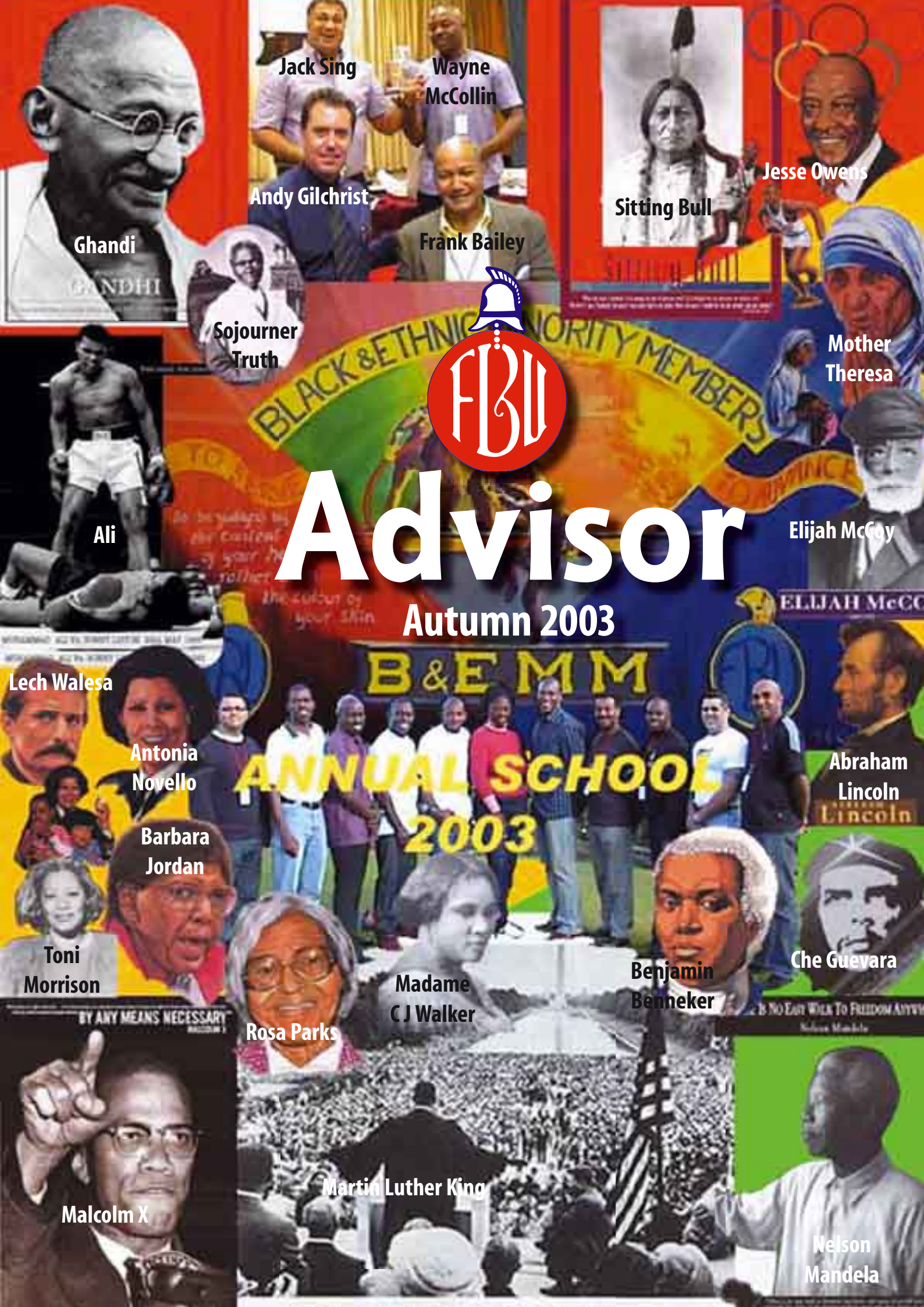




Jack Sing

Wayne
McCollin

Andy Gilchrist

Frank Bailey

Sitting Bull

Jesse Owens

Ghandi

Sojourner
Truth

Mother
Theresa

Ali

Elijah McCoy

Advisor

Autumn 2003

Lech Walesa

Antonia
Novello

Barbara
Jordan

Toni
Morrison

Abraham
Lincoln
Lincoln

Che Guevara

Rosa Parks

Madame
C J Walker

Benjamin
Benneker

Malcolm X

Martin Luther King

Nelson
Mandela

Our future is in our hands



**Paul Ahmed,
B&EMM
National Chair**

If I started this foreword by saying “it’s time to move forward” would I be suggesting we, as a union:

- a) have defended our “unbreached barricades”
- b) are somewhat guilty of standing still
- c) feel renewed optimism.

Some, reading this, may think all three of the above are totally wrong. A significant number of our membership feel that instead of successfully defending the Fire Service and our conditions of service, the floodgates of attacks on them are now fully opened. Some believe, that in fact, if we’ve made any move, it’s been a backward one. Some may think that the credibility of the FBU is being questioned and the self respect of once proud officials is at a low ebb. Optimism barely flickers among many in the rank & file and is accompanied by a “fingers crossed” mindset.

There is no doubt in my mind that we are currently in a vulnerable position. Those who only dared to snipe are ready to pounce, while those who sneered now triumphantly mock. But rest assured, we will be back!

The multi-functional firefighter was portrayed as a work-shy water squirter and our highly skilled control staff as glorified telephonists. To my knowledge NOT ONE senior brigade officer was prepared to defend the service we provide. Their ignorant silence may have irreparably damaged the service and its once proud image.

One myth that was rightly dispelled was the old one about the southern regions being the soft underbelly of the FBU. Lack of resolve can never again be leveled at any region in OUR union.

So, it’s time to move forward. Now more than ever, we need to resolve our internal differences and unify to become the ONLY ‘stake-holder’ that truly cares about the communities we serve. A far cleverer person than I once said “a movement that stands still becomes a monument”.

We cannot let our particular section stand still either. With an estimated 700-plus members to represent, there is much to be done. Some of the responsibilities of our officials are highlighted elsewhere in this issue. Our future is in our hands and your continued support is greatly appreciated. Enjoy the ADVISOR and feel free to contribute!

Let’s hear

Wayne McCollin,

B&EMM

Region 1, says the

recent dispute

highlighted

many issues that

could have a

disproportionate

affect on Black

and Ethnic

Minority Members

WHITE PAPER, PAY AND MINORITY GROUPS

how Government will consult us



JESS HURD/REPORTAGEAL.COM

After many years of campaigning on equality issues and steady progress being made towards redressing the balance of under representation, Black and Ethnic Minority Members of the Fire Brigades Union (B&EMM) were looking forward to the year 2004 with some expectation.

This would mark the start of an unprecedented period of staff turnover in the service. The potential number of vacancies that would arise, supported by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister targets for recruitment and progression of minority groups, was seen as a key milestone and a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to address under-representation issues within the uniformed parts of the Fire Service.

That air of expectation has potentially been blown away as a result of the Government's insistence during the pay dispute that a decent pay rise had to be financed by service cuts.

The other bargaining point was the modernising agenda. A reasonable pay increase had to be met through different ways of working, said the Government and Employers.

A simplistic standpoint to take would be that cuts – a reduction in staff numbers – are the only way to make savings and would be an inevitability. And if you reduce the number

of people required, you reduce the opportunities for new people to enter the service, which will affect the targets for the recruitment of minority groups that have been set.

But perhaps cuts are not the necessary outcome of different ways of working. Perhaps jobs do not have to be sacrificed to foot the pay bill.

The Government and management have put forward Integrated Risk Management Planning (IRMP) and Integrated Personal Development System (IPDS) as being fundamental to the new ways of working in the Fire Service.

