For John Gabriel

Trade Unions and Racial Inequalities: An examination of the role of ILTS in removing the barriers.

Sardul Dhesi
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Since its introduction in the mid seventies, Industrial Language Training Services (ILTS) has had the formal backing of the TUC and of certain individual unions. It has attempted to provide a range of services for several target groups within the trade union movement. However, for one reason or another the relationship between the ILT scheme and the trade unions has never developed to the extent where full co-operation could take place. This relationship has had its peaks and troughs over the years.
The ILT Scheme, funded nationally by the MSC and consisting of 30 individual units based on local authorities, was set up for the purpose of providing training at the place of work for those workers for whom English was a second language. (Detailed historical development of the ILT scheme and the range of services it provides is discussed in another essay). Providing training for the trade unions was never considered to be the main priority by ILT either at the place of work or outside. In fact, trade unions were very rarely consulted when new training projects were negotiated with the management. However, certain ILT units over a period have recognised the importance of liaising with the shop floor union representatives and full time officials in gaining 'entry' into the workplace in situations where the management was not too receptive to the ILT service. In the process, it was established that whilst some trade unionists showed enthusiasm for the ILT scheme to be involved in training in the workplace and were willing to help negotiate it with the management, others were either indifferent or generally opposed to it. As a result ILT began to develop a programme of training for the trade unionists.
The intention of this study is to examine the contribution made by ILT training for trade unions in the area of equal opportunities and anti-racism. The scope of the study has been deliberately narrowed to consider ILT's contribution to fighting racial inequalities within the union movement as the wider issue of trade union education and anti-racism forms the basis of another study.
Having worked for Birmingham ILT Service (BILTS) for seven years with the responsibility (and a commitment) for liaising with the trade unions, I am aware of the trade union response to the various projects put forward regionally and nationally by ILTS. I was, for some time, convenor of the West Midlands ILTS working group on trade unions as well as being a member of the ILT National Advisory Group

on the work of trade unions. Over the years BILTS has maintained a relatively high profile as regards trade union training since its formation in 1978. This experience has provided a substantial amount of primary data for this study. Further information has been obtained from a variety of sources including:

- minutes of ILT/TU advisory group
- ILT working papers and reports
- TUC publications
- discussions with TUC tutor and TU education office
- discussions with members and shop stewards attending ILT courses.

As a committed trade unionist working for the ILT scheme and being involved in training initiatives for union members and representatives, I have been concerned for some time about the effectiveness of ILT provision in this area. The essay is therefore an attempt to evaluate the usefulness of ILT trade union provision as viewed by:

(a) ILT scheme
(b) TUC/TU education officers
(c) members and representatives attending ILT courses.

It is also hoped that this analysis will make a contribution to the discussion on training for equal opportunities taking place within the ILT scheme. I shall begin by discussing how ILT perceived its relationship with the trade unions, then I will attempt to trace the development of various ILT/TU projects within the West Midlands region in order to evaluate their effectiveness.

In 19 , in a paper by Des Watkiss (Lancashire ILT) on the work of ILT with trade unions, he discusses the unique role of unions for ILT scheme;

> *"In ILT we have spent considerable effort promoting our work with organisations concerned with ethnic minorities and training seminars, consultation, special projects, working parties with RREAs, CRE, ITBs (1)...*
> *Our work with the trade unions may often appear to be the same. But it has been the basic premise of our group (2) that it is <u>not</u> the same, that the trade unions are not another agency for promoting our work, but are necessary parties to <u>any</u> activity which effects workers and effects the workplace."* (D.W. blue 7).

Although the TUC nationally had formally endorsed training provided by the ILT scheme on three occasions (1976 circular , 1978 circular , 198 circular), <u>their affiliated sections regionally and individual workplace representatives</u>:

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were more cautious in their support. In certain cases they argued that their members would regard the introduction of specialist training for black workers only as discrimination against white members. Other trade unionists regarded the ILT scheme as a pro-management, government funded, training agency interfering in industrial relations and thus undermining their bargaining position. This gap between the national support and the actual shopfloor response was recognised by ILT early on;

> *'there is a large gap between union policy at national and regional level and the situation and practice at plant level'* (*Harman & Robert* 2. 79)

There were, nevertheless, individual trade union activists who had promoted the interests of ILT. These included, for example, in the West Midlands, TUC Education Officer (TUCEO), full time district and divisional officers (e.g. Don Groves of ASTMS), shop stewards (G. Avtar Johal, TGWU, also an IWA organiser). Some sections of the T.U. movement recognised the important role ILT could play, for example, Lancashire Association of Trades Council, in their study of "Trade Union structures and Black Workers' participation" acknowledges the role of Lancashire ILT in highlighting the issue of under-representation of black workers in the union. This was discussed in 19 in its report to the Trades Council, when Lancashire ILT identified the problem facing the black workers. It quoted a section of a TUC cirular (1978/240) on ILT;

> *"immigrant participation in trade unions is important for the unity of the union, and therefore positive steps need to be taken if workers from different cultures and with language difficulties are to participate fully in union activities."* (*TUC circular 1978/240*).

The problem of under-representation was perceived by the trade unions to be as a result of inadequacies in the black members, i.e. poor levels of English and lack of awareness of the "British Culture".

Lancashire ILT report too, located the low level of activities of Asian workers in trade unions on cultural grounds. They therefore explained the reasons why the Asian members tended to go through community organisations rather than through the union as;

> *"simply because they come from a different cultural background that they respond to these day to day problems by using procedures which have worked for them in the past in that society."* (*paper :78*)

These comments were typical of the ILTS understanding of the issues as they were percieved by white professional middle class 'do gooders' with little contact with the black communities, believing that they were acting in the best interest of the black community. The reality was that none of them had bothered to find out why black trade union members were not following the union procedures in taking up their grievances. To their credit, Lancashire ILT Unit did recommend a thorough survey to establish the extent of the "problem". The following steps were recommended:

(a) survey of certain workplaces and of certain trade unions to establish the level of activity by Asian members.

