

Black & Ethnic Members

Newsletter Vol.5 No. 1 – JANUARY 2012

CHANGING OF THE GUARDS



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SOUTH EAST BLACK & ETHNIC MINORITY MEMBERS (BEM) COMMITTEE ALL NEW OFFICERS

At their 2012 Annual General Meeting held on the 19th January at RMT Head Office Unity House Euston, the meeting voted to have all new younger officers in for the coming year.

In fairness, the old Guards did not put up much of a fight, with many of the nominations coming from them, helping with ushering the next generation. In what will always be remembered as a 'bloodless coup', by a new crop of Officers who, when asked, not one of them could remember what a 'ten bob note' looked like.

'This is a change over that has happened at the right time, with the right people in the right place at the right time' said newly elected **Secretary Glen Hart** who takes up his post immediately and will be seeking to arrange an early handover meeting with outgoing Secretary Glenroy watson and other Officers. He continues

"This sort of wholesale change of all top Officers could not have happened last year, or the year before. We have spent time with our Elder Officers, work with them, understanding the work that they have been doing and how they have kept going against all the odds".

Both the outgoing and the incoming Officers worked very closely in the last few years to bring about the Reparation conference on the 23rd August last year, inviting Mario Joseph of Haiti and reviving this BEM Newsletter.

"With the close working we have seen so far, and the inclusion of all members in the South East" explained incoming Chair Kissi-Debra *"This will be a seamless transfer where we will simply be continuing the ongoing work of last year's Officers and look forward to our next meeting on the 16th February 1600hrs"*



UPDATE

“What happened to James Masango & Jayesh Patel’s Cases?”

This winter saw **Justice for James Masango and Jayesh Patel** both resulting in them back driving trains.

James was declared unfit by medical professionals yet was railroaded into driving a train, in this time he made a mistake one which could have been prevented if LUL had not decided to continue their campaign of victimising drivers.

His case dragged on for over 2 years with management seeking to stress him out and push him into dropping an employment tribunal case.

James won his tribunal where a judge ruled that he was 100% innocent, and LUL were 100%

guilty of dismissing him unlawfully. Having won his employment tribunal LUL still refused to give him his job back! This dragged on for months and is continuing even today. His branch has demanded and the union is preparing for balloting! Let’s see now

Jayesh was a lay member with the RMT until he heard about the disgusting way Train Operator Eamonn Lynch was being treated. Eamonn worked on the same line as Jayesh but the two did know each other.

Management preferred to take their revenge out on anyone they can for Eamonn Lynch’s reengagement.

Jayesh had a **INR** then interviewed by a manager whilst driving his train.

These victories were not attained through the good will of management but through the organisation and activism of every formal body within the RMT, from Trains Grade to the National Black & Ethnic Minority Members Advisory Committee (B&EMMC), each played a significant role in the success of the campaign.

The local BEM group were extremely supportive of the campaign. Members with their wealth of experience of tackling victimisation produced materials & were regularly seen around the combine distributing them to drivers and all other staff around the combine. The committee also played it role in the Eamonn and Arwyn dispute, and will continue.



National Black and Ethnic Minority Members Advisory Committee (B&EMMAC) Annual General Conference

Wednesday 14th and Thursday 15th March 2012
Bernie Grant Centre: Tottenham N.15

The RMT's National B&EMMAC annual conference will be held this year in London and at the Bernie Grant Centre in North London for the second time in less than 5 years.

Black members in the South East welcome the conference back to London and with both the National Chair and Vice Chair Jason St John and Jennifer Kissi-Debra both being located in the South East, this will give an added bonus to the organising spirit of the events and preparation.

All RMT branches and Regional Councils are entailed to send 4 delegates each and as many visitors as they like. Many branches are still struggling with the idea of sending their Black members to "those type of conference" even those in the so called 'enlighten' South East of the country.

Black members right across the country, including the London area are still not even aware of the existence of these structures created to help move forward the agenda of equality for all members. That is the job of BEM News.

We need the help of all to make this year's conference a success. Retired regular members Kato and Daley will be joined this year by newly retired Carol Fosters who is still making her contribution to the continued struggle.

If Comrades who should be enjoying the 'twilight years' of their lives can give their time this way, what reasons can other elected Black & Ethnic Representative have for their non contribution to the struggle? The fact remains that many of our elected Black Representative still think that white Comrades will not support fighting 'black issues' this must change



Retired Carol
Still fighting Racism

Of the LTRC 5 elected delegates to the B&EMMAC two have never been to any meetings at all or given any satisfactory explanation, as to why they have not informed the local BEM Committee when they cannot attend in order that another replacement Activist can be found. These delegates are given paid release. Under our rules, these two posts have now been declared VACANT and any RMT member in the LTRC area who has been playing an active role in fighting for justice and against racial discrimination **should attend & seek nomination at their local Branch.**



Frank, Peter, Mohammed, Jason, Glen – visitor – & Zimele of Scotland part of RMT's (8) Delegates to the 2011 TUC Black Workers Conference

There is an Annual Running battle each year with the Leadership and the B&EMMAC conference on the numbers of delegates to attend each year's TUC Black Workers Conference. No prisoners taken yet. Each year resulted in an increase. At one of our lowest point our delegation was down to only one person representing the largest union on the railways.

Even when we had our full delegation, little Tssa and mini Aslef were sending larger delegations than us.

It got so bad that the 2011 Chair of conference stated that if TUC would

TUC BLACK WORKERS CONFERENCE 2012
April 27th, 28th and 29th

not let us in as affiliate 'then we should kick the door in and go anyway'. Fortunately it never came to that. A dangerous possibility was averted which would have push back our progress in 2010 of 5 delegates. After an impromptu election, held at the end of the 2011 conference, another 5 delegates were elected.

Note: Missing from the photo above is **Frank Ajayi, Jennifer Kissi-Debra & Glenroy watson.**

Delegations to TUC Conferences from affiliates are based on each union's membership. For many years the NUR and now the RMT have been entailed to between 10 and currently **15 delegate** to the TUC Black Workers conference. To this day, RMT never taken up its full compliment and Black members have never been given an explanation of why not.

In the absent of that explanation, Black Activists have been fighting to ensure we send along our full compliment and this year there is a good chance we will make it. The Leadership have made concessions and have move the elected numbers from 3 to 12 but continue to refuse to change the way delegation are voted on. Using the current system has again resulted in only 4 people being elected. Another 8 who stood, have been nominated by the Executive to make 12, BEM News says 'go the whole hog, allow delegates at this year's B&EMMAC conference to elect another 3 delegates from there to make up our 15, on 14/15 March in Tottenham'. Don't waste our voice.



2012 Annual General Meeting

Special Guest Speaker: Mario Joseph of Haiti



Throughout the previous year we have participated and organised a number of functions to address these concerns.

Through providing a necessary forum, additional to branch meetings we make it easier for black and ethnic workers to address any concerns they may have experienced with racism, to a collection of highly experienced reps, able to provide the correct advice or guidance.

Our purpose is not to undermine the sterling work most of our industrial or health & safety reps conduct, but it is to offer them the right guidance and advice to ensure they understand and meet black and ethnic workers needs.

Surprisingly, and in this day and age, many people still question the reason why a committee for black and ethnic members is in existence? Black & ethnic workers historically are massively disadvantaged in the workplace, and, continue to be so. They can sometimes be unconsciously disadvantaged within the ranks of their own union.

Our Guest Speakers Mario Joseph is a powerful Speaker and one of Haiti's most prominent human rights campaigners. When Mario speaks, others listen. Haiti is a current and important subject which can act as a barometer of our Humanity towards each other and quite frankly what we are willing to do for each other in times of need.

The problem exists in large aspects of society, the term institutionalised racism is not a made up term. It recognises the disadvantages many face on a daily basis. Unfortunately some workers when not affected by any disparity of treatment, sometimes do not see it for themselves or sometimes even prefer to pretend it does not exist.

We hope to arrange and have many more, high profile activists and campaigners in black and ethnic workers issues, address our future meetings to recognise our struggle on a national and international basis. To ensure the consistency of standards set by the committee's founders is maintained to an exceptionally high one, we are seeking full union participation to address worker's plight at any level, and, continually demonstrate the RMT's ability to meet its obligations. A morality saying coined by Alexander Hamilton and later used by the great Malcolm X states, ***"Those who stand for nothing fall for anything"***. We are asking you to be the change consciousness and stand with us

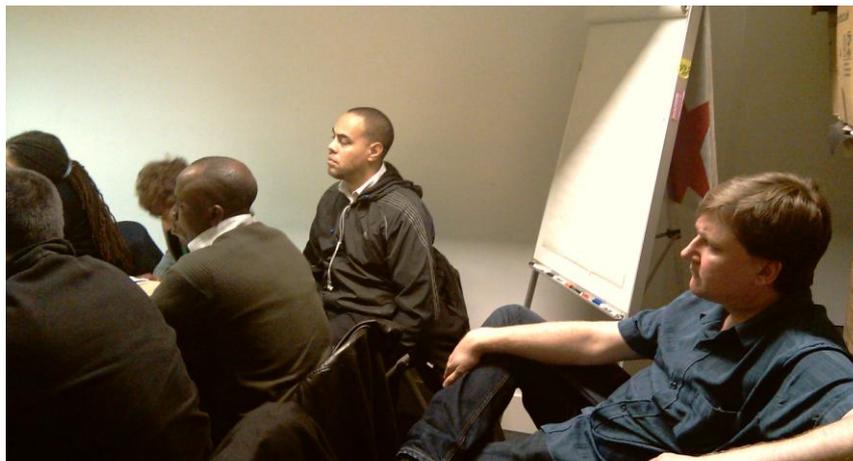
As we all know, the role of the union is to fight for justices for members and ensure workers rights are maintained.

What makes RMT stand out from other unions is that, rather than have one group which fits all, they have provided for these network groups which pays concerted attention to the issues which affect equality groups.

At this year's well attended AGM, this position was again reaffirming with our commitment to deliver.

We provide an advisory function to the union, providing advice on what issues adversely affect black and ethnic workers in the workplace.

To do so we offer support to local and functional reps to ensure they are best equipped to meet the needs of black and ethnic workers.



Glen Hart and EC member Darren Island listen to Mario

SOUTH EAST Black & Ethnic Members (BEM) Aims and Objectives

- Our purpose of serving Black and Ethnic member's, within the RMT, is to co-ordinate, mobilise and provide the necessary tools to equip members, activist or reps.
- We intend to utilise our experienced committee members to provide suitable advice on appropriate matters.
- This will include, as required, discussing past or present industrial cases, addressing policy concerns and any other union or workplace issue which has detrimental impact on the welfare of Black and Ethnic members.
- To this aim we are seeking to ensure equality for all RMT members, that by increasing active participation for Black and Ethnic members, we will be able to train, educate and prepare a body of workers to meet all needs.
- Working on these principles of fairness and equality, it will allow us an opportunity to increase awareness of specific issues relevant to our members, provide a forum to discuss these matters and ensure mistakes of the past are recognised, to prevent them from being repeated.
- To achieve this we will hold regular monthly meetings, which will give attendees an opportunity to share views or address concerns, in providing a forum to develop and learn public speaking skills.
- We maintain a responsibility to ensure our meetings discuss the most recent and relevant criteria.
- Towards establishing a network of workers, we will invite speakers, reps and associated groups to keep us informed on all the latest updates of pivotal industrial matters.
- As well as providing an advisory function, the success of the committee is reliant on the support of its representatives and members.
- To continue providing an opportunity for Black and Ethnic members to successfully generate a network of activists, leaders and spoke-persons.



Some of the delegates to 2012 TUC Black Workers Conference
Jayesh, Julie, retired member Caroline, Glen, Augusta and Petric.

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The current RMT Delegation to this year's TUC Black Workers Conference are:-

Name	Branch
1) Arthur Georgestone	Picc. & District
2) Barry Kelly	Birmingham Rail
3) Chris Buckle	Kings Cross
4) Glenroy watson	Finsbury Park
5) Glen Hart	Morden & Oval
6) Julia Latona	Stratford No.1
7) Jennifer Kissi-Debrah	Eurostar (EPS)
8) Jayesh Patel	Bakerloo Line
9) Kent Knight	Southall, Ealing/S
10) Mansur Khan	Leeds City
11) Pat Raeburn	Neasden
12) Tandi Madodoko	Surrey & Hants
13) Vacancy	TO BE ELECTED
14) Vacancy	TO BE ELECTED
15) Vacancy	TO BE ELECTED

Many of the above delegates have never been to their Local Black and Ethnic Members group meetings or RMT National B&EMMAC meetings or conference. We do not know if they have been actively fighting racism in their roles within the union. We need to welcome the fact that they have come forward to stand for election, but the role of elected delegates is founded on accountability.

SACKED FOR NOT SIGNING VISITORS SHEETS

ISS Cleaners are being dismissed for not signing the visitors pass record at station. Despite having their own telephone booking-on systems, they have decided to use our evacuation records to discipline their staff. They have charged worker's failure to sign the register as an act of gross misconduct, even though these workers are actually at work in another location.

Cleaning contractor Workers already experience some of the worst terms and conditions of any other workers on the Underground network. The matter has been referred to Functional Council and Health & Safety reps for their consideration. In the meantime LUL Staff are reminded not to hand over restricted documents such as evacuation registers or visitors pass records to third parties. The only persons entitled to restricted documents are LUL managers, London Fire Brigade and Police services. Bosses only use it for sacking our other RMT members.



“She was bleed to death before the earthquake”

HAITI

CAPITAL FOR THE GLOBAL NGOs

(Non Government Organisations)

Hosted on his visit to Parliament by MP Jeremy Corbyn while in the UK for his third visit, but only allowed in twice, Mario Joseph was able to spend some time seeing limited parts of the House of Commons.

On his first visit in 2010, the UK Board Control Agency refused to allow Mario out of the airport. To this day, we are still waiting for an explanation as to why.

On his second visit, as a guest of the RMT, invited to address the 23rd August annual Reparation conference, they could no longer prevent him coming in, so instead they deliberately delayed him by 4 days ensuring that he missed the conference. However, Mario obtained a 6 Months visa which meant he could come back to the UK, up to January 2012

Thursday the 12th January 2012 marked two years since the earthquake in Haiti which killed more than 315,000 people.

Mario, whose trip back to Europe was also a lobby tour to Brussels, Scotland and to attend a commemoration event at the TUC organised by a coalition of organisations included BEM, Haiti First Haiti Now Reparation campaign, Pan Afrikan Society Community Forum (PASCf), Haiti Support Group (HSG), Global Afrikan Congressuk (GACuk), Caribbean Labour Solidarity (CLS), RMT and the TUC

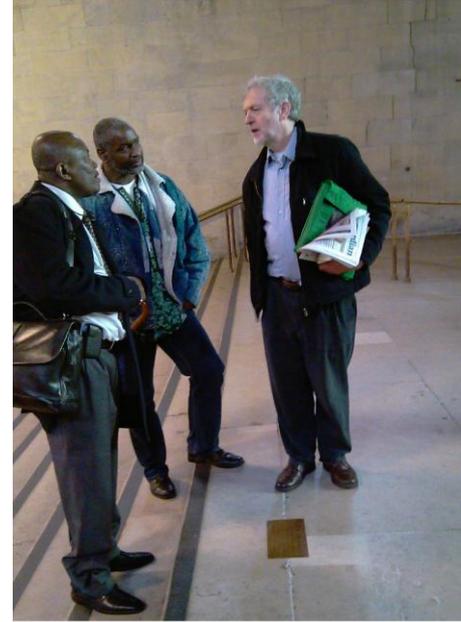
His last day in the London started with an early morning Interview with BENTV back to lunch in parliament, where he was able to see Jeremy and other MPs while seeing Britain's UK colonial symbols. He then attended *“The Occupiers”* in St Paul before he was able to attend The BEM AGM.

People who have suffered so much, have been infected

by cholera, imported by the UN which so far has killed more than 6,500 and made over 500,000 reported residents falling ill. The UN's failure to screen peacekeepers and dumping of untreated waste into the main river is known to be the cause. It is rare for any Caribbean countries to have that particular strain of cholera. The UN are now blames earthquake suffering Haiti's inadequate sanitation infrastructure as the reason.

Mario explained that another problem preventing aid reaching the victims is the number of NGOs. International charities have offices in western country, and every country sent Representative.

The people of Haiti have never seen so many brand new 4X4 van and trucks. Mario explains that NGO's do provide some valuable services, so the residents do not want them to leave Haiti. He ask that the amount of officers is reduced. These charities are using the money they have collected from us to help the people to buy 4X4s. At dinner after the AGM, Mario asked that the Coalition stays in Place to ensure it does not happen again.



Mario, Omowalie and Jeremy on 'Mandela parliament spot'.



STOP & SEARCH



Criminalizing a Nation:

Change to stop and Search?

The latest development to come out of the successful convictions of some of Stephen Lawrence's killers is with the reform of the controversial powers of stop and search. One reform, recommendation made by the 1999 Lord Macpherson's report.

For ethnicity data to be recorded for every stop and search conducted. It was in effect, until the ConDemn Coalition Government decided different.

The original purpose, identified through the Stephen Lawrence murder investigation, was that recording of data increased accountability of officers, who were seen to abuse their powers, in pursuit of a racist agenda.

The Equality and Human Rights Commission recently recognised that since the changes, an African-Caribbean person is more than 27 times likely than a white person to be stopped by police. The actual success rates of stop and search are shown as disproportionate when compared with the amount of searches conducted.

BEM News asked what do you suggest would improve relations between the local communities and the Police?

KH "If intelligence and more interaction were sought from the community, the public would accommodate all of the Police's efforts. We need a number of safeguards in place, such as an scrutiny by an independent stop & search panel, properly resourced, able to investigate the Police's methods, this would instil much-needed confidence in the community".

BN: What do you think was the root of the problem?

KH "At the moment, Police act as if they are a law unto themselves. They do what they want without informing anyone. Even more worrying, is that they are refusing to provide any results or outcomes of stop & search to community groups or leaders". He explained further, "The original purpose of the Section 60 search was to disperse and prevent gang violence. The state powers provided are being abused in such a way, it now brings into question the purpose. It seems they haven't learnt from the controversial abuse of stop & search under s.44, which was a prevention of terrorism measure, ruled illegal by the European Court of Human Rights. This occurred as a consequence of 101,000 persons being stopped and searched for suspected terrorist activity, without a single individual being arrested for terrorism. The Police have used stop & search over the last 40 years as a means to criminalise young black men between the ages of 15-45 years old. It is a form of racially profiling to ensure young black men are criminally convicted. Simply put, if a young person is wrongfully convicted (fitted up), they become angry men, and quite often this is their first experience of the justice system".

BN: How do youths see the Police?

KH "It doesn't help that they (the Police) promote themselves, with 32,000 Officers and weapons to boot, as the biggest gang in London. Not as a team or anything more polite, it is as if they are competing –it's an absolute disgrace! When they do capture many of these youths, they often threaten and tell them, 'we're going to teach you a lesson', rule by intimidation".

BN: What are, if any, the recent developments with stop & search?

KH "I attended a meeting with the Police Deputy Commissioner, who described the new rolled out stop & search plans. At first glance, it seems a step in the right direction; they use appropriate language and appear to

have the right idea. My main concern is whether it actually filters to the main people, foot soldiers who have to implement it".

KH: Do you still feel there will be bias against the black community?

KH "The suggestion has been made that now stop & search will target mainly violent offenders. I have no problem with that, the majority of Haringey community have no problem with that, no matter what colour of race, that's a problem we all want eradicated. However, the suggestion that there will be a reduction of 50% stop and searches for drugs users is not good enough. It seems that there remains an attempt to criminalise black youths, for possessing a small amount of cannabis, say".

In this Interview, exclusive to **BEN News**, he explained his thoughts on the recent plans.

KH "In my area of Haringey, where I'm responsible for, we all want to stop violent offenders, we realise that 50% of drug users isn't the problem. Another safeguard was that any use of section 60 in Haringey would be reported to me as the chairman of the stop & search monitoring committee. While this suggestion was being made to me at the meeting, we heard reports of a number of stop & searches being conducted in Tottenham, practically outside.

BN: How did that make you feel?

KH "It beggars belief; I mean, where is the change?"

Finally, **BEM News** asked Ken Hind what he feel are the main dangers if things don't change?

He provided for us an indicative assessment of the current stop & search climate.

KH "The only real way to make a difference is for the Police to get real support from the community. The fourth generation in this country are never going to allow stop & searches to destroy a whole community ever again, before they allow that to happen... I fear it would cause another uprising".

OUT GOING OFFICERS

"GOODBY ... OR GOOD RIDDANCE? OLD TRADE UNION ACTIVIST DON'T EVER FADE AWAY"

Frank Murray, outgoing Chair and Glenroy Watson outgoing Secretary, have led, not once but at least 3 revival of the Local Black and Ethnic Members (BEM) – note, it's 'members' not minority - during the many years of the National committees existence.

"Glenroy seconded the motion at the RMT National AGM which created the Current National Advisory Committee" noted Frank "and he was at the first ever conference of the Committee." After the AGM, a number of Black



Elder Frank flanked Kissi & Elder Kato

Activists got together to see how we can put the AGM motion into action. It was clear

not all in the NUR were in Agreement, with the AGM's decision."

"We could not hold meetings at NUR's Office, so we held a number of small meetings at my house" recall Glenroy.

"There has only ever been one Black Member on the NUR/RMT's National Executive committee Ben Mottley."

continued Glenroy "The AGM motion came from his branch where apart from Ben there were no other Black members. Ben, Frank & myself put forward ideas,

some were taken up, some not.

Frank is still on the committee, fighting inside while I am on the 'outside' to try and ensure implementation



Elder Glenroy Watson addressing International conference in Berlin

2012



MEETINGS DATES

"the 3RD Thursday every Month"

(put these dates in your RMT diary)

These Meetings will be held at **UNITY HOUSE** 39 Chalton Street NW1 1600hrs

February 16th

March 15th

April 19th

RMT National Black and Ethnic Members Advisory Committee's Conference **March 14/15th** Tottenham

Black Workers Conference April 27 – 29th Congress House

These Meetings will be held @ **EXMOUTH ARMS** 1 Starcross Street NW1 **1700hrs**

May 17th

June 21st

July 19th

August 16th

September 20th

These Meetings will be held at **UNITY HOUSE** 39 Chalton Street NW1 1600hrs

October 18th

November 15th

December 20th

End of year Social, at 12 Pins Pub Finsbury Park N4

2013 Annual General Meeting 1600hrs

Thursday 17th January Unity House