IRMP as a principle is easy to understand and accept. You take the brigade area, gather as much data as possible about the area and the people within it, determine what constitutes risk and then use professional judgment to determine the best way to deploy and use resources to manage those risks.

Yet even if we are starting with a clean sheet of paper and a clear mind, it is not yet possible to determine what affect this approach will have on staff numbers. What is clear is the fact that the outcomes will vary from brigade to brigade and there will be a reduced emphasis on reactive firefighting and more emphasis on fire prevention.

IPDS is said to be a vehicle for the delivery of good equality and fairness practices. It is said to be individually driven and is open and transparent in application. Under IPDS, the occupational standards that we will all be expected to meet will have performance requirements for how we deal with all the people we meet in the work context. Such a system requires explicit evidence of positive contribution towards diversity in the assessment of potential to progress. The application of IPDS would, then, demonstrate management's commitment to this critical issue and how B&EMM members feature in the thinking of our managers.

Under IRMP managers will have the ability to change the shift system at local level with proper consultation and agreement of the Union. The current system for station-based staff has been under attack for some time. It has been claimed that it is unattractive to women and B&EMM – a claim that has been refuted repeatedly by women and B&EMM firefighters.

B&EMM members have made a significant impact on the policies and procedures in the Fire Service with regard to diversity issues. We wait to hear from government how we will be consulted and how we and members of our community are going to be able to contribute to the modernised Fire Service.

The recent dispute has served to highlight many issues that will affect all members of the Fire Service and potentially could have a disproportionate affect on Black and Minority Ethnic members.

RECRUITMENT/OUTREACH

The Government's White Paper, published in July, contains a number of measures designed to promote diversity in the newly renamed Fire & Rescue Service. This renewed equality push – apparently contradicted by Government statements suggesting job cuts instead of a major new recruitment drive – comes some four years after a Home Office initiative to tackle what it saw as a total lack of diversity in certain parts of the public sector.



*The LFB Positive Action Team (l to r)
Sub Officer Pam Operaocha, psychologist
Helen Bartimore, David Martin*

A target too

IN 1999, the Home Office gave the Fire Service a 10-year target to improve its recruitment, retention and promotion of black/ethnic people and women.

There is no doubt that for certain Brigades the figures set were ambitious. Many senior officers and authority politicians shook their heads and said "unachievable". But many of these people had simply missed the point. It was a TARGET. Something to aim for. As far as employing under-represented groups was concerned, the Fire Service never had an aim before. So quite honestly it was about time! Needless to say, many Brigades found excuses from the word go. Quite a few decided to "strip down" whatever they did before and totally change the way recruitment of minority groups was attempted.

Two brigades with the most challenging targets were London and West Midlands. With their highly diverse communities, that was to be expected. And from the word go, they put in place strategies and from that came Outreach policies and activities. Below, we outline how these two brigades decided to try and meet their targets.

LONDON

After many meetings concerning all interested parties, including FBU sectional groups, the Brigade produced its

Recruitment Outreach Strategy. This was broken up into seven component parts:

Firefighter Selection Team – more often than not, it was in the past staffed by mainly white males. Any of the under-represented groups in the team were on short term secondments, which didn't inspire continuity. Now, instead, out of six people in the team – of which four are operational Sub-Officers – five are black/ethnic minority and two are women.

Coverage – the focus is to attract female and black & ethnic persons to the uniformed brigade. Positive action!!

Black & Ethnic Communities – the target for 2009 is 25% of operational staff to be black/ethnic. A tall order! Being in London's diverse communities and playing a part was an absolute "must do". It was agreed that marketing would be more effective if aimed at the higher-populated ethnic areas. Recruitment literature such as leaflets and posters are to be displayed in areas with the full understanding and co-operation of proprietors. For example, barbers, hairdressers, fast food outlets, community groups & places of entertainment.



far?

Education – schools, colleges, career packs for graduates etc.

Primarily targeted at highly populated black/ethnic educational establishments, work experience programmes can be an effective learning experience. Visits to local fire stations and training centres will be beneficial in giving a background of the service as a career choice. Recruitment Open Days are to be regularly held for under-represented groups. Fitness assessment could also be part of the programme, especially for young women.

Events – many staged in London and surrounding areas aimed at black/ethnic communities. The Recruitment/Outreach team is to attend and meet potential candidates from target groups. The presence of black/ethnic volunteers supplementing the team and explaining the job of a firefighter is invaluable. The colour barrier, in communication terms, has been removed. Events include: Cosmopolitan Show (women), Afro Hair & Beauty, Mega Mela and Notting Hill Carnival. The Service has to play a part in these communities.

Positive Action – central to this policy are the “Open Days”. They are aimed at the minority groups, but not exclusive to them. Volunteers from B&EMM and London’s Women Action

Committee (WAC) help staff the days, and the response in terms of job applicants so far has been astounding. Potential applicants are taken through the whole selection process and have all their questions answered by serving operational staff. The intention is to have 12 Open Days a year.

Networks – the help, ideas and enthusiasm for London’s strategy are fuelled by the volunteers from B&EMM & London WAC. Regular meetings are held to evaluate the strategy and amend it where necessary. This internal “networking” must continue. The Deputy Commissioner for Fire and Emergency Planning, Roy Bishop, has added regular meetings with the sections to his diary to discuss all aspects of London’s Outreach Policy. A fair package of compensatory leave for all volunteers was negotiated through the usual procedures. Externally, there are links being built within communities. Community groups, career advisors, special interest groups, have all been willing to ensure that black/ethnic people get the right information about a career in the Fire Service.

Evaluation

In 1999, when the targets were issued to brigades, London had 240 black/ethnic operational staff. Worst still, it had just 61 women. This, after nearly 20 years of “trying” to recruit under-represented people in the most diverse city in the world!! In August 2003, it has over 400 black/ethnic and 132 female operational staff. There’s a long way to go but like reggae legend Jimmy Cliff said:

“You can get it if you really want”

WEST MIDLANDS

West Midlands Brigade produced its Action Plan for its Recruitment Team to be actioned during 2003 towards the 2004 and 2009 milestones of the Thematic Review.

The aims & objectives of the strategy will be to develop and strengthen existing links and to establish new community contacts with schools, colleges and resource centres.

Short Term

- To progress strategies and initiatives that target people of employable age in the labour market at present.
- A programme of visits to community resource centres will continue. To familiarise staff with the recruitment process and career opportunities that the Fire Service can offer. A partnership to bring about workshops with potential candidates invited to Awareness evenings.
- A review of the evenings using information from issued evaluation forms to continually improve the strategy.
- To provide additional support for fitness training, GAT awareness and interview skills.
- A guidance pack to be produced for attendees.
- A campaign for potential women candidates will be initiated using information and profiles from serving

RECRUITMENT/OUTREACH

firefighters.

- ◆ Collaboration with other Fire Brigades following the success of Mela 2002.
- ◆ Continued attendance at targeted Job Fairs.
- ◆ To be fully aware and involved in National Womens Week.

Advertising to be placed in Womens Guide and in womens gyms across the region.

- ◆ To support the Fire Service Access course at Wolverhampton City College.
- ◆ The partnership with the Connecting Communities Scheme in Handsworth to continue.

Medium Term

- ◆ The plan will focus on the 16-18 age group and those entering university. To present the Fire Service as an option when these people are making future career decisions.
- ◆ Attendance at Careers events and the distribution of Careers Advisors Pack. This will result in increased requests for attendance.
- ◆ The team will continue to work with Colleges who provide the Entry to Public Services Courses. A pilot scheme took place at Training Centre and was viewed as a great success by college staff and students alike. It will be extended.
- ◆ Advertising materials will be re-designed to focus on specific target groups.
- ◆ Posters and pre-paid response cards will be sited at youth centres, cinemas and gyms.
- ◆ A direct mailing to 1,800 female students took place in March 2003. An awareness, information and activity day is planned.
- ◆ Meetings with our Youth Liaison team to take place to build links and offer support for the services they provide. Work experience projects are an area where we can assist.

