

Contacts

The Black and Ethnic Minority Consultative Committee would welcome letters or articles from members, and if you want to contact the BEMCC Delegate in your district details are as follows:

District 1

Laurence Campbell
0773812808

District 2

Paul Patmore
(National Secretary)
0207 317 8600

District 3

Curty Gunputrar
078432 00396

District 4

Surjeet Puee
0207 317 8600

District 5

Floyd Doyle
(National Chair)
07788153594

District 6

Aaron Clapp
077904 90128

District 7

Amjid Hussain
0207 317 8600

District 8

Pat Blake
07743382890

FRESHTRACKS

Black and Ethnic Minority Representative Committee Newsletter

America's first black President heralds a new era

THE politics of race will never be the same again. As America's 44th President of the United States, and the first black man ever to hold the post, officially takes his position in the White House the world is still celebrating the victory.

From a time less than 50 years ago when it was unimaginable for an African American to run for office let alone run for President, through decades of fighting for civil rights, America has elected its first black President. Chosen for his strength, integrity, policies and leadership, he is now the head of the most powerful nation on earth.

5,300 miles south of Obama's home state of Illinois, on a wet November afternoon in Sao Paulo, 23 year old Lewis Hamilton became the first black man to win the Formula One Championship. After missing out by just one point last year, he went onto win the World Championship at the Brazilian Grand Prix by the same margin.

Both men are shining examples of how far the world has come. We are now entering a new era where, although racism is by no means eradicated, the tide has turned and opportunities are growing.

Closer to home, there is an opportunity to show that the UK are also breaking glass ceilings. Mr Ahmad Shahzad is re-running for the position of Chair for the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Labour Committee (BAME Labour) formally Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Socialist Society. Mr Shahzad has been a member of Unite since 1989 and has been firmly involved in the trade union cause fighting for workers rights all his life. He has been involved in some very notable cases such as saving 250 school dinner ladies jobs in his capacity as Labour Councillor during the 1990s and in his position as Chair of the BAME Labour has made fantastic strides for black and ethnic minorities and for the first time securing its place on the Labour Party's NEC in 2007. Let's hope he stays in his position.

Associated Society
of Locomotive
Engineers and
Firemen



REPORT OF THE TUC BLACK WORKER'S CONFERENCE 2008

2008 Black Workers TUC Conference was held in Floral Hall, Eastbourne from 18th-20th April. Conference was attended by 218 delegates from 31 affiliated unions with 8 representatives from Trades Union Council and Regional Councils.

Conference was opened by Chair of the Conference, Zita Holbourne, who welcomed everyone to Eastbourne and hoped we enjoyed our time there.

Brendan Barber, TUC General Secretary, addressed the conference on the first day along with Dave Prentis, TUC President. They discussed the work the TUC had been carrying out since last year's conference and what issues face us as union members in the future.

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

ASLEF submitted a motion on Zimbabwe:-

“Conference is appalled at the human rights violations that are taking place every day in Zimbabwe. Zimbabwe is in its seventh year of recession with annual inflation of over 1,200 per cent and its people denied access to food, water, housing and medical care are in a humanitarian crisis.

Thousands of trade union and human rights activists have been imprisoned and subjected to brutal attacks and Zimbabwe is now rivalling Colombia as one of the most dangerous countries in the world to be a trade union activist in.

Despite United Nation sanctions, President Mugabe's brutal regime and oppression of his people continues unabated.

We applaud the efforts of South African President Thabo Mbeki in trying to break the deadlock over Zimbabwe's political crisis amid signs that the Mugabe Government would not yield to opposition demands for a new constitution.

We call on the General Council to work with the Government at all levels to ensure that aid is released to avert the humanitarian disaster unfolding in Zimbabwe.

Conference calls on the General Council to highlight the plight of Zimbabwe with all their affiliates and ask them to raise the issue with their Parliamentary Groups of MPs, MSPs and Welsh Assembly members.”

ASLEF also seconded a motion on racial abuse, urging conference to call on all the public authorities to ensure that there is no slackening of the unremitting pursuit of racial abuse and violence to make sure that all know that it will not be tolerated. And to call on the Government to address continuing inequality in recruitment in important national institutions and to act robustly to prevent unscrupulous employers from preying upon the vulnerability of migrants to exploitation in employment by exploiting them and making it very difficult for them to join an independent trade union.

Delegates Aaron Clapp and Curty Gunputrar spoke on these motions and they were passed by conference.

Guest speakers over the weekend were Donna Covey Chief Executive of the Refugee Council, Ms P Kamalam Director of Equalities at the International Trade Union Confederation, Zohra Moosa from the Fawcett Society Congress, and Simon Chase, Campaigns officer Action for South Africa who gave extremely informative presentations from their organisations.

Lastly the vote of thanks was moved by Patrick Williams, University and College Union, and seconded by Richard Reed, Fire Brigades Union and Conference was closed.



MODERN

I FIND it difficult to understand my own heritage as it is obvious being a black Afro-Caribbean that my family originally came from Africa. Yet my name, my parents name, my grandparents and great-grandparent's names are as English as any member of the landed gentry – Blake, Cole, Hewitt, Roach and there is no way of tracing my heritage further than that. Believe me I have tried.

Were these our slave names given to us by the families that owned and worked my family? It was common practise for plantation owners and other businesses that owned slaves to give the slaves their

12TH ANNUAL SCOTTISH TUC BLACK WORKER'S CONFERENCE 2008

Report from Paul Patmore. BEM Representative Committee Secretary. District No 2.

Once again I had the pleasure of attending the Scottish TUC Black Worker's Conference. Conference was held at the Salutation Hotel, Perth on the 4-5 October 2008.

The theme for this year's conference was diverse and united. The Civic welcome was made by Deputy Provost Willie Wilson of Perth and Kinross Council who welcomed us to Perth and hoped that we would have a good and productive conference.

Chair for the conference, Nazerin Wardrop, also welcomed delegates to conference. She informed conference on the work that the Black Worker's Committee had carried out in the passed year with the STUC Congress and General Council.

The first guest speaker, Stewart Maxwell MSP Minister for Communities, spoke on race equality within the Scottish society, the work his department has undertaken in the passed year, the need for more people from the minorities in Government positions, the diversity pack and insisted on employers having and introducing this pack to its workforce.

Guest speaker Marlyn Glen MSP spoke on the need for politicians and unions to liaise together, and the need for an equality statement to be introduced by the minister.

Grahame Smith, General Secretary STUC, spoke on the support for Black Workers, and the involvement of Black Workers within their unions. He also gave his support to the One Work Place Project, and the Global Economic Down Turn.

There were seventeen motions at conference this year. Below is a short list of some of the motions.

- Support for Black Workers
- Supporting Show Racism the Red Card
- Working Against Racism
- Asylum Seekers Right to Work
- Local Government Equality Standards
- Race Awareness
- End Child Poverty

ASLEF's motion to conference, which was passed, was on gun and knife crime. 'Conference calls on the STUC to engage with the Scottish Parliament and police authorities in discussions about how gun and knife crime and gang warfare can be effectively tackled and what preventative steps can be taken. With the ever increasing deaths caused by knife and guns in our inner cities on our youngsters this motion has to be taken seriously and now.

Conference was closed by Nazerin Chair. We all hope motions put forward to this year's conference are implemented by the relevant bodies.

MODERN DAY SLAVERY

own family names.

I would love to delve further into my roots – can anyone help?

Being unable to trace my ancestry has left me feeling rootless, but this was one of the lesser evils of slavery.

On the ASLEF BEMRC we have come to realise that slavery is still continuing.

Modern slavery includes the trafficking of people for forced labour and for use by the sex industry.

So now we must work to end modern slavery and people trafficked to be prostitutes, kitchen workers, maids and labourers living in fear and many of them

near-destitution, treated as second-class citizens. Many of them were promised proper jobs with decent earnings so that they can send money home for their families – instead they live enslaved and out of sight, fearful for their lives and of the authorities.

If anyone can understand the plight of modern trafficked people it is the descendants of slavery, and I urge ASLEF to join the fight against it.

For more information contact Anti Slavery International at www.antislavery.org

PAT BLAKE - LUL

SOUTHALL BLACK SISTERS

SOUTHALL BLACK SISTERS (SBS), a not-for-profit organisation was established in 1979 to meet the needs of black (Asian and African-Caribbean) women. Their aims are to highlight and challenge violence against women; empower them to gain more control over their lives; live without fear of violence; and assert their human rights to justice, equality and freedom.

The organisation manages a resource centre in West London and provide a comprehensive service to women experiencing violence and abuse. They offer specialist advice, information, casework, advocacy, counselling and support to women and children experiencing domestic and sexual violence including forced marriage and honour crimes. Self-help support services are also offered in several community languages such as Hindi, Punjabi, Gujarati and Urdu as well as English.

