), the National Employment Panel (NEP) and the Ethnic Minority Advisory Group (EMAG). Leslie Manessah, a member of the TUC Race Relations Committee and the General Council, has continued to represent the TUC on the Taskforce; Frances O'Grady, TUC Deputy General Secretary, has been a member of a NEP Business Commission on Ethnic Minority Employment; and Collette

Cork-Hurst, a member of the TUC Race Relations Committee and Wilf Sullivan, TUC Race Equality Officer, have been appointed as members of EMAG.

The TUC has continued to press the Government on using public procurement as a lever to encourage the private sector to do more on increasing the number of black workers employed in the labour market. This has resulted in the EMETF organising procurement pilots in Jobcentre Plus, the Home Office (Identity and Passport Service) and Department for Education and Skills (Children's Centres). The pilots aim to test and demonstrate the effectiveness of introducing conditions related to race equality in public sector contracts. The results of the pilots will be assessed to see how public procurement measures can be introduced across Government. Research into the use of public procurement in the USA and Canada is being carried out in order to gauge the effectiveness of their systems in increasing black workers' involvement in the labour market.

The TUC has worked to influence the NEP Business Commission to make a recommendation to the Chancellor that public procurement should be used to improve performance on race equality in the private sector and that the Government should take reserve powers to extend the general duties in the Race Relations Act to the private sector if employment rates do not improve. Discussions have also taken place about the possibility of extending the general duties in the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 to be applied to the public and voluntary sector if targets to improve black employment in the private sector are not met within a specified period.

The TUC continues to be concerned that the major emphasis of Government policy on dealing with race discrimination in the workplace has been on building employer ability through improving skills and connecting people to work. The TUC continues to work through the EMETF, the NEP Business Commission and EMAG to encourage the Government to come up with more effective measures for tackling discrimination in the workplace.

6 TUC EQUALITY AUDIT

In 2001 the TUC Stephen Lawrence Task Group recommended that commitment to equality should be a requirement of affiliation to the TUC. In agreeing this recommendation and rule change Congress also resolved that it should receive a report every two years on what unions were doing to advance equality. The decision was to do this through a TUC Equality Audit that would give unions the opportunity to report progress and showcase good practice.

Congress 2003 received the first audit report, which was to be a benchmark by which to measure progress in the future. The basic tool for the 2003 audit was a very detailed questionnaire. An evaluation found that, although the response was highly representative in terms of union membership – the 33 audit unions represented 92.1 per cent of TUC-affiliated membership – the larger unions, who perhaps had more resources to complete such a large questionnaire, dominated the response.

This year the 2007 TUC Equality Audit will measure progress against the benchmark set out in the first audit but will not seek information on collective bargaining that was specifically dealt with in 2005. A report based on the Audit will be presented to Congress 2007. It is recognised that every union will not be able to answer every question or give all the information requested, but unions are asked to provide as much information as is

possible. There is also space for additional comments and any information felt to be relevant, as well as a section at the end where the union's successes in the equalities area can be described.

A second questionnaire has been produced, which is an abbreviated version of the main Audit questionnaire. It is designed for smaller unions with fewer than 12,000 members who feel that completing the main questionnaire would be beyond their resources. Smaller unions may choose to answer the full audit questionnaire, and indeed the TUC has had indications from a number of unions, including smaller ones, that the process of the detailed TUC Equality Audit has been very helpful in identifying strengths and weaknesses in union organisation and collective bargaining. Two briefing seminars for union officers responsible for completing the questionnaire were organised in November 2006 at Congress House. LRD, who are again analysing the questionnaire responses, were available to give free telephone advice and support to unions on the questionnaire and to provide more detailed support if required.

The 2007 TUC Equality Audit will be reported to TUC Congress in September 2007 and will be an opportunity to see what progress has been made since the first full audit in 2003.

7 EQUALITIES REVIEW

The TUC responded to a consultation on the interim report of the Government-established Equalities Review chaired by Trevor Phillips. In the autumn, the Review invited interested parties to submit views on what the review should cover. As part of the consultation response the TUC consulted the equalities committees in order to incorporate their views into the TUC response.

The Race Relations Committee raised a number of concerns that were part of the TUC's response to the Review: these were that the approach in the report was one of looking at opportunities or the lack of them rather than tackling structural inequalities. As a result the report was framed in the context of policy initiatives to tackle lack of opportunities rather than giving people suffering from structural inequalities a voice. The report also individualised the problems arising from discrimination and undermined the political and collective approach in that it took the view that the anti-racism approach had not succeeded.

The Race Relations Committee was concerned that this approach would undermine the debate about the need for enforcement as part of the role for the new CEHR. The enforcement powers for the CEHR would be defined in the context of a Single Equality Act emerging from the Discrimination Law Review. Trade unions would need to campaign to make sure those powers were given to the new body. There were concerns about the lack of comment on the need for enforcement of the discrimination legislation. The CRE had had to curtail its activity because of the cuts in funding for this kind of work.

The RRC continued to be concerned about the content of the final report that was published in March 2007. As well as having little content on gender and sexual orientation issues the review did not feature discrimination as a fundamental cause of inequality and instead focussed on outcomes and opportunities.

It was felt that the political analysis in the Equality Review report was weak as it did not reference class or wealth/poverty and there was no analysis of the economic context. The TUC is concerned that the report may be used as the context for the Discrimination Law Review and would help the CBI and others who were seeking to have a very basic Single Equality Act rather than to use the opportunity of creating a Single Equality Act to improve the legislation.

8 CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE FAR RIGHT

The TUC is continuing to campaign against the far right and is encouraging unions to focus on campaigning amongst trade union members especially on the issues of the incompatibility of voting for parties like the British National Party (BNP) with trade union principles of solidarity among all workers and on the issue of rights for migrant workers. The TUC will be updating its Organising Against Racism and Fascism handbook to assist trade union representatives with workplace campaigning.

TUC Regional Secretaries have been asked to encourage unions to co-ordinate activity among trade unions in their area to enable maximum use of the resources available and to target areas where the BNP are standing candidates. Searchlight has agreed to provide information on seats that the BNP are likely target and where they will be hoping to make gains.

Many of the regions already have co-ordinating arrangements and some are organising training and the production of regionally-based leaflets. Projects involving full time workers to campaign against the far right have been established in the North West Region and Yorkshire and Humberside Region with other regions establishing co-ordinating committees and campaign groups in order to effectively campaign in the May 2007 local elections.

A national meeting of trade unions was organised on 14 December 2006 to report on the initiatives that have already been taken, to receive reports from trade unions on their plans for campaigning activities in the May 2005 local elections and to discuss what other initiatives affiliates thought that it may be useful for the TUC to undertake. As a result of the meeting the TUC is creating an archive of myth-busting publicity and other material that trade unions are using in order to disseminate good practice on anti-fascist campaigning across the trade union movement.

The British National Party has recently launched a “union” called Solidarity (the union for British workers). The “union” was registered with the Government’s Certification Office shortly before Christmas. Solidarity claims that it will be a normal trade union defending the interests of any British worker, but in reality it is likely to be a sham union and a front for the BNP.

The President of the “union” is Patrick Harrington, who was expelled from the RMT. Harrington was active in the National Front in the late 1980s alongside Nick Griffin, now leader of the BNP. Other BNP activists involved in the project include Jay Lee, who was recently expelled from ASLEF, and John Walker, the BNP’s national treasurer, who has had his own troubles with the TGWU. The “union” appears to have been launched as a way for the BNP to channel funds to the party given their recent problems with banks denying them banking facilities and as a way of politically challenging the TUC and affiliated unions. The “union” is currently looking into the establishment of a political fund, which will allow the union to donate money to the BNP.

The TUC has had contact with the Certification Office and established that no application has been submitted by Solidarity for a certificate of independence. The TUC will be working with Searchlight to monitor the activities of this “union” in order to see whether we can complain to the Certification Office about the activities of this organisation and challenge its bona fides as a trade union.

The TUC welcomed a recent decision by the European Court of Human Rights in the *ASLEF v UK* case which had arisen as a result of ASLEF expelling a member because of his activities in the British National Party. ASLEF had lost its case at the Employment Appeal Tribunal and the Court of Appeal but had taken the case to the ECHR on the basis that trade unions should have the right to decide who was in membership. As a result of the positive ruling by the European Court it will be easier to expel fascist activists from trade unions. The Government has consulted the TUC on the legislative changes that will be needed to reflect this judgement in domestic legislation. It is hoped that these changes will be included in the Government’s new Employment Bill.

The TUC has continued its work to encourage activists to work with community-based campaigns. TUC General Secretary Brendan Barber addressed this year’s Unite Against Fascism Conference, which was hosted at Congress House and the TUC have supported Searchlight’s Anti-fascist fortnight and Hope Not Hate tour.

9 REDWATCH

A delegation from the TUC, Angela Eagle MP and representatives from trade unions met with Vernon Coaker, the Minister responsible, in July 2006 to progress the issue. The meeting took place partly as a result of Angela Eagle MP raising the matter as a ten-minute debate in the House of Commons following an attack on one of her constituents in his home and threats against a fellow MP in Liverpool.

At the meeting it emerged that no progress had been made since the TUC’s meeting with Charles Clarke, former Home Secretary, where a commitment had been made to discuss the matter with the police. It appeared that the dossier that had been presented to Charles Clarke had been passed to different Officers within the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO).

The meeting discussed a number of issues; these included:

- the Government’s e-crime Strategy and the Home Office Group on hate crime;
- the role of Internet Service Providers;
- the legal position; and
- contact with officials responsible for dealing with the issues.

At the meeting the TUC underlined its belief that there are grounds for taking legal action against the individuals responsible for the UK sites and that, through co-operation with the FBI, simultaneous action in respect of those responsible for the US-linked site could be co-ordinated. It was pointed out that action had been taken in Poland to close down similar sites that were mirror-hosted in the US with the co-operation of the US Government.

A discussion took place as to why no action had been taken to close down the website. The response of civil servants was that if the website was closed down investigations into

those behind it would be curtailed and no evidence could be gathered for a prosecution. However, there is no clarification from the police that such an investigation is under way or that there is any intention of attempting to prosecute those behind the website.

Vernon Coaker took personal responsibility at the meeting for progressing the issues that were raised about Redwatch. In addition, the TUC pressed that the Government should actively seek the co-operation of Internet Service Providers on this matter and look forward to any further information on this.

At the meeting on 16 August with Peter Fahy, Head of Race and Diversity for ACPO, it emerged that, because the issue of Redwatch had been one that had not been deemed to involve the law on incitement to racial hatred or related to the area of community cohesion, it had not been allocated. The TUC pointed out that there was also a problem relating to the consistency of response across forces when issues relating to intimidation as a result of names and details of campaigners being posted on the Redwatch website are reported to the police. ACPO have allocated responsibility for dealing with Redwatch to a senior officer and other police forces have been asked to supply information where members of the public have reported attacks against them that they believe have resulted from their details being posted on the Redwatch site.

Follow-up meetings have taken place on 25 October 2006 and 27 February 2007 where the TUC continued to press the Government on the issue of closing down the Website and prosecuting those behind it. Until this is done it is impossible to know whether the current legislation is adequate or whether there is a question of amending the legislation to deal with web-based harassment.

The TUC will be working with Searchlight to encourage trade union members and anti-fascists who have been harassed as a result of the Redwatch website to complain to the police. Initial discussions have also taken place with the Commission for Racial Equality to explore what action they can take to pressure Ministers into giving the police clear instructions to act against those behind the Redwatch site and to close it down.

10 BICENTENARY

The TUC Race Relations Committee agreed at its meeting in October 2006 to develop two main activities in relation to the bicentenary of the abolition of the slave trade. These activities are a campaign for an Annual National Slavery Remembrance Day, which will be conducted with the help of affiliates, and a slavery legacy conference.