Long Term

- ◆ In order to come close to the targets for 2009, it is important that the focus is on the younger age groups. At an early age there is an opportunity to raise the profile of the Service, challenge perceptions and promote the wide opportunities the Service can offer. We need to make contact with parents and guardians whose encouragement and support for their children is vitally important in any future career choice.
- ◆ Existing links with Connexions and Careers & Education Business Partnership will be strengthened.
- ◆ Develop and extend links with School Careers Advisors. A new Careers Advisors pack with an inter-active CD Rom to



Sub Officer Pam Operaocha speaks at an open day for BME candidates

support the package will be investigated.

- ◆ Exploration of links that can be made within Brigade CFS initiatives.
- ◆ Explore sponsorship opportunities, youth sport teams, community projects etc.
- ◆ A possible partnership with the Birmingham Wellbeing Project alongside Birmingham Bullets basketball team and Aston Villa F.C. Similar projects will be contacted throughout the West Midlands region.

Conclusion

London and West Mids have made strenuous efforts to improve their employment of the under-represented groups. It has not been cheap or straightforward, but no one said it was going to be!

In two years, London has almost doubled its representation of black/ethnic firefighters to 400 and has more than doubled its employment of women to 132. In just 2-3 years of setting up their Positive Action teams and strategies, both Brigades have shown what can be truly achieved. London have had only one recruitment round in 12 months!

Many brigades are still struggling to successfully explain the term "positive action" to existing staff. Because of this or a simple refusal to accept the idea some of our members are confused as to why it is necessary.

Yet the shamefully low black/ethnic employment figures is the only explanation needed in some of the densely populated black/ethnic communities, who see no diversity in the Fire Service that they pay for.

There are many important changes about to take place within Our Fire & Rescue Service. The White Paper does not fill us with much hope that changes are going to be to the benefit of existing staff or new members of the Service. The section dealing with diversity is just two lines! The onus is on ourselves to make the case for the importance of diversity and how to go about achieving it. We must always endeavour to make things better for our people already in the Service and most importantly, for those who are considering a career in the service.

Special thanks to: Les Bowman (Sub-Officer – Positive Action Team, London FB), Carl 'Spider' Smith (West Mids FB).

NATIONAL COMMITTEE REPORT



When the National Committee first came into the formal structure of the FBU in 1999, we couldn't say with a great deal of confidence that we knew exactly what we were embarking on. All we really knew was that in all arenas we were representing our members.

REPRESENTATION

Each of the 14 regions of the FBU has the opportunity to have a B&EMM rep. After all, we now have members in every region across the country. Politically, every brigade has issues, policies and legislation that involve and impact upon black & ethnic minority staff. Most of them are actively inviting BME staff to input into the myriad of change that is currently taking place and their first point of call will often be the union officials in that Brigade. The best people to influence officials on minority issues are those people themselves. But how are representatives going to speak on your behalf without you voicing your opinions, concerns or demands? Quite frankly, they cannot! On the most basic democratic aims, the rep can only be as good as the people they represent. Without the support, advice and involvement of the members, reps feel that they are sometimes swimming against the tide. The next time you receive a letter/e-mail about a meeting please make every effort to attend. You'll be surprised

From the left: M Nicholas (EC Member), T Turney (B&EMM Chair, Reg 10), S Gordon (B&EMM Sec, Reg 7), L Philpotts (B&EMM Sec, Reg 14), W Simpson (B&EMM chair, Reg 7), P Ahmed (Nat B&EMM Chair), L Ramsey (B&EMM Sec Reg 13), C St Paul (Nat B&EMM Sec)

how much your attendance matters to your B&EMM rep.

BUSINESS

Like all committees within the union structure, the National Committee meet on regular occasions throughout the year. These are formal "business" meetings with a fairly set agenda. At these meetings, your officials report back on all issues going on within Brigades. We are not parochial. All FBU matters are debated and decisions have to be made. The EC member & the National Secretary give their reports and the whole committee responds where appropriate. There are four formal meetings a year at FBU Head Office in Kingston, and many more are held as the need arises. We have an Education sub-committee that deals exclusively with the B&EMM School and they meet on several occasions to put together that major event in the B&EMM calendar. As you can imagine, during the Pay Dispute things were kind of busy!

NEC MEMBER

Michael Nicholas
mickn@fbu.org.uk
07764-927729.

NATIONAL CHAIR

Paul Ahmed
paulafbu@org.uk
07718-159224.

NATIONAL SECRETARY

Carl St Paul
carlstpaul@yahoo.co.uk
07711-435639.

NATIONAL VICE-CHAIR

Samantha Gordon
beamm2@fbu.org.uk
07767-886191

REGION 1

No representative
Scotland.

REGION 2

No representative
Northern Ireland.

REGION 3

David Cass-Williams
Tyne & Wear, Cleveland,
Durham, Northumberland.
david.cass-
williams@freeserve.co.uk
07719-454077.

REGION 4-

No representative
Yorkshire and Humberside.

REGION 5*

Paul Greaves
Gt Manchester, Lancs, Isle of
Man, Cumbria.
Beamm05@fbu.org.uk
07947-271166

REGION 6

No representative
Notts, Derby, Leics, Lincs,
Northants.

REGION 7

Samantha Gordon (Sec),
Warren Simpson (Chair)
West Mids, Hereford &
Worcs, Staffs, Warwicks,
Shropshire. warren_
simpsonuk@yahoo.co.uk

REGION 8

Brian Amos (Sec),
Des Howells (Chair)
Wales.
brian@amosb.
glowinternet.com.
07773-289694

REGION 9*

Mike Ackah
Cheshire, Merseyside.
Mackah999@yahoo.co.uk
07715-948659.

REGION 10

Ronnie Stanley (Sec),
Tennyson Turney (Chair)-
Essex, Herts, Cambs, Beds,
Norfolk, Suffolk.
ronstanley999fbu@
btinternet.com
07947-602866

REGION 11

Garratt Brooks (Sec), **Les
Bowman** (Chair)
London
gpb Brooks@aol.com
07973-521597

REGION 12

No representative
Kent, Surrey, Sussex.

REGION 13

Lud Ramsey
Hants, Dorset, Berks,
Oxfordshire, Bucks, IOW.
ramseysophie@aol.com
07966-754627.

REGION 14

Leroy Philpotts
Gloucs, Wilts, Avon,
Somerset, Devon & Cornwall.
leroy.phillpotts@
btinternet.com
07730-366331

* Regions 5 & 9 are merging
early 2004

THE DESCENDANTS



West Midlands FBU members Samantha Gordon and Warren Simpson at the fund-raising Descendants' Ball in May

Introducing... The Descendants

The Descendants were founded by a group of minority firefighters in the year 2000 because we:

- Were frustrated with the single dimensional approach to Diversity and Equality
- Wanted to promote inclusivity
- Wanted to promote and celebrate the positive aspects of our Community
- Wanted to produce and celebrate the positive aspects of our Community
- Wanted to do something by ourselves, how we wanted to do it, without having to consult with some paymaster
- Wanted to utilise our positive and creative energies

The Group has since grown to include a number of other professionals outside of the Fire Service committed to self direction and spiritual autonomy of all races, which is a key aspect to Diversity that is often overlooked.

To date we have brought people together who have collectively raised not inconsiderable amounts of money for various charities and who have increased knowledge of some of the health afflictions within our community. We focus on the positive, aiming to provide an annual evening of charity and joy in good company and pleasant surroundings.

We also aim to provide both an inter and intra-community network of mutual respect, understanding and appreciation that is at the very heart of Diversity.

We also support other events including St Patricks Day and Brittlebone by our attendance and contribution to such events.

Warren Simpson, B&EMM Chair, Region 7

RACE RELATIONS ACT

SOME TEETH AT LAST FOR THE CRE

New anti-racist legislation affects all public bodies, including the Fire Service

In response to some of the issues raised by the MacPherson Inquiry into the Stephen Lawrence case, in December 2000, the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, was passed. The new legislation is the first major reform of the Race Relations Act of 1976. It gives public bodies, including local authorities and the Fire Service, new responsibilities for promoting good race relations, which are enforceable.

The Commission for Racial Equality (CRE), established by the 1976 Act, will finally gain some teeth. It will have a policing role, and be able to bring legal challenges against any local authority that fails to comply with its new duties. The legislation will place a general and a legal duty on public authorities.

The General Duty

The General Duty requires:

- The elimination of unlawful racial discrimination
- The promotion of equality of opportunity
- The promotion of good relationships between people of different racial groups

Specific duties

Specific duties have been introduced to help public authorities meet the General Duty. The specific duties are a means to an end – steps, methods or arrangements – rather than an end in themselves. Imposed by the Home Secretary, they specify in more detail what each public authority must do to meet the General Duty.

The relevance

Race equality will be more relevant to some functions than others and the relevance of it depends on how much a function affects members of the public or local government employees. For example, a local authority may decide that race equality is more relevant to raising educational standards than to its work on highway maintenance. Public authorities should therefore assess whether, and how, race equality is relevant to each of their functions.

Monitoring compliance

One problem with compliance is that the CRE does not have the resources to monitor every public body's performance in this area. Therefore it is working with relevant audit and inspection agencies in order to ensure that monitoring compliance is built into their framework for inspection.

The CRE will also rely on publicity and complaints received.

Source: CRE

Civil Service: Time to make it happen

Five government departments have no senior ethnic minority staff, according to the latest figures available from the Cabinet Office examined by the Commission for Racial Equality.

Launching the publication of a major survey – *Towards Racial Equality* – into how public bodies have responded to new duties placed on them under the Amended Race Relations Act, CRE Chair Trevor Phillips said: “If we look more closely at the figures we see that ethnic minorities are mainly concentrated in the lower ranks.

“The upper echelons of the civil service remain out of reach for most ethnic minority civil servants.”

Phillips questioned whether the targets set by Whitehall – of 3.2 % for 2005 – raised the bar sufficiently. There was an average number of 9.7 % ethnic minority employees across all departments and an average of 2.8 % for senior staff. However there are 12 departments where fewer than two percent of senior staff are from ethnic minorities. That includes the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, with 1.7 %.



CRE Chair Trevor Phillips addressing the TUC in Brighton earlier this year

Mr Phillips added: “There are whole departments with no ethnic minorities in senior levels. This is

alarming. After 25 years of legislation – and talking about ending racial discrimination – it’s time to make it happen.”

Education: under representation

In the same year of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry research was completed by Carter, Fenton and Modood, on Ethnicity and Employment in Higher Education. The research recognised:

- There is under representation of black staff; especially in lecturing;
- A higher proportion of black staff experience harassment and bullying

It also found:

- Most colleges employ fewer than 5% black staff;
- Black staff are more likely to be part-time, casual or support roles;
- 1% of principals nationally are black;
- 30% of black staff have reported suffering direct discrimination;
- Black staff are concentrated in certain areas ie access;
- The qualifications of black staff are undervalued though they are, on average, more qualified than white staff.

The University and College Lecturers Union NATFHE has agreed to the following actions for change:

- Equality challenge
- Partnership for equality
- Encourage targets.

EQUALITY AT WORK

Lecturers give lessons on race and sexism

The University and College Lecturers Union NATFHE has been striding ahead on race issues.

Using the impetus of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry, and with consistent pressure from their black members, the union took steps to examine their representation of black staff.

As a result:

- NATFHE was the first union to have a reserved seat on its Executive for a black member; and
- They were the first union to have a black woman President.



NATFHE Vice President Sam Allen is also the Black Members representative on the Union executive



Naheed Arshad-Mather is a NATFHE executive member and chairs the union's equality advisory council

DISCRIMINATION DOUBLE JEOPARDY



Samantha Gordon is B&EMM Region 7 Secretary, B&EMM National Vice-Chair, West Midlands brigade. Samantha will be giving her comments on the "Double Disadvantage" research.

IF YOU are black and a woman trade unionist, you probably suffer twice over, says Samantha Gordon*

Its known as double disadvantage, double jeopardy, or perhaps more formally, multiple forms of discrimination. This is what black women can face within the workplace – and within the trade union too, according to new research presented at a seminar earlier this year.

Although there have been numerous studies on women within trade unions, there has been little research into the experiences of minority ethnic women with the union movement. The Economic & Social Research Council commissioned Dr Geraldine Healy, reader in Employment Relations at the University of Hertfordshire Business School, to look into the matter.

The conclusions from the research were:

- Contradictory in context and time
- Persistence of exclusion
- Separatism and inclusion go hand in hand
- Black women need more visibility
- Diversity in organising and representing in different sectors
- Representation gap

Healy also found that the term "Black" was largely recognised as an inclusive term, except by mainly Asians. In addition, she found that as women become more politically aware they realise that this term is meant to be totally inclusive of all those who are not white.

The research, in my view, did not reveal anything new. As a black woman I have experienced nearly all of the feelings and apprehensions mentioned by the women who took part in the research. And I was glad that the research had found honest realistic women who were willing to share with them their special views. Too often research shows an unrealistic picture of our experiences, with explanations as to why black women have issues, but failing to address the fact that more often than not it is not we who have issues but others that have issues with our confidence and seemingly unflinching determination to succeed.

This need to succeed (in whatever field we choose to endeavour) is not always transparent to even ourselves. But I feel that as we learn lesson after lesson, we attend the school of life and realise that our success as women will not only benefit us as individuals but it will benefit a whole nation.

STEPHEN LAWRENCE

I feel that as we learn lesson after lesson, we attend the school of life and realise that our success as women will not only benefit us as individuals but it will benefit a whole nation

TUC report calls for positive promotion of race equality

Britain's black and ethnic minority workers say that real progress has been made in combating race discrimination at work over the past 10 years, but that racism persists, often in disguised forms, according to a TUC report, *Black voices at Work*.

Issued on the eve of the 10th anniversary TUC Black Workers' Conference in April, the report called on the Government to extend race relations laws to require all employers to positively promote race equality.

Employers should take race discrimination more seriously, the report says. They must give responsibility for equal opportunities policies to their most senior managers, who must treat racial discrimination, including the expressing of racist views, as a serious disciplinary offence. Unions are also called on to step up promotion of their equal opportunities policies more widely to both workers and employers, especially in smaller companies.

The report includes in-depth interviews with black and ethnic minority workers who have benefited from the past decade of anti-racist campaigning, equal opportunities policies, and companies' concerns about their corporate image. But those interviewed also reported being passed over for promotion, putting up with racist language, managements only paying lip service to equal opportunities policies, and more subtle discrimination.

Anger as Government 'loses interest' in race issues



Ten years after the death of Stephen Lawrence the mood of the black community and anti-racists is angry, reports Warren Simpson, B&EMM Region 7 Chair

A CONFERENCE held in remembrance of Stephen Lawrence in February highlighted a rising tide of anger over the Government's race relations record, with the war on Iraq and attacks on asylum seekers seen as encouraging the rise of the BNP.

