

REPORT OF THE 2007 TUC BLACK WORKERS' CONFERENCE

IN THE CHAIR: ROGER KING

The Conference was attended by 196 delegates from 31 affiliated unions, 12 representatives from Trades Union Councils and Regional Councils and over 75 visitors and exhibitors.

APPOINTMENT OF TELLERS AND SCRUTINEERS

It was agreed that the following delegates should act as Tellers:

Nazim Hamid	Amicus
Harpal Jandu	GMB
Charanjit Pabla	Prospect
Rajinda Sagoo	Community

It was agreed that the following delegates should act as Scrutineers:

Ramesh Joshi	Connect
Rurville Grazette	BFAWU
Christine Tucker	Accord

CHAIR'S ADDRESS

The Chair addressed the Conference on Friday afternoon.

GENERAL SECRETARY'S AND PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

Brendan Barber, TUC General Secretary, and Alison Shepherd, TUC President, addressed the Conference on Friday afternoon.

GUEST SPEAKERS

On Saturday morning, Professor Gus John addressed the Conference.

On Saturday afternoon, Paul Stephenson, Bristol Community activist and Glenroy Watson, Global Afrikan Congress addressed the Conference.

On Sunday morning, Chidi King, Equalities and Rights Officer PSI addressed the conference.

INFORMAL SESSION

(WS)

REPORT OF THE RACE RELATIONS COMMITTEE

The Report of the Race Relations Committee, on their work during the year and on issues considered by the General Council which were of particular importance, was approved.

RESOLUTIONS

THE FOLLOWING RESOLUTIONS WERE CARRIED:

Please note: all accepted amendments have been incorporated into the texts.

Motion 1: CHALLENGING RACISM IN EMPLOYMENT

Conference notes the findings of various studies of ethnic minorities in the labour market, which all have a common conclusion. This is that a person from an ethnic minority background with the same education, skills, age, class background etc as a person from the majority background is more likely to be unemployed, in a more junior position and earn less than their majority background counterpart.

This points to ongoing failures across the board in ensuring equality of opportunity in the recruitment, selection, appointment and career progression stages of the employment process.

It is also unfortunate and undeniable that many of these inequalities extend into the trade union movement's own structures and processes.

Conference instructs the TUC Race Relations Committee to work with affiliates to tackle this through appropriate measures including:

- i) campaigning for greater compliance with the RRAA 2000;
- ii) continued engagement with Government Departments, employer representatives, CRE and other influential bodies to ensure race equality perspective is mainstreamed into all strategy and policy development;
- iii) encouraging BME workers and activists into union membership and structures; and
- iv) taking a lead in the organisation of, and engagement in, anti-racist and anti-fascist activities which promote equality and diversity.

Moved by: Prospect

Seconded by: Public and Commercial Services Union

Motion 2: RACE EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

Conference is concerned at the growing tendency to express the problem of racial discrimination at work as a problem of diversity in the workplace. While important in itself, focusing on diversity alone is insufficient because it fails to highlight the issue of equality. It is possible, for example, to have a diverse workforce where racial inequality persists in terms of job type, grade, pay and employment status. As such, equality must go hand in hand with diversity as an objective of public policy and HR management within individual employers.

Conference urges the TUC Race Relations Committee and individual unions to ensure that race equality remains a key element of the approach to diversity in the workplace

and to encourage employers to ensure that their workforce reflects the ethnic profile of locality.

Moved by: *Connect*
Seconded by: *UNISON*

Motion 3: COMMISSION FOR EQUALITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Conference notes that the BME communities have made it clear that the CEHR in its present form will not only fail to be effective in challenging racial discrimination and that it may lead to a regression in equality.

Conference notes that members of the Race Equality Stakeholder Group (REG) of the CEHR were so alarmed that they have stated that they would refuse continued membership of the group unless a committee to represent BME interests was guaranteed.

Conference demands:

- i) a statutory race committee;
- ii) guaranteed Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) representation;
- iii) ring-fenced funding to promote racial equality, and tackle discrimination;
- iv) funding that matches the demand for legal advice and representation in potential race discrimination cases; and
- v) the setting up of an independent BME forum to review the work and effectiveness of the CEHR on racial equality.