As part of the campaign for an Annual National Slavery Remembrance Day the TUC have constructed a micro website that will contain details of the campaign and a sample letter that members can send to their local MP.

As part of the campaign we would aim to achieve the following Parliamentary activity:

- an adjournment debate to take place in the House of Commons;
- a written briefing for MPs presenting the arguments for establishing a remembrance day; and
- a Parliamentary meeting in the House of Commons for Parliamentarians led by the TUC but held with Anti Slavery International and other community organisations.

The TUC is also organising a Slavery and Legacy Conference. The Conference will take place on Friday 26 October 2009 at Congress House under the title 'Work in Freedom'. Discussions will take place with SERTUC to plan an evening event and social, which will be based on the theme of the Conference but part of the SERTUC Black History Month Activities.

The purpose of the Conference is to highlight the role that slavery had as a system of forced labour and the legacy that is left today, with racism and exclusion in the labour market and modern day exploitation of black workers from the developing world; and to raise awareness amongst trade unionists over the role of slavery in development of Britain as a industrial nation, its role as a cause of racism in the labour market, its legacy in terms of modern day discrimination, forced labour and slavery and to increase the involvement of trade unionists in trade union and NGO activities and campaigns against modern day slavery and forced labour domestically and internationally.

To raise awareness amongst trade unionists about the slave trade, its consequences and the modern day forms of slavery still in existence today, the TUC European Union and International Relations Department have developed an education fact file called 'Slavery and Forced Labour in the Twenty-First Century'. The fact file is the fourth in a series on international development and references within it point trade unionists towards the other three to assist them in exploring more about development and poverty reduction and the trade union role. To accompany the fact file and stimulate discussion and its use, a poster that raises the profile of slave and forced labour today has also been produced. Both the poster and the fact file are available on the TUC website.

11 *MUSLIM COMMUNITIES*

Resolutions on tackling racism and Islamophobia passed at the 2006 TUC Black Workers' Conference highlighted the need for the TUC to be more proactive in making contacts with Muslim communities. As a result the TUC has sought to develop its work with Muslim communities in the past year. Following the TUC General Council meeting that took place in the East London Mosque after the London bombings in 2005, the TUC developed a joint statement with the Muslim Council of Britain (MCB) and Dr Mohammed Abdul Bari the General Secretary of the MCB was invited to address the 2006 TUC Congress in Brighton.

The joint statement pledged the TUC and MCB to work together in support of workplace justice and against Islamophobia - in particular in terms of facing the threat from the far right - and recruitment of workers into trade unions. It also committed the organisations to a regular dialogue which would go beyond the framework of the statement through more detailed contacts and jointly-organised events for members of the TUC and MCB.

The TUC and MCB organised a seminar on 12 April 2007 to discuss ways that trade unionists and activists within Muslim communities can develop a better understanding of the respective organisations, examine how working relationships can be built at regional and local level, and how the two organisations can work together to combat far right parties who are using anti-Muslim propaganda as part of their election strategies.

TUC regions have been asked to work with MCB contacts in their area explore ways in which:

- joint working could be developed together to counter the political activities of the far right, with a particular focus on the 2007 local elections;
- advice and contacts between union officers and Muslim organisations, for instance in the area of employment rights and religious observance at work could be developed; and
- unions could be provided with opportunities through Muslim organisations for recruitment initiatives with Muslim workers.

12 MIGRANT WORKERS

In accordance with a resolution from the 2006 Conference, the TUC continues to be active on the issue of migrant workers both in responding to Government proposals on changing immigration law and in offering direct support to migrant workers.

In 2006 the Government issued its consultation on “Managed Migration” to which the TUC gave a detailed response following consultation with affiliates. Although the TUC welcomed the Government’s objectives of trying to achieve greater transparency and fairness in immigration law, the TUC expressed a number of concerns. Among those concerns was that the new points-based system will perpetuate a work permit system which would continue to tie migrant workers to individual employers.

Throughout 2006 the TUC has worked with trade union confederations from sending countries to help migrant workers in the UK. In particular, the existing protocol with CGT Portugal was renewed and work with Solidarnosc deepened with joint work on developing a Polish language website which will provide additional information for Polish migrants.

In January, Bulgaria and Romania joined the European Union, but the British Government reversed its earlier policy towards the A8 countries by imposing transitional measures on the freedom of movement of workers from these two new member states. At the 2006 Congress, the General Council issued a statement which acknowledged the positive contributions migrant workers were making to the UK and reiterated the TUC’s opposition to transitional measures. The statement also condemned those employers who were exploiting the vulnerability of migrant workers and called on a number of measures to be taken to make such exploitation more difficult, including the adoption of the EU Temporary Work Agency Directive and the widening of the Gangmasters licensing scheme to cover other areas of the economy.

The TUC held a Conference in December 2006 entitled “Building Support for Migrant Workers” involving both affiliates, NGOs and agencies. The conference objectives were to promote the sharing of good practice and encourage co-operation between attending organisations.

The Race Relations Committee are concerned about the actions of employers who are asking black members of their workforce to show documents proving that they have a right to work as a result of the requirements of the Immigration Asylum and Nationality Act 2006. The Committee are increasingly concerned at the extension of the role that public services and employers are expected to play in enforcing immigration control and are intending to raise this area with the TUC Commission on Vulnerable Employment. The Commission will report back to the TUC in the second half of 2008 and will include a study of how unions can best work to support vulnerable workers, including migrant workers.

13 ASYLUM SEEKERS AND REFUGEES

The TUC has worked with the Refugee Council to develop its work on asylum and refugee issues. As part of this work the TUC, along with the Refugee Council, have developed a Know Your Rights booklet for those asylum seekers that have achieved refugee status. The purpose of the booklet is to provide some basic information about the world of work for refugees and to encourage them to join and use trade unions to resolve problems that they have in the workplace.

The TUC and Refugee Council have also been exploring how the TUC and trade unions through Unionlearn can work together with asylum seekers and refugee community organisations by developing joint work on basic skills and work related learning. It was hoped that some of this work could be developed through joint projects based on the provision of ESOL but, given the Government's change to the rules on ESOL funding, this will be more difficult. However, the TUC and the Refugee Council believe that there are other learning areas where a positive working relationship can be developed between the trade union movement and refugee organisations.

The TUC is concerned about Government proposals to end universal entitlement to free ESOL courses from August 2007. Only people unemployed or receiving benefits would as a result be entitled to fee remission. Waged students will have to pay over 30 per cent of costs in 2007 rising to 50 per cent by 2010. This is likely to leave many thousands of people unable to afford language classes, including low-income families in minority communities, refugees and asylum seekers.

The TUC believe that these proposals are contradictory given Government policy on integration of migrants and refugees, which emphasises the need for newcomers to learn and become proficient in the use of English language in order to fully participate in society.

The TUC was also concerned over the proposal to make the receipt of tax credits a qualification for receiving free ESOL given the complicated process to obtain them and the lack of take up by vulnerable groups such as migrant workers and refugees. The TUC made representations to the Government suggesting a different method for providing simple evidence of low pay and tax benefit entitlement, such as showing wage slips.

A trade union led campaign, which has involved voluntary and other organisations, has conducted a vociferous campaign which included a Parliamentary lobby on 28 February 2007 to try to persuade the Government to abandon these proposals, along with representations made by the TUC having resulted in the Government re-examining its proposals. However the campaign to get the Government to drop these proposals is continuing.

14 ORGANISING BLACK WORKERS

The TUC Black Worker's Charter that was presented to the 2006 TUC Black Worker's Conference was officially launched at the 2006 TUC Congress. The General Council issued a statement to Congress on combating racism and discrimination that asserted the TUC's belief that the involvement of black workers in unions is essential for the renewal of the trade union movement in the twenty-first century.

The TUC Trade Union and Black Workers' Charter focuses on what trade unions need to

do to be more effective in fighting racial discrimination both with employers and within their own structures. As part of the launch of the Charter, the TUC Race Relations Committee drew up a pledge that commits unions to agreeing to promote and implement that charter and asked General Secretaries to sign on behalf of their unions. Twenty-four unions signed up to the pledge during Congress.

The TUC Race Relations Committee sees the implementation of the Charter as an important first step in improving the organisation and participation of black workers in trade unions and will monitor how the Charter is being implemented. The Committee will also examine the results of the 2007 Equality Audit and develop an organising strategy based on the weaknesses identified in the audit and in the light of the Organising Black Workers Project that ran during 2005-06.

The West Midlands Black Workers' Forum that brings together trade union and community activists to work together continues to meet and has organised training and trade union awareness events in community venues. A Forum has also recently been established in the East Midlands and attempts to create forums in other parts of the country will continue.

15 HIV/AIDS

In line with the resolution from the 2006 Conference, the TUC continued to provide financial support for the ICFTU-AFRO Project designed to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS, combat discrimination and alleviate suffering, implemented in co-operation with Africa Regional Organisation (AFRO). It sponsored three training workshops for shop stewards on HIV/AIDS prevention, held in Tanzania (2) and Malawi (1) in 2006. The General Secretary, in a letter to Prime Minister Tony Blair, called upon the Government to support the establishment of a permanent high-level working group on HIV/AIDS, pointing out that a working group on HIV/AIDS at G-8 level would significantly contribute to monitoring progress on the commitments made by all G-8 nations at the Gleneagles Summit in 2005 and go a long way in achieving Universal Access to Treatment by 2010.

Bandula Kothalawala from the European Union and International Relations Department took part in the trade union seminar organised by the GUF/ITUC in collaboration with the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) in Toronto, Canada, in advance of the International Conference on HIV/AIDS in August 2006. He also participated in the meeting of the Global Union Advisory Committee on HIV/AIDS held in Nairobi in October 2006 and contributed to the development of a joint trade union strategy on HIV/AIDS.

The General Secretary, in a message to a video film produced by the GUF/ITUC on the situation in Lesotho, stressed the role of the workplace in combating the pandemic. On World AIDS Day, the TUC and the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) in a joint statement pledged to collaborate more closely to help their respective members to deal with the issues raised by HIV/AIDS. While acknowledging the serious impact of the pandemic on businesses and unions alike, the Statement referred to workplace-based initiatives by trade unions and employers to prevent the spread of the disease and to provide treatment, care and support and stress the need for eliminating stigma and discrimination associated with the disease.

16 TUC STRUCTURES REVIEW

A resolution at the 2006 Conference called upon the General Council to consider allowing the equality conference to submit two motions to Congress, and the right of direct representation from the equality conferences on the General Council. The TUC Race Relations Committee put these proposals forward to the General Council as part of the TUC review into structures.

At the General Council meeting in April 2006 there was an extended discussion on TUC structures and services based on the responses by unions and the equality committees to a TUC consultation document on future TUC structures.

The General Council did not support the Committees' proposal to change the rules so that the equality conferences elected those General Council members representing their constituency. They did not agree to increase the number of motions submitted by each union to Congress – indeed a number of unions supported reducing the number of motions to Congress. It was agreed that further discussion would take place on this issue. They did not agree to increase the number of motions sent to Congress by the equality conferences.

The proposal by the RRC that “naming and shaming” should be tried for unions that sent unrepresentative delegations to TUC events was not supported. The Committee commented that there was a need for more black networking events and more to be done on organising black workers and the office is looking into that. Other proposals from the RRC were aimed at unions; members of the Committee will no doubt wish to discuss these proposals in their own unions.

In order to improve communication between the General Council and the Equality Committees on issues of equalities it was proposed at the April 2006 General Council meeting that the TUC General Secretary meet the chairs of the equality committees with a view to clarifying the strength of opinion on the equality committees about the range of issues raised in the consultation. To date one such meeting has been held and another has been organised for July.