Lee Jasper, Secretary of the National Assembly Against Racism, said there had been "islands of change and good practice," but that they were in "isolation, surrounded by seas of mediocrity and a piecemeal adoption of McPherson."

He pointed out that ten years ago a black person was five times more likely to be stopped by the police. This has recently risen to eight times more likely. Meanwhile, the Crown prosecution service has reported a 20% increase in racial attacks with minimal convictions. Jasper also pointed to high black unemployment and a decline in black success in education, despite "black males consistently outperforming their white counterparts at junior school level."

Jasper pointed to the single issue campaigns in the Mail and gutter press as contributing to a rise in xenophobia in the North, in particular, where there were five local authority seats occupied by the BNP. He warned trade unions and local authorities of the urgency for a more pro-active stance on racism, pointing to Oldham as an example of where the BNP can be put on the back foot. Jasper also condemned Blair's attacks on asylum seekers as fuelling the BNP's rise.

Doreen Lawrence, mother of Stephen Lawrence, said the rise in stop and search showed that race relations were deteriorating and slammed the Government for "losing interest" in race issues. "Almost ten years after the murder of my son I am saddened that not a lot has changed. The only way to deal with

STEPHEN LAWRENCE



Ten years on – but little has changed

racism is to tackle it head on.”

Bill Morris, outgoing General Secretary of the TGWU, launched an all out attack on Home Secretary David Blunkett labelling the concept and idea of Institutional Racism a slogan, adding that this attitude was an insult to the memory of Stephen Lawrence, to the integrity of McPherson and was the language of the BNP. “Institutional racism is very much a painful reality,” Morris said.

Morris, in reference to Blunkett’s now famous phrase, said that communities were not “swamped” by asylum seekers. Such language from the government gave the Nazi British National Party “a signal of permission to attack black and Asian communities”. Ministers were indulging in “cheap and nasty populism”, he said.

Fazil Kawani, co-chair of the Asylum Rights Campaign, described asylum seekers as the most disadvantaged section. For they have no protection under the Race Relations Amendment Act (see page 8) and their only contact is with an immigration service capable of great prejudice against individuals and groups.

There were personal testimonials of extremely violent racist attacks, terrible harassment and bullying in education and within the legal profession, and gross miscarriages of justice.

Maria Bameih of the National Black Crown Prosecution Service argued that equality in the CPS was more form than substance with the CPS being found to be racist in a host of cases. And instead of the perpetrators answering for this, they were promoted to higher office in government and elsewhere.

Neil Gerrard, Labour MP for Walthamstow, talked of the fourth change to asylum laws in 10 years, condemning its harshness. He also told the floor of a return to the white list – preference given to those who seek asylum with white skin.

***Warren Simpson is B&EMM Region 7 Chair**

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

Lessons

In August 2002, FBU members from West Midlands, Luton & Bedfordshire, together with delegates from the Caribbean, attended the 32nd Convention of the International Association of Black Professional Firefighters (IABPF) in Buffalo, New York State. Michael Ogwo, T/ADO London B&EMM reports.

The IABPF has its origins in the 1950s. At the time, black firefighters carried out the same job and ran the same risks as their white counterparts, but suffered a lack of respect and poor career prospects. So they began organising. Across the US, black firefighters formed local groups, which then coalesced to cover cities. Subsequently groups at state level were formed and finally a national organisation was born in 1971.

Thirty-two years later, the 32nd Convention continued to focus on the protection of the rights of black firefighters. And under the slogan “Keep the Fires Burning for Justice”, it sought to tackle:

- a weakening commitment in the US Fire Service to equality, underlined by:
- a decline in the number of black firefighters in recent years.

The Convention was structured around a string of tutorials – workshops, formal assemblies and social events – led by Fire Service employees, consultants and academics from specialist Fire Service institutions. It dealt with technical issues as well as equality, with professional tutorials on Fire Safety in the community, recruitment of women, organisational change, occupational health and risk management.

There were also tutorials on personal and professional development:

- The state-funded **National Fire Academy**, a rough equivalent to Fire Service College, which:
- Offers personal development for firefighters within their existing role rather than preparing them for future roles – which is the task of fire departments.
- Offers a unique and cost effective opportunity for professional development but was currently underused
- Had strong research into firefighter safety in incidents
- Offers lessons for British institutions in how they organise

from America

& deliver professional training, particular at the higher managerial levels.

- Had selection procedures designed to be ethnic and gender-blind. Enrolment only requires meeting selection criteria with selection among eligible candidates carried out randomly through a filter process. Typically 75% of applicants get a place
- Seeks to overcome application withdrawals due to difficult domestic arrangements with flexible study programmes – weekend, correspondence and on-line. There are no tuition fees.
- Saw a disproportionately low number of women and black firefighters enrol – only 7%
- Why? Word of mouth method of advertising National Fire Academy and reluctance of Fire Chiefs to approve applications by black firefighters
- IABPF's efforts to remove barriers require political pressure in order to be effective.

• Executive Development Institute:

- Founded by black firefighters in leadership positions
- Aims to raise awareness among potential black entrants of entry and selection criteria
- Provides training to prepare black firefighters for leadership roles
- Led to establishment of Assessment Centres and Entry Level Testing to eliminate selection criteria that excluded certain groups
- Challenges beliefs among black firefighters about their own limitations
- Emphasised awareness of fire safety among black and ethnic minority communities, highlighting their particular vulnerability to fire

Conclusions:

Broadly, comparisons of the US and British Fire Service & our two organisations showed:

- UK tends to lead the way on equality
 - depressing or reassuring depending on your point of view
 - reflects greater advance on equality throughout British institutions
- The B&EMM offers equivalent capacity to IABPFF for evaluating equality policies and procedures in British Fire Service

- IABPFF struggle against determined opposition in achieving the rights they seek. They recognise the need for goodwill, co-operation of all parties to secure these rights and they have a positive outlook and focus on winning round opposition to understanding mutual benefits of supporting that cause
- This is a vision B&EMM and British Fire Service need to share

Community Safety & the Community:

Public safety, like occupational health & safety, needs the right culture to make it happen. Understanding and having an affinity with the community enables the Fire Service to deliver a better and more comprehensive service.

- There were very good examples of IABPFF members using the knowledge of their own communities to convey fire safety awareness to the people in those communities and motivate them to adopt safety-conscious behaviour
- IABPFF members' credibility with the community and having its trust contribute significantly to their success

Tackling Unequal Opportunities:

Youngsters most likely to succeed in joining the profession and advance furthest in it are from families connected to the profession.

- We must break the cycle of inherited positions and obstacles to progression
- There was recognition by IABPFF and National Fire Academy of the system's shortcomings
- Separate Black-only career development, such as the Executive Development Institute is not necessarily the ideal long-term solution

Recommendations:

Links between B&EMM should be maintained and developed for the exchange of information within a network of mutual support. Our Brigade, LFEPA, should:

- sponsor future delegations as an investment in the organisation's capacity to connect with diverse communities and attain the standards envisaged for a progressive fire service
- explore opportunities for overseas training – courses offered by the National Fire Academy may offer advantages in terms of scope and cost.

ASYLUM

Milena Buyum of the National Assembly Against Racism explains how the Nationality and Immigration Asylum Act 2002 is leading to segregated education, benefit removal and racist uproar



Truth is the casualty

THE attacks on immigration and asylum rights have been relentless in the last few years with worrying signs that they will continue in the next period.

In the last ten years, there have been four different Acts, each further curbing rights of asylum seekers and chipping away immigration rights.

The latest, the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002 is the worst yet. Some of the measures in the NIA include:

- ◆ Segregated education for some asylum seeker children
- ◆ The removal of benefits from in-country applicants – a measure brought in by the Tories in 1996 but defeated after fierce opposition and legal challenges
- ◆ The creation of accommodation centres, some of which have led to racist uproar from local residents, such as the Coniston Hotel in Sittingbourne, Kent.

Although the NIA faced criticism in the Lords, it was essentially passed through the Parliamentary stage without any major amendments and thanks to assurances from the government, notably on the criteria for withdrawing support from in-country applicants. Subsequent implementation of this particular measure showed how inflexible immigration officers were in deciding to remove support. The cases of six such asylum seekers in the High Court led to a defeat for the government, in what the judge called an “inhumane and unlawful”

measure. The Government subsequently appealed and lost again.

The so-called debate on asylum is marred with the premise that the rise in the number of applications must be stopped and is reduced to one about numbers rather than the 1951 Convention on Refugees, the international framework for protection.

The NIA, we are told, contains the necessary measures to achieve this “necessary reduction”, with the Government pledge that it will reduce the number of applicants – which reached 110,000 last year – by half by October, entirely arbitrarily. The truth about asylum is the casualty of this regressive context.

The recent Institute of Public Policy Research (IPPR) research on asylum challenges the widely held belief that most asylum seekers are economic migrants. In fact, the vast majority of asylum seekers flee wars, persecution and repression. The list of the countries from which most asylum seekers to Britain come from is the very list of the most ferocious conflict zones and repressive regimes in the world.

The economic benefits of immigration and refugees are never discussed. In fact, rather than being a drain on Britain's economy, migrant and refugee communities contribute 10 % more to the economy than they take from it.

CRE calls for Government review of the detention

The Commission for Racial Equality has called for a government review of the detention of children asylum seekers.

Commenting after the release of highly critical reports by the HMI Prisons for England and Wales and HMI Education into the Dungavel detention centre in Lanarkshire, Mick Conboy, Acting Head of CRE Scotland, said:

“Much public concern in Scotland has been founded on a basic sense of unfairness in the arrangements for the detention

of asylum-seeker children within Scotland, a situation that would not be tolerated for any other child.”

Conboy expressed concern that the reports had come “too late” for the Ay family, whose four children aged eight to 14 were held at Dungavel for more than a year before being deported to Germany in early August and called on the “Government to now seek more progressive approaches to improving the system overall.”

It is argued that being “tough” on asylum will help “address people’s genuine concerns and stop the rise of the BNP”. Every piece of evidence from the European experience shows the exact opposite is true.

In every country where immigration and asylum rights have been curbed, this has led to a rise in support of neo-Nazis, because their anti-immigration stance is legitimised through the implementation of those measures. Today, there is a real danger in Britain of mainstreaming the far right’s agenda with disastrous consequences. The neo-Nazi BNP say they are on course to control their first council in the next two years. This can be stopped and their advance arrested through the establishment of the broadest possible alliance of black communities with Jewish and Muslim communities, lesbian and gay communities, trade unions and the labour movement together with the anti-racist movement. The next twelve months before the European and local elections will be crucial for regrouping this powerful alliance.

Immigration and asylum is the acid test for mainstream parties. As the IPPR report suggest, it is vital that the Government and all mainstream parties promote the truth about asylum, bringing an end to the issue constantly being presented as a “huge problem”. Close examination of the situation shows this is simply not the case. Britain is tenth among European countries for the number of asylum seekers per inhabitant; it can therefore only be described as inflammatory and racist to talk of “swamping” as is the case of the tabloid media and by politicians. The actual impact of the approach is chillingly clear; it legitimises racism and racist attacks.

The trade union movement as a whole has a crucial role to play and all self-organised groups within the movement must be centrally involved in the campaign in defence of immigration and asylum rights.

For more information and to get involved in the campaign for asylum rights or to defeat the BNP, contact:

National Assembly Against Racism,
28 Commercial Street, London E1 6LS. 020 7247 9907

This is an edited version of an article that first appeared in the Summer issue of Black Action, the newsletter of Unison Black Members

of children

Anne Owers, the chief inspector of prisons, said the government must stop holding the children of asylum seekers in detention centres for long periods. Owers warned that their welfare and development were “compromised” while they were kept in custody. They should be locked up only in exceptional circumstances and for no more than a matter of days, she said.

*** The B&EMM delegation to the Scottish TUC Black Workers Conference in September passed a motion on this subject.**

Asylum – the facts

- According to an opinion poll last year, the public believes the UK hosts about 23% of the world’s refugees, although the real figure is 1.98%
- In 2002, the United Kingdom was 8th in terms of the number of asylum applicants per 1,000 of the population, with 1.9. Austria is top with 4.6
- The public believes that the average asylum seeker receives about £113 in benefits a week; in reality they receive about £36.54.
- An average family seeking asylum receives 24% less than its British-born equivalent in income support and benefits
- Elderly or disabled asylum seekers cannot claim extra benefits. The maternity grant for asylum seekers is £300, £200 less than that for UK residents
- In 1999-2000 immigrants contributed £31.2 billion in taxes and consumed £28.8 billion in benefits – a net contribution of about £2.5 billion to the economy.
- Asylum seekers are barred from working or seeking training while awaiting decisions
- 10,410 asylum seekers were forcibly removed in 2002 – 13,335 including dependents. This is the highest annual total on record
- Eighty-four per cent of applications are dealt with within six months. 76% of appeals were dismissed.
- There were 85,865 applications for asylum in 2003, a year-on-year rise of 20%. In the same year, 8,100 (10%) were granted asylum, 19,965 (24%) exceptional leave to remain, and 54,650 (66%) were refused)
- The Home Office does not publish a figure for the total number of asylum seekers awaiting determination of their cases at any one time. Unofficial estimates are of 90,000 excluding dependents.
- About 790 asylum seekers are being held in some form of detention
- About a third of those held in detention have been there for more than four months
- During the controversy over the Sangatte camp in France, the media used 51 different terms to describe asylum seekers, including “parasites” and “scroungers”
- The main countries from which applicants came in 2002 were Iraq (14,940), Zimbabwe (7,965) and Afghanistan (7,380)

Source: The Independent newspaper

NEWS • NATIONAL



JESS HUBBARD/REDFERNS.COM

Respect at the Millennium Dome. Inset: FBU volunteers



Respect massive

More than 100,000 people joined trade unions in London to celebrate 'respect' in the workplace and the community on July 19.

The 'Respect Festival' – held this year in the Millennium Dome in Greenwich to remember with sadness the racist murder of Stephen Lawrence in the borough ten years ago – is a music and cultural event and a fantastic fun day out for all the family organised jointly by London Mayor Ken Livingstone, trade unions and the National Assembly Against Racism (NAAR). The 'respect Festival':

- Recognises the immense contribution that black and minority ethnic cultures have made to the quality of life in London,
- Celebrates the spirit of tolerance which exists in London's diverse communities,
- Sends out a clear message that trade unions, the Mayor of London and anti-racist organisations will combat racism and discrimination wherever we find them, both in the workplace and in the community.

The TUC established the 'respect' brand through festivals organised in the late 1990s. Mick Connolly, Regional Secretary for the TUC for the London region praised the fact that "the huge majority of Londoners believe that multiculturalism is an essential factor in their quality of life," and added: "Now it is time for other major cities in the UK to seize the positive messages of the respect brand, celebrate diversity and

condemn the politics of race hatred."

There are 150,000 black trade union members living and working in London making trade unions the biggest organisations in London working to defend the interests of black people. Black trade union members are better paid and less likely to have an accident at work than black non trade union members. And trade unions are vigorously confronting racism and discrimination in the workplace.

A series of TUC rights leaflets are available on www.tuc.org.uk and from the know your rights line 0870 600 4 882.

Respect now in Manchester and Bristol too

Tens of thousands attended the first ever Respect Festival to take place in the North West on Saturday 30 August 2003 at Platt Fields, Fallowfield, Manchester. It was the city's biggest free outdoor celebration of the year.

TUC Regional Secretary Alan Manning said: 'The TUC Respect Festival sends a clear message that people in the North West should respect each other and that the politics of hate should have no place in our region.' Major acts included Gregory Issacs, RDB, Mr Scruff, Heartless Crew & MC JD.

In addition to four music stages the Festival featured a market, community groups stalls, food, drink, eco arts and crafts workshops, sports activities, and a children's play area.

Respect also hit Bristol on 31 August.

West Africa – a new dawn?

LIBERIA'S President Charles Taylor has gone into exile and handed over power to caretaker president, Moses Blah, raising hopes of an end to the 14-year war and peace returning to West Africa. As Taylor was preparing to step down the UN warned of a humanitarian crisis, with over 20,000 displaced civilians sheltering in the capital city's football stadiums without adequate food or water. Hundreds of people were reported to be dying daily as rebels closed on the capital.

The new-found peace in the country is fragile. The rebels have not disbanded: whether they and the opposing government forces will stick to the ceasefire depends largely on field commanders being offered a reason to put down their guns. A week after the ceasefire there were reports that it had been violated and of a massacre in one remote province.

In early August the vanguard of 5,000 regional peacekeepers arrived following a UN decision to authorise a multinational force. Months of dithering ended with a Security Council vote authorising a Nigerian-led force to stay in the country for two months, before giving way to a UN peacekeeping force. The council determined that "the situation in Liberia constitutes a threat to international peace and security, to stability in the West Africa sub-region, and to the peace process for Liberia".

US President George Bush has dispatched three US warships, but few Marines have ventured ashore. Though peacekeepers are likely to be greeted by Liberians, the Pentagon prefers the boots on the ground to be Nigerian, fearing more body bags to add to those returning to the US from Iraq.

Some critics say the US should take a more active role in bringing peace to a country it helped create in 1847, when former US slaves founded the country, and which was a dependable ally during the cold war. Washington provided substantial aid to the brutal regime of Samuel Doe during the 1980s and stood by as his demise – and public execution by a rival – in 1990 left a vacuum eventually filled by Taylor. This indicted war criminal, who was inaugurated as President six years ago, exploited the country's diamond wealth to give financial support for rebel forces in Guinea, Ivory Coast, and Sierra Leone. This created enormous hardship in those countries – and civil war in Sierra Leone. All three countries in turn have supported anti-Taylor forces in Liberia.

The wars of the past 14 years have left over 200,000 people dead, more than 1.5 million homeless, infrastructure shattered and malnutrition rife.

For news on the humanitarian disaster in Liberia see www.unicef.org/emerg and www.reliefweb.int.

Western Sahara – Morocco rejects latest peace plan

Morocco has rejected the latest peace plan for the Western Sahara. The plan provided for a referendum in four to five years time that would have offered the inhabitants of Western Sahara the choice between independence, autonomy within Morocco or complete integration with Morocco. The plan was recently accepted by Polisario and approved by the UN Security Council.

Who exactly should be allowed to vote in a referendum has been a source of constant argument. Morocco would like its own settlers in the territory to be eligible, whereas Polisario would like to exclude most Moroccan settlers, but include Western Sahara refugees living in other countries, particularly Algeria.

Under the plan, those able to vote in the referendum would be people over the age of 18 who had been continuously resident of Western Sahara since 1999. A provisional voter's list drawn up by the UN Mission in Western Sahara (MINURSO) in December that year would form the basis for the new electoral roll.

People whose names appeared on a repatriation list drawn by the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) as of 31 October 2000 would also be eligible to vote.

The plan also proposes that an autonomous Western Sahara Authority (WSA) be responsible for local government, territorial budget, taxation, economic development, internal security, law enforcement, transportation, agriculture, mining, fisheries, socio-cultural affairs, education and other basic infrastructure during the run-up to the referendum.

Morocco would remain responsible for foreign relations, national security, external defence and all matters relating to the production, sale and ownership or use of weapons during this period.

Unlike earlier UN proposals, the new plan did not require the consent of both parties at every step of its implementation.

Western Sahara was occupied by Morocco in 1975, and the UN brokered a ceasefire between the two countries in 1991. Hundreds of thousands of Saharawis live in makeshift refugee camps in the hostile Algerian desert and have been awaiting a UN-sponsored referendum on self-determination since 1991.

See www.waronwant.org for more on the campaign for rights of the Saharawi people.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS



JESS HUBBARD/REUTERS/GETTY IMAGES

Stop the War demonstration in London's Trafalgar Square

Iraq – another Vietnam?

The US and British Occupation of Iraq is coming under increasingly stiff opposition in the country and at home as the occupying armies continue to struggle to find any hint of alleged weapons of mass destruction.

The war and occupation, costing US taxpayers \$70 billion and British taxpayers over £3 billion, has resulted in at least 6,100 civilian deaths, and some 20,000 injuries, according to official body counts. But US and UK military casualties are growing daily too. At least 52 American soldiers have been killed in combat since May 1 when President Bush declared major fighting over. So far, 167 Americans have died in combat in this Iraq war, 20 more (147 killed) than in the 1991 Gulf War.

L. Paul Bremer, chief of the American occupation administration, has joined the chorus of U.S. officials, mainly in Washington, who have sought to blame the relentless attacks on American forces partly on foreign terrorists. Other violence, he says, is the work of remnants of local forces loyal to Saddam and those fighters did not represent the larger Iraqi population.

Yet in dozens of interviews by foreign news agencies – including the US-based Associated Press, the world's largest – Iraqis have voiced growing bitterness and a desire for revenge against US soldiers for the way they have treated the population and the failure to restore basic water and electricity supplies.

Meanwhile, Lord Hutton's judicial inquiry into the death of the Ministry of Defence biological weapons expert Dr David Kelly, has revealed that the crucial assertion by the Government that Iraq could launch weapons of mass destruction on British interests within 45-minutes was false.

LETTERS

Bain, the White Paper and Black History lessons

There is an old saying which states, "it is better to remain silent and appear uniformed than to speak and remove all doubt". As members of the black & ethnic minority community, we recognize the wave of fascist, right-wing sentiment descending on our country. One of the by-products of this is the feeling that the minorities within communities have too much; that they are beneficiaries of preference to the detriment of the white majority; that black targets/quotas mean that whites will be treated less favourably or overlooked so that minority members can take "their" places.

What is definitely not needed in these challenging times, are favours from those who possess no understanding of racism or its negative influence on the thinking or conduct of the ill-informed. It is therefore why I continue to cling to the notion that it would be enlightening for many to learn at least some black history and the secrets about black existence, endurance and survival in the political arena of life prior to using us for political gain!

Horace Walpole, the 4th Earl of Orford, remarked more than 200 years ago that, "this world is a comedy to those that think, a tragedy to those that feel".

It becomes a bit more complex for those who both think and feel and who cannot escape their burden.

Daniel Alie. Holloway – London Fire Brigade. (Writing in response to the Bain Report, the White Paper and the Fire Service's long standing failure on diversity)

Education, education, education

Currently throughout the three Welsh Brigades we have approx 12 B&EMM. This is not a true reflection of the Welsh communities and it is an issue that I am addressing alongside our brigades' Equality officers. However, the task of promoting diversity and bringing about much needed change in Wales is massive. Getting past the "tick-box" exercises and pushing forward initiatives in an attempt to change attitudes and promote equality, is a painfully slow process.