(b) Interviews with Asian members to identify training needs in terms of:

(i) language and communications skills for them to be effective representatives.

(ii) knowledge of the T.U. structure and procedures.

(iii) Interviews with white stewards, convenors and full time officers to get their perception of the issues in relation to working with Asian members.

Subsequently a programme of training to overcome these perceived barriers to greater participation by Asian members was recommended. The main thrust of the training was an overcoming of the communication deficiencies of the Asian stewards (and of potential stewards) by providing specialist preparitory or bridging courses for them so that they could be "phased in" on to the mainstream TUC education provision. The flipside of this training strategy was aimed at white union officials and representatives in the form of Cultural Awareness Training (CAT). The focus of CAT was to make;

"English shop stewards aware of communication and cultural problems.....when representing members from minority ethnic groups."

Whilst the details varied from region to region and from unit to unit, generally speaking this was the model on which the ILT scheme based its training; firmly believing that the obstacles to equal opportunities for black workers were due to ignorance on the part of the white shop stewards and poor communications skills on the part of the Asian members. If this analysis can be accepted for the sake of argument, how then did the ILT scheme explain the

under representation of other black workers (e.g. Afro-Caribbean) who shared the same (or very similar) culture and spoke the same language (or very similar) as the white trade unionists? On the whole this evidence was conveniently overlooked. When the debate was forced into the open, certain sections of the scheme, that were keen to provide training for Afro-Caribbean workers, attempted to define English spoken by the Afro-Caribbean communities as another language.

Why did the ILT scheme ignore the evidence provided by the first and second PEP report on the levels of racial inequalities and continued to focus on the cultural communication deficiency model's approach to training? To answer this it would be necessary to look to the education/training philosophy that was being advocated by schools, colleges and indeed by the TUC itself at that time. The education philosophy for the black communities was based on the social policy of first, assimilation and later on, integration. (Discussed in another essay).

The TUC said that language courses;

> *"helps them (Asian workers) understand their own rights better and makes it possible for them to participate in the union and therefore strengthen it."* (BBC/TUC:62)

Training was also recommended for white shop stewards based on the communications/Cultural Awareness Training model;

> *"only when they (white union representatives) are informed about the working traditions where the immigrants come from, about their particular language difficulties, and about their religious beliefs can..... shop stewards treat immigrant workers as individuals and make allowances for some of their problems in adapting to British Industrial life."*
> (BBC/TUC:62 1975). my underlining.

In order to locate the factors which may have given rise to the development of this type of provision for the T.Us by the ILT scheme, it is necessary to trace the changing focus of ILT courses.

Most of the ILT courses for the TUC have been local and diffident in that ILT tutors were aware of moving into aspects of training which was not central to their terms of reference. ILT tutors piloting these projects, had to be very sensitive to the concern of the TUC and individual unions about the overall control of the course. In 1978 the TUC issued a second circular confirming its support for ILT provision. According to the General Secretary of the Indian Workers' Association (IWA) TUC support for ILT provision.

.....

(especially that aimed as Asian members) came about as a result of personal interest taken by Len Murray. The TUC circular had direct impact on the internal structure of the ILT, in that for the first time formal recognition was given to work with the Trade Unions. As a result a national T.U. Advisory Group was established with the aim of:

(a) bringing together ILT tutors with interest in and commitment to work with trade unions.
(b) collecting and disseminating information about T.U.s and T.U. training.
(c) maintaining the effectiveness of the latest TUC circular by gaining shopfloor T.U. support for the ILT service.
(d) acting as a forum for discussion of syllabus design for the impending ILT training for T.U. members and representatives.

Training for black trade union members and representatives

Whilst in other parts of the ILT scheme training for Trade Unions was piloted in conjunction with individual unions. Lancashire ( ) West Yorkshire, ( ), London ( ), West Midlands was the only region of the TUC Education Service to sponsor ILT courses. It is this area of co-operation that I wish to discuss.
Early in 1977, there was a deliberate attempt in the Midlands to promote the idea of language training for Asian shop stewards on an in-plant basis. Though it received official support initially, for various reasons, practical and ideological, the reaction against in-plant training and the setting of membership rather than stewards training as a priority meant that it was never piloted. New work was then begun on preparing an introductory trade union course for Asian members to be translated into Punjabi; These courses were organised jointly by TUC-EO (through WEA) and ILT, running initially in Birmingham only. The aim of these courses was that potential trade union activists would be recruited to learn about the philosophy and practice of the trade union movement. It was felt this would have a knock-on effect by firstly increasing the level of participation within the union at the place of work and secondly it would help to built bridges between the black community and the T.U. movement.
The first part of the course contained ten two-hour sessions in Panjabi. This was run by a local IWA activist who was also a T&GWU

convenor in a local foundry. The course material was based on the TUC basic shop stewards syllabus. It was intended that after the first stage of the course in Panjabi members would then continue with the ILT course for a further ten weeks with the aim of developing the communications skills needed by Asian members. In practice the level of co-ordination varied between two parts in terms of materials used and topics covered. Although initially these courses (by 1980 they were being run in most parts of the West Midlands region where there were ILT units) attracted a deal of interest from Asian T.U. members and representatives and were successful in raising an awareness of the need for greater participation in the unions, there were problems associated with them.

As the Midlands courses were targetted at members rather than representatives, they could only be organised outside worktime, often in the evenings and sometimes on Sundays in Sikh temples! (as in Walsall). As potