

# RMT National Black & Ethnic Minority Members' Conference Report 2019

## Portsmouth



# RMT Nat. Black & Ethnic Members' Conference 2019

Official 25<sup>th</sup> NB&EMM Conference held at the Royal Maritime Club, Portsmouth, March 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup>

# Conference Report



RMT Union's 25th official National Black & Ethnic Members' conference hosted by Portsmouth branch/ Wessex region took place at the Royal Maritime Club 27/28th March 2019. It had a strong London Transport Regions contingency, well supported by LT branches, who either sent their full complement of 4 delegates or donated to the cost of the event. The conference started with RMT lay tutor, Jayesh Patel (Bakerloo branch) giving a valuable insight into conference which although billed as an intro session for first time delegates, had an effect of being an excellent ice-breaker.

Glenroy Watson (LTRC) gave a moving tribute for veteran and pioneering comrade Eric Kato, recently bereaved, and included other departed RMT comrades.

Former RMT president Sean Hoyle gave the host

branch/region's welcome recalling memorable events such as our time in Edinburgh where conference was



disrupted to allow delegates to attend an anti-fascist demo. When he and the NEC intervened to ensure we could have Jackie Walker - a speaker of our choice. His pride at being invited to chair our fringe meeting at TUC Congress and admiration for guest speaker David Comissiong. He also gave credit to NB&EMM President, Glen Hart (Morden & Oval branch) who had covered Jackie's travel expenses from his own pocket. Lastly, he reminded that with 84

registered delegates our conference has larger numbers than the AGM and its testament that we continue to build on the success.

Our first keynote speaker, Roger McKenzie, Unison's Assistant General Secretary gave a powerful inspiring talk, finishing on the theme 'justice' being a key demand for race equality. Conference was reminded by delegate Sister Thandi (Wimbledon branch) of our condolences for Roger's recent bereavement.





Next, Suresh Grover from the Monitoring Group went through a whirlwind history explaining teacher Blair Peach's murder by the Police, and then to how he and others had established the Stephen Lawrence campaign, helping to capture the public's interest. He ended on the current concerns with the 'Gang Matrix' and reiterated calls to always seek justice.

The day ended with a showing of the documentary 'The Witch-hunt'. A film discussing the wider context of racism; highlighting antisemitism claims against the Labour Party and the persecution of Jackie Walker. Followed by a passionate discussion exploring the treatment of the Palestinians.



The night ended with a social at a Turkish restaurant, although with so many delegates being unable to fit in the restaurant all at once, we had to split the party into 2 sittings. This at least allowed the 2nd sitting to take in a brief tour of the local area through co-operation of our gracious hosts.



Our 2nd day started in much the same vein as the 1st. Political discussions, education and conference business all jam packed into a tight scheduled and delivered adeptly by the chair. Millie Samuels (Wimbledon branch) gave the Advisory committee report, thanking the NB&EMM President and Jess Webb for their efforts. Also, commending the Liaison Committee and host branch for their efforts in producing conference merchandise and their hospitality in covering all of our needs.



Then, Brother Oluwarotimi Ajayi (Vice chair, Paddington branch) gave the TUC Race Relations report, detailing their work and the pivotal role RMT union had played in supporting their work, including our fringe meeting at TUC Congress on reparations.

Author and educator Danny Thompson (Morden & Oval branch) our 1st guest speaker for the day. He highlighted his research for the Afrikan workbook, which was available to purchase and signed.

Guest visitor Digimas Dodgima spoke about the current state of affairs in Cameroons.

Followed by the NEC report, which as usual for our conference, raised a lot of questions which NEC member Geoff Kite handled with aplomb.

Our general secretary was scheduled for 25 mins, Mick ended up having to respond to questions and points for an additional 50mins. Eventually, the chair Glen Hart, had to intervene and draw the discussion to a close.



Speaker Gloria Morrison, Jengba - Joint Enterprise: Not Guilty By Association, Campaign Coordinator gave a



moving personal testimony about the creation of their campaign group and why it was necessary. Their visit was partly in response to our 2018 AGM resolution seeking to affiliate with these types of groups. Further conference business took place with discussions on resolutions. The 2 selected for the RMT's AGM were Gang Matrix from Bakerloo branch and Neasden branch's Anti-Racism Strategy in response to the Christchurch massacre.

Elections to host our 2020 conference venue on receipt of invites by branches/ regions was decided between a dual bid from Liverpool Shipping branch/ Liverpool No. 5 branch and Blackpool and Flyde Coast branch. With Liverpool Shipping branch/ Liverpool No. 5 branch winning the vote after they had sent in a detailed request.



Elections for officers saw Glen Hart re-elected for his 3rd and final term as National Black & Ethnic Minority Members' Conference Chair. With Jennifer Aggrey-Flynn (Euro Passenger Services branch) elected vice-Chair. Our Liaison committee elected with Janet Campbell (Wolverhampton) Beverleigh Thomas (Waltham Cross & District) and Arthur Georgestone (Piccadilly and District West).