They are managed by a group of women with a long experience of women's struggles and commitment to women's rights. They receive calls and cases from all over the UK from women experiencing violence along with other organisations, social services and solicitors who call for specialist advice.

Southall Black Sisters campaign vigorously against immigration laws that can leave women vulnerable and liable to deportation after leaving an abusive relationship or a marriage which has broken down. Immigration rules such as 'no recourse to public funds' and the 'two year rule' means if a woman leaves a broken marriage, failed or abusive relationship she has no where to turn to except to return to her home country.

SBS can be contacted on 0208 571 9595 between 10am and 5pm Monday to Friday. Although a 24 hour emergency services is not provided, if you need help out of hours contact the Police on 999.

If SBS takes on your case within office hours they will continue to work on your case out-of-hours if necessary to ensure your safety.

Southall Black Sisters are the only organisation that offers these services and any donation of any size is gratefully received in order for the organisation to continue to provide essential services. Donations marked 'SBS endowment fund' should be sent to 'SBS Endowment Fund' Southall Black Sisters, 21 Avenue Road, Southall, Middlesex, UB1 3BL.

More information regarding Southall Black Sisters, what they do, their campaigns and useful contacts can be found at <http://www.southallblacksisters.org.uk>

MEMBERS' PROFILES



My name is **LAURENCE CAMPBELL**, age 40, the proud father of four young daughters.

My family history can be traced as far back as the 14th century from the Caribbean beaches of St Lucia to the Highlands of Scotland.

I was born in the UK, but was sent to St Lucia at a very young age to learn the ways of my elders, the transition from boy to man, a very ceremonial and traditional time in my life.

I served four years in the UK Army 1987 to 1991, then later I was made redundant from a career in robotics in December

2000, I had to find a job to support my little girls.

So in February 2001 I joined the footplate at South West Trains, and made sure that I joined ASLEF within the first week of my employment, a decision that I recommend to all employees joining the railway no matter what TOC.

In 2007 I was proud to be elected by our members in to the Black and Ethnic Minority Committee for District 1. I attended the Black Workers TUC 2007, and gave a speech on the effects of Gangs Knife/ Gun Crime.

I am hoping to make 2009 a proactive, positive year for all our members on a multi-cultural level.

It is more than just a Union I am proud to be part of it.

My name is **PATRICK BLAKE** and I currently serve as the Black & Ethnic Representative Committee Member for District Council 8. I am currently working for London Underground as a Train Operator where I have been for 25 years; I have been an A.S.L.E.F member for the same amount of years. I am also my branches Equality Representative.

My current pastimes are golf, football, korfbal, working on computers. I have two step daughters that are aged 11 & 15.

IN THE recent meeting of ASLEF's Black and Ethnic Minority Representative Committee we discussed the feedback we had been given regarding the Black and Ethnic Minority badges.

There were many positive responses but some were negative. As a committee we want to explain how the badges were intended.

It was brought to our attention by some members that, unlike the other ASLEF Representative Committees, there was no black and ethnic minority badge to wear on uniforms. As a result the committee agreed that a badge should be produced and the Executive Committee agreed.

Once received the badges were then sent to every black and ethnic minority member.

Some members have told the committee that they were not happy with how the badges were distributed and if they had wanted a badge they would have requested one and some felt it alienated people.

There have been many positive responses with members who have been extremely proud to finally wear a black and ethnic minority badge on their uniform. There have also been requests for more badges to be given out and those interested in the new badge have been brought together to discuss the work of ASLEF's committee.

As a committee we are very sorry if people have been offended by the distribution of the badge but this is not how they were intended. They were intended to promote, highlight the black and ethnic membership of the ASLEF and the committee's work and mostly to bring people together.

We hope everyone can wear their badge with pride.

Useful addresses

Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) The new commission is working to eliminate discrimination, reduce inequality, protect human rights and to build good relations, ensuring that everyone has a fair chance to participate in society. Telephone 0845 604 6610 info@equalityhumanrights.com <http://www.equalityhumanrights.com>

Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants (JCWI) Provides support and legal advice around a wide range of immigration and asylum issues. 0207 251 8708 info@jcw.org.uk <http://www.jcw.org.uk>

The Afya Trust National charity working on ethnic minority health issues. 0207 582 0400 www.afyatrust.org

BLINK - Black Information Link Independent Community interactive site for black communities. 0207 582 1990 www.blink.org.uk