The "sitting on committees" leads to more of the same until you almost experience death by committee! But if we don't represent, senior management will continue to make ill-informed decisions on our behalf, hence the need for more B&EMM to become more proactive within our union.

My involvement has allowed me to be better educated on issues inside and outside of my working environment, enabling me to meet and network with other like minded people. It has also taught me how to challenge and be heard without the wrong perception being taken.

Working in the Fire Service is a constantly changing and challenging situation. OUR members need to be able to concentrate on improving/fine tuning their skills, as opposed to being viewed as somewhat inferior due to their ethnicity.

One way of creating a level playing field is through a better informed workforce; on-going diversity training for all; teaching understanding and tolerance. As always, QUALITY EDUCATION is the key!

Brian Amos, Region 8 B&EMM Rep.

Frank Bailey joined the London Fire Brigade in the mid-fifties and stayed for 10 years. We believe he was the first Afro-Carib to join the LFB. He was the special guest at the B&EMM School in 2002. He was warmly received by all and his recollections of his Fire Service career earned him a standing ovation. Here is a letter he sent to Michael Nicholas, B&EMM EC member, when he returned home.



Dear Michael,
I wish to thank you and the committee for inviting me to speak to you. It was for me, a great privilege to attend and listen to, and speak to, so many bright and intelligent young black people, (I do not discount the white people present, they are important too) in one grouping, in one hall.

Many of the things I said, apart from my account of my time in the job, I have said in meetings before now, but always the audiences were made up of mainly white people. And I always had the feeling that although they listened attentively to all that I said, they were smiling and saying to themselves a fine speech, and he is right, but we're quite safe and nothing will change.

You will recall, that except for our guests from America and Palestine, the other invited speakers were white people who were urging unity between black & white, (as far as I'm aware, black people have never opposed the idea of unity) asking your group to join their camps, to help fight their cause. Never mind that you will be fragmenting your time and neglecting your main interests. One must learn to select the issue you can serve best, thereby to make the most valuable contribution to the welfare of your people; and not to get involved in everything, while achieving nothing, which is what has been happening to our people in the past. It has happened to me.

Again I say thanks for having me. I learned quite a lot about many things, especially about the healthy minds of young black men and women of today's generation and I am very, very proud. My blessings on you and all that you all do.

**Love and best wishes,
Frank**

Let's have more black and minority ethnic women in the fire service

I have been a firefighter in the London Fire Brigade for 7 years, my favourite other person in this brigade is another black woman. Her name is Rosalie Jones. Rosie really looked after me when I started this job and made me understand that I was a black woman AND a firefighter, that I had a special role to play.

I have been in situations where I believe that the fact that I am a woman AND an ethnic minority has made communication between members of the public and ourselves (operational firefighters) much easier. Some years ago I was at a fire above a Chinese restaurant. The occupants would not open the door for our leading fire fighter or two other firefighters that were with him but they opened it for me.

There have been other situations where the fact that I am

different has made a difference. My fire station is in a black/asian area, the people who live and work in the area smile at me when they see me, they're proud of me; they trust me so they trust the people I work with.

On a more personal note, if there are more black and minority ethnic women in the London Fire Brigade I will have more girlies to hang out with at the B&EMM school.

**By a black woman fire fighter who loves this job!
Pamela Oparaocha, Operational Firefighter**

Fairness at Work

The Fairness At Work Section for the Grey Book should not be allowed to form a separate section within the Fire Service Grey Book [is this still current?]. Like all Equality issues, it should be mentioned in the preamble and run throughout the veins of a living document! Integrate, not separate! That's the problem we have today, so let's move on! Fairness At Work is not a separate issue but a necessary factor within every issue every day in every way! I urge that we do not buy that separate section rubbish! It's dated and means we are always playing 'catch up'!

**Warren Simpson – B&EMM Region 7 Chair
West Mids Fire Service**

Letter from Phillippa Clark to B&EMM National Committee

'Phil' left the FBU in May this year after many years service as our Research Officer. Her input into the FBU's equality agenda and it's progression was vast and her vitality, humour and political beliefs were greatly appreciated.

Dear friends & comrades,

Greetings from the Highlands! I am at last organized in my new home and can put pen to paper and let you know what I'm up to. It was a very tough decision to leave the FBU but it was going to happen after the dispute and I felt it was time the union had new blood! So here I am, 30 miles from Inverness and starting to look for work. I am feeling fine. I know I made the correct decision but I do miss many aspects of the FBU – not least the friendships & stimulation of the black & ethnic comrades whom I was privileged to meet and whose company I enjoyed. I am grateful to you all for your patience with this middle-aged, white feminist politico! I am grateful for your gentle teaching when I got it wrong. Most of all, I am grateful for your commitment to fighting racism & fascism as well as battling for a fair deal for all working men and women in the world-wide trade union network. Your talents have strengthened the union immeasurably. I was so proud to be part of the equality initiatives in the FBU and watch you win your rightful places on the committees and in the forums which constitute the unions democratic structure; also, your election onto the Race Relations Committee and your impact on the whole of the TU movement. Ruth (president) told me that Garrett mentioned me in his 'au revoir' to the TUC Race Relations Committee and this touched me very much. It is more than I merit. The people who wage the struggle are the people who win the struggle – and I know you will continue to fight – and win. Please accept my love and heartfelt solidarity. And brothers, do not forget your sisters!

Phil x

Welcome

To all black & ethnic members who have joined the Fire Service and hopefully the FBU, in the last 12 months. We sincerely hope you have a long, successful and enjoyable career within the British Fire & Rescue Service.

Congratulations ...

Wayne McCollin promoted to Ass. Chief Firemaster in Lothian & Borders in January 2003. You continue to make us proud!

Dep. Chief Officer **Jagtar Singh** (Bedfordshire F.B) on receiving an OBE in the Queen's Honours List in June 2003. Your acknowledgement of your family was well deserved.

Patrick Goulbourne – B&EMM Region 11 – who married Vicky on 8 August 2003. Best B&EMM wishes for the future.

All B&EMM who have passed Fire service exams and those who have gained promotion in 2003. May you progress under the IPDS structure.

Special Mention

Sis. **Linda Smith** (Reg. Treasurer – London) on receiving the TUC award for 'best article in a Trade Union publication' 2002. Linda, on her return from Palestine, wrote about what she witnessed there. Well done Lin!

Sis. **Jag Hayer** on finally resolving her career 'situation' in Derbyshire. It's been a long time coming but there is now light at the end of this particular tunnel. You remain an inspiration.

Bro. **Simon Green** thank you for all your work on behalf of B&EMM. Rest assured we are alongside you in your fight for fair treatment within Hampshire FB. We shall overcome!

Condolences

To the families of Firefighters **Bob Miller, Alex Kent, Andy Grannon** and **Andy Clinton** who have lost their loved ones during the course of their duties. Our thoughts and sympathies are with you.



Terry and family at his leaving party

Moving On

Bro. **Terry Richardson** who left the London FB for pastures new on the 11th August 2003. A pioneer for Equality and Fairness, founder of the FBU Gay & Lesbian Section and a dear friend, we will no doubt see you around mate ...

Diary

September

19th-21st: Scottish TUC – Black Workers Conference: Glasgow. B&EMM delegates.

28th-1st October: Labour Party Conference, Bournemouth. B&EMM EC to attend.

October

2nd: B&EMM National Committee Meeting, FBU HQ.

10th-12th: B&EMM National School, Wortley Hall.

13th: TUC Black History Event, TUC Congress House, London

17th-19th: G & L National School, Wortley Hall

October/November 03: B&EMM National Officials Election: You will be notified!

November

1st-7th: FBU National School, Wortley Hall

20th: B&EMM National AGM, Wortley Hall

December

12th: B&EMM National Committee Meeting, FBU HQ