Moved by: *National Union of Journalists*
Seconded by: *UNISON*

Motion 4: COMMISSION ON INTEGRATION AND COHESION CONSULTATION

Conference welcomes the Commission on Integration and Cohesion's consultation. Participation, integration and cohesion are key issues for the UK.

The BME community and trade unions have an important role to play in this agenda, working towards equality in the workplace and the wider community.

Employment is central to the integration and participation of everyone in society and important in tackling poverty and social exclusion. BME groups, particularly those in Pakistani and Bangladeshi origin, have higher unemployment and lower pay than their white counterparts.

Conference calls on the Government to ensure that:

- i) trade unions are full consulted on the Commission on Integrated and Cohesion's final proposals to Government;
- ii) BME Communities participate in the development of policy and action;

- iii) action is taken to improve the labour market prospects of BME communities;
- iv) there is a co-ordinated to policy initiatives that are developed by the Equalities Review and the Commission on Integrated and Cohesion; and
- v) the myths and misinformation about migrant workers and asylum seekers which are fuelled by the press are challenged and corrected.

Moved by: Amicus
Seconded by: UNSION

Motion 5: RACE EQUALITY SCHEMES

Conference is appalled by the findings of the Healthcare Commission in August 2006 that few NHS trusts appeared to be fully compliant with meeting legal requirements on race equality. Although 60 per cent of Trusts had published race equality schemes for 2005-8, only seven NHS trusts nationwide had fully met the requirements of Race Relations Amendment Act by also publishing employment monitoring statistics by ethnic groups and outcomes of race equality impact assessments. Given this level of failure when race equality schemes have been a requirement since 2002, Conference is concerned that NHS Trusts will prove little more competent in producing the new disability and gender equality schemes.

Conference calls on the TUC General Council to:

- i) lobby Government to ensure NHS Trusts to comply fully with the Act's requirements by publishing good quality race equality schemes and reporting demonstrable improvement;
- ii) work closely with the CRE and CEHR to ensure that achieving a high level compliance in the entire public sector is given top priority;
- iii) work closely with the CRE and CEHR to ensure that achieving a high level compliance in the entire public sector is given top priority; and
- iv) publicise good practice on race equality schemes within the NHS and the public sector to affiliate unions so that activists can be well informed when involved in improving their employers' schemes.

Moved by: Chartered Society Physiotherapy
Seconded by: Society of Radiographers

Motion 6: EQUALITY REPS

Conference welcomes the Government funding of equality representatives through the modernisation fund. We believe these reps will be vital in highlighting and addressing inequality in the workplace especially race inequality. The Government has set aside £5 million for this initiative; this is clearly not enough for such an important issue.

We would like to see these reps introduced into the workplace in a similar way to that of union learning reps in having a dedicated fund that unions can bid for, specifically for recruiting and training of these reps, and to have statutory rights in the workplace.

Inequality still exists and is widespread in many workplaces.

We believe the introduction of these reps will improve the representation for black and minority ethnic members in the workplace. We believe that if inequality is to be seriously tackled then equality reps need to be rolled out nationally by all trade unions.

Moved by: Society of Chiropodists and Podiatrists
Seconded by: UNISON

Motion 7: DEFEATING THE FAR RIGHT

Conference notes the enlargement of the European Union (EU) has led to the formation of an ultra far right/fascist bloc of MEPs in the EU. Conference views this development as disturbing as ultra far right politicians will be entitled to funding from EU tax payers and will be able to influence EU policy and legislative decisions.

Conference believes that this development highlights the need for black workers to engage with the European trade union movement on race discrimination issues as the formation of this bloc will have a detrimental effect on the development of social and economic policy within the European Parliament.

Conference calls upon the TUC Race Relations Committee to work with the General Council to:

- i) encourage the ETUC to work with the European Parliament Intergroup on Anti-Racism and Diversity to counter the activities of this far right block of MEPs;
- ii) encourage the ETUC to ensure the anti racism dimension becomes an integral part of its work; and
- iii) request the ETUC to organize an international anti racism conference within the next three years where a trade union strategy for fighting race discrimination and countering far right activity across Europe can be developed.

Moved by: Public and Commercial Services Union
Seconded by: ???

Motion 8: BNP

Conference acknowledges the efforts made to counter the threat to democracy posed by the BNP. Conference congratulates the TUC for its support for the ASLEF case resulting in the CEHR decision that unions can expel members of the BNO. It is right that trade unionists join with anti-fascist to defeat the pernicious message of hate spread by the BNP. But we know that to win this battle, its not enough to marshal our troops just at election time.

Whilst it is invaluable for the leaders of the trade union movement to keep up the pressure at national level, we must not ignore the importance of taking on the perpetrators of hate locally. This must be a continuous process. A climate of fear and hate of 'others' has been stoked not just by the BNP and media, but by Government pronouncements and policies, not least those on immigration and asylum.

Conference calls on the TUC to continue to build on the success of community based election campaigns against the BNP. No matter what the outcome of the local elections on 3 May, we must reaffirm our commitment at all levels within the trade union movement, to continue our fight against the BNP, starting from 4 May. The role of the TUC is essential to draft a coherent plan of action. This should include assistance by way of leaflets, letter-writing campaigns to local press, etc to assist those at local level to counter the lies spread by the BNP.

Moved by: National Union of Rail, Marine and Transport Workers
Seconded by: Amicus

Motion 9: SLAVERY

In 2007 we shall be commemorating the bicentennial of the legislation that led to the eventual abolition of the European trade in African people. This was the worst crime against humanity. Britain and its society profited from slave labour, and the descendents of slaves continue to make a positive contribution to life in Britain. This deserves to be fully acknowledged.

Black people still suffer in many aspects of British society especially in education, health, employment and the criminal justice system. Despite many initiatives, our progression is slow and for many there are no discernable improvements at all.

The bicentenary is both about commemoration and liberation. Conference believes that the TUC and its affiliates should take this opportunity to raise awareness of both historical and contemporary forms of slavery.

Conference calls on the General Council to encourage affiliates to undertake activities during 2007 to mark both the bicentenary and the achievements and positive contribution of black people.

Conference demands the TUC lobby the appropriate Government departments to review the inequalities in black British life and commit to:

- i) having a true and positive black history perspective reflected in the National Curriculum and in further /higher education;
- ii) driving agenda for change within the public sector to address inequalities in service provision; and
- iii) full implementation of the RRA Act to ensure that there are no barriers to black employment and progression in the public/private sector

There will be a positive legacy for black people in 21st century multi cultural Britain.

Moved by: Fire Brigades' Union
Seconded by: National Union of Teachers

Motion 10: DEMONISATION OF THE MUSLIM COMMUNITIES

Conference condemns the escalating demonisation of the Muslim community. The continual focus on alleged failures to integrate and/or to root out extremism represents a new low in Government propaganda. These statements pander to popular racism and distract from widespread public dissatisfaction with Government performance in public services and foreign policy.

The injunction to universities and colleges to monitor extremism among Muslim and 'Asian-looking' students must be resisted. The proposals are unworkable – no member of staff can monitor the movements and associations of students. They are offensive – no-one should be forced to operate an informal system of ethnic-profiling and surveillance based how individuals 'look'. They are inappropriate – these proposals are likely to alienate Muslim and minority students and communities and create barriers to the free and open debate that form the basis of learning. These proposals come at a time when black communities' access to education is under attack from cutbacks in adult education and threats to ESOL.

Conference denounces proposals that transform education into an extension of the security services. We defend the right of all education workers to work free from the threat of intimidation and in accordance with the principles of academic freedom.

Moved by: University and College Union
Seconded by: Connect

Motion 11: ASYLUM AND MIGRATION

Conference recalls the great contribution to economic, social and cultural development in Britain by migrants and refugees over centuries and expresses its deep concern at the failure of the Government to resist the Daily Mail and other newspapers in their campaign to play on racist and xenophobic prejudices against people migrating to Britain for employment and refugees seeking asylum in the UK.