17 INTERNATIONAL MATTERS

The TUC continued to play a key role in the international trade union movement, and in November 2006 became a founder member of the new International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC). The ITUC was created through the merger of the two former world trade union confederations, the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) and the World Trade Union Confederations (WTUC).

Gloria Mills and Sofi Taylor were members of the TUC delegation that attended the founding Conference in Vienna, and it was noted that the TUC delegation was one of the few northern trade union movements with significant black members (alongside the AFL-CIO from the USA).

The TUC are encouraged that the ITUC has made the development of a strategy on racism and xenophobia a priority. It has embarked on a consultation exercise of trade union confederations and their members to establish what action is being taken on tackling racism and xenophobia by the trade union movement worldwide. A strategy will be developed as a result of the consultation.

The TUC has continued to play an active role in the European Network Against Racism (ENAR) and has successfully influenced ENAR to make tackling problems of racial discrimination in employment one of the priorities in their work programme. In order to progress this priority the TUC facilitated a meeting of ENAR, the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) and Claude Moraes MEP, Chair of the European Parliament Intergroup on Racism and Xenophobia that explored the possibility of future joint working.

18 *INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT*

A new three-year DFID/TUC partnership - the Strategic Framework Partnership Arrangement - was signed in 2006. The purpose is to increase the engagement of UK unions with DFID and build individual union capacity to internationalise their agenda. This is to be done through TUC development education activities but also through building the capacity of UK unions to access DFID core funding streams to carry out their own development education awareness work and work in partnership with sister unions in developing countries. Full details of the project can be found on the international pages of the TUC website.

21 COMMITTEE ATTENDANCE 2006-07

<i>Name</i>	<i>08/06/06</i>	<i>31/10/06</i>	<i>08/01/07</i>	<i>27/03/07</i>
Gargi Bhattacharyya	✓	✓	✓	✗
Freddie Brown	✗	✓	✓	✗
Lorna Campbell	✗	✓	✓	✓
Brian Caton	✗	✗	✗	✗
Susan Chawla	✓	✗	✓	✓
Collette Cork-Hurst	✓	✓	✓	✓
Sybil Dilworth	✓	✓	✗	✓
Peter Foley	✓	✓	✗	✓
John Hannett	✗	✗	✗	✗
Billy Hayes	✗	✗	✗	✗
Maureen Henry-Johnson	✓	✗	✓	✗
Simon Hinds	✓	✓	✗	✗
Zita Holbourne	✗	✓	✓	✓
Rosalind Kamara	✓		✗	✓
Roger King	✓	✓	✓	✓
Paul Mackney	✗	✓	✗	✗
Leslie Manasseh	✓	✓	✓	✓
Gloria Mills	✗	✗	✓	✗
Michael Nicholas	✓	✓	✓	✓
Harish Patel	✓	✗	✗	✗
Tim Poil	✗	✗	✗	✗
Sue Rogers	✓	✗	✗	✗
Eleanor Smith	✗	✓	✗	✓
Mohammad Taj	✗		✗	✗
Ian Taylor	✓	✓	✓	✓
Sofi Taylor	✗	✓	✓	✓
Patrick Williams	✗	✓	✓	✓

Code: ✓ = attendance ✗ = non attendance n/a = not applicable

Note: It is not possible to list all the reasons for absence but it should be noted that reasons given are work commitments, union business and sickness.



Published by:

Trades Union Congress

Congress House

Great Russell Street

London WC1B 3LS

www.tuc.org.uk

© 2007 Trades Union Congress

£5

ISBN 978 1 85006 798 6

For more copies of this title contact our ordering point on
020 7467 1294 or smills@tuc.org.uk

Bulk discounts may be offered.

All TUC publications may be made available for dyslexic or visually impaired readers, on request, in an agreed electronic format or in accessible formats such as braille, audio tape and large print, at no extra cost.

Enquiries concerning the TUC Women's Conference 2007 should be directed to the TUC Equality and Employment Rights Department on 020 7467 1394.