Conference agrees with the Refugee Council that prejudices would be dispelled if asylum seekers were enabled to contribute to mutual understanding through being employed lawfully and calls on the Government to restore to people seeking asylum in the United Kingdom the opportunity to become gainfully employed after six months in the country.

Conference notes the strongly positive impact which recent migratory flows have made on British economy and society and expresses its profound concern about the vulnerability of new migrants to exploitation in employment, for example in terms of pay below the National Minimum Wage and excessively long hours of work.

Conference calls on the TUC to work with its civil service affiliates to try to ensure that all migrants to the UK (whether asylum seekers or economic migrants) have access to information that encourages them to join a union and that the TUC can advise them of the appropriate union to join once they are in work.

Moved by: Community

Seconded by: Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen

Motion 12: PROTECTING AND ORGANISING MIGRANT WORKERS

Conference welcomes the proposal from Unison that calls for sustainable regularisation of all undocumented workers, and for the end of migrant workers' exploitation.

Conference notes the need to organise migrant workers and calls on the Government to grant regularisation for any worker in the UK currently working without the knowledge of the authorities.

Conference believes that we must build and develop the organisation of migrant workers and co-ordinate a national campaign for an amnesty of all undocumented workers.

Conference calls upon the TUC and its affiliates to:

- i) work to ensure that the issue of sustainable regularisation for all undocumented workers, and the need to end migrant worker exploitation, is agreed as a guiding principle by all affiliates across all regions;
- ii) to produce publicity materials, such as fact-sheets, which tackle racist articles in the media and statements by politicians which denigrate undocumented migrant workers.
- iii) to work with the TUC Commission for Vulnerable Workers, NGOs and faith groups to campaign for a sustainable regularization programme for all undocumented workers and put an end to the exploitation of migrant workers.

Moved by: UNISON

Seconded by: Public and Commercial Services Union

Motion 13: CHANGES TO ESOL FUNDING

Conference acknowledges the positive contribution workers from abroad make to the UK economy and celebrates the cultural and religious diversity they bring to society. We acknowledge the crucial role ESOL provision plays in enabling thousands of low paid workers with English language needs to learn and improve their English, tackle social division and racism and access their employment and civil rights.

However, we note with grave concern:

- i) black workers outside of the European Union have always been denied equal access to publicly funded ESOL classes; and
- ii) double standards of the UK Government in saying it wants to encourage integration whilst announcing its intention to remove existing entitlement to free ESOL training for workers from abroad and restrict free tuition in receipt of means tested benefits.

Conference calls upon the TUC and all affiliates to:

- a) lobby Government to abolish the 'EU residency' requirement of three years that continues to disadvantage Black and Asian workers;
- b) support affiliates in their campaign to reinstate free tuition to all low paid workers with an ESOL need; and by
- c) working in conjunction with the TUC Unionlearn identify and circulate amongst affiliates best practice examples of where employers have worked together with unions to facilitate and negotiate learning opportunities for Black and Asian workers.

Moved by: Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers

Seconded by: Transport and General Workers' Union

Motion 14: GLOBALISATION AND WORKER'S RIGHTS

Conference is concerned that the benefits of global trading should be distributed more evenly, rather than remain concentrated in pockets of wealth that exist alongside large-scale poverty. Conference is also concerned that the effects of global warming are disproportionately affecting the developing countries, making already difficult situations intolerable.

Conference further believes that companies that outsource work to developing countries should abide by the Base Code of Practice developed by the Ethical Trading Initiative which complies with the ILO core labour conventions and in particular:

- i) ensure at least a living wage is paid throughout the supply chain;
- ii) ensure that the right to join a trade union is guaranteed and appropriate trade unions are recognised throughout the supply chain; and
- iii) contribute a percentage of their profits to local health, education and housing projects.

Conference therefore instructs the TUC Race Relations Committee to work with the TUC General Council, international labour and trade union organisations, and relevant campaigning organisations to take this policy forward.

Moved by: Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen

Seconded by: National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers

Motion 15: BLACK WOMEN

Conference is strongly aware that negative stereotyping and attitudes have a huge impact on black women in the labour market. Bearing in mind that Black Caribbean, Pakistani and Bangladeshi women are more likely to be graduates than white British men and women and that at 16 they are better qualified than boys, this is not reflected in their pay or their positions of seniority.

Conference notes that Black Caribbean, Pakistani and Bangladeshi women are 50 per cent more likely to have difficulty finding work and, worryingly, they are three times more likely to be asked about marriage and children in interviews. Conference is concerned that the majority of organisations in areas with a higher ethnic minority population do not reflect this in the number of their black women employees.

Conference therefore calls for the TUC and affiliated unions to:

- i) encourage involvement and participation of black women;
- ii) organise and represent black women at the workplace and the union;
- iii) ensure representatives are supported in meeting the needs of black women workers; and
- iv) lobby the Government to ensure that race and gender strategies are fully incorporated in all areas affecting black women specifically on family friendly policies and progression at work.

Moved by: Transport and General Workers' Union
Seconded by: Amicus

Motion 16: WORKPLACE TRAINING – EQUALITY FOR BLACK AND MINORITY WORKERS

Conference notes that racism in Britain's workplace is damaging the future prospects of Black and Minority Ethnic Workers, because at every level of their working life they get less training opportunities.

There is a clear divide in equality of access to training in certain industrial sectors of the economy, such as manufacturing, where nearly half (48 per cent) of Black and minority ethnic employees say that they have never been offered training compared to only 37 per cent of white employees.

This is clearly a failure to tap into a rich reservoir of potential talent within the workplace.

We therefore call for TUC sponsored campaigns aimed at:

- i) ending racism at work, which is preventing too many Black and minority ethnic workers fulfilling their potential;
- ii) ending the barriers to training with industry and the public sector; and
- iii) ending the qualifications divide and the training hierarchy where those with qualifications are more likely to receive training at the expense of Black and minority ethnic workers.

Conference calls on the TUC to campaign vigorously to make all workplaces respond positively to the training needs of Black and minority ethnic workers and to lobby the UK Government to introduce new legislation that will force all employers to give equal access to training for all workers.

Moved by: GMB
Seconded by: Amicus

Composite Motion 1: TACKLING INSTITUTIONAL RACISM (Motions 17 and 18)

Conference believes that institutional racism is a prevailing feature of the 21st century, permeating society, organizational structures and policies, and must be tackled at every level, at all times.

Conference calls upon unions and the Government to be more proactive to eradicate covert racism, which clearly exists. As public awareness of this has recently been heightened, there need to be strong messages communicated and appropriate actions taken to demonstrate prejudice/discrimination of any form will not be tolerated.

Conference is concerned that it remains necessary to return to the substantive issues surrounding institutional racism, demonstrating that little has changed since the Stephen Lawrence inquiry highlighted it as a major problem. Whilst the overt nature of institutional racism has been weakened, its covert presence appears to have grown in the following areas:

- i) Criminal Justice System: staff are being asked to categorise certain individuals as foreign nationals according to their names - this practice serves to criminalise members of BME communities who come into contact with the CJS;
- ii) policy and practice: the lack of opportunity and support afforded to BME staff in relation to learning and development and promotion (EOC, September 2006); and
- iii) the media: the validation of offensive behaviour/jokes to the detriment of BME communities in order to raise viewing figures – for example Channel 4s “Big Brother”.

Conference calls on the TUC to put the spotlight on institutional racism by devising a strategy to tackle the issue as it relates to the above; the strategy to be launched at Congress 2007.

Moved by: *Napo*
Seconded by: *Accord*
Supported by: *National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers*
National Union of Journalists
Public and Commercial Services Union
University and College Union

Motion 19: ZERO TOLERANCE TO RACIST BEHAVIOUR IN GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS

Conference endorses with full support, initiatives demanding zero tolerance strategies relating to racist behaviour in all government departments and agencies.

Further, Conference urges the Government to ensure that all public services are required to take the strongest possible measures against staff that are proved guilty of such offences in the workplace.

Moved by: *POA (UK)*
Seconded by: *UNISON*

Emergency Motion 1: CUTS IN PUBLIC SERVICES

Conference is concerned that plans to cut 100,000 civil service jobs and to relocate work away from London and the South East will have an adverse impact on black workers and on black communities.

Conference notes that black workers are over represented amongst the lowest paid grades in government services and that it is those grades that are the most vulnerable to job cuts, relocation and privatisation. Conference also notes that in implementing this policy, the government will undermine its own diversity targets and the duty to promote race equality.

Conference believes that the potential job losses amongst black workers will not only contribute to higher unemployment levels within the black community but also lead to diminished levels of service to the public as local officers are closed and insufficient staff remain to deliver services which are not properly resourced and funded.

Conference applauds the action taken by PCS Members on the 31st of January, in their dispute aimed at defending jobs, pay and services and calls on the TUC Race Committee to continue to support the activities of PCS and other affiliates in defending jobs and services and challenging the negative impact on black workers and the black community.

Moved by: Public and Commercial Services Union
Seconded by: National Union of Teachers
Supported by: UNISON

Motion 20: PREJUDICE-RELATED BULLYING

Conference deplores all forms of prejudice-related bullying and its legitimisation in society. Conference believes that prejudice-related bullying seeks to exploit those who are most vulnerable, creates divisions within and between communities and must not be tolerated.

Conference recognises that black workers experience racist bullying and are also bullied on grounds of their sex/gender, disability, LGBT status, religion/belief and body image. Conference is particularly concerned that racist and faith-based bullying has intensified in recent years.

Conference asserts that everyone has the right to live and work in a safe and secure environment where they feel valued and respected.

Conference believes that effective action to tackle prejudice-related bullying starts at an early age and requires commitment from all bodies.

Conference calls on the TUC to:

- i) raise the profile of prejudice-related bullying and its consequences;
- ii) include the issue of tackling prejudice-related bullying in its Trade Unionists in the Classroom initiative;
- iii) lobby the Government to establish national arrangements to monitor all forms of prejudice-related bullying in the workplace and wider society; and
- iv) challenge the inadequate and often stereotypical on-screen portrayal of black and minority ethnic peoples lives in the media, and in view of the influence of television in shaping attitudes and behaviours, call on our major broadcasters to produce programmes which reflect fully and accurately the diversity of the UK population.

Moved by: National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers
Seconded by: Prospect

Motion 21: CULTURAL COMPETENCE WITHIN THE NHS

Conference expresses its deep concern that most international recruits within the NHS experience difficulties in becoming empowered to practice within the organisation because of a failure to become interculturally competent.

This inability to become culturally competent impacts on individual's ability to deliver high standards of care and as such may have consequences for protection of the public.

Conference calls upon the TUC Race Relations Committee to require health care employers to:

- i) set up a mentoring and educational programmes within the NHS;
- ii) facilitate the development of intercultural skills in all participants; and
- iii) promote respect and tolerance for others.

Moved by: Society of Radiographers

Seconded by: Chartered Society of Physiotherapy

Motion 22: BONE MARROW REGISTER

Conference congratulates the ACLT (African-Caribbean Leukemia Trust) in increasing the donor base amongst BME's.

However, we note with serious concern the vexed issue of the age restriction of 18-40 that is rigidly applied by the Anthony Nolan Trust who oversee the excellent work being done by the ACLT.

Conference feels that this age restriction is unreasonable and contrives to the already large gap there is in the lack of donors who come forward from the black and ethnic minority communities. The age limit is inconsistent with the National Blood Service who runs a limit of 18-44.

This problem was recently highlighted at the bone marrow registration clinic organised by the CWU, where a number of potential donors had to be turned away because of their age.

Conference urges the TUC Race Relations Committee to:

- i) work closely with the ACLT to increase the amount of donors; and
- ii) liaise accordingly with health Authorities, Primary Care Trusts, British Medical Council and the Government Health Minister to bring about an increase in the age limit that will at least be consistent with the age limit currently used by the National Blood Service.

Moved by: *Communication Workers' Union*
Seconded by: *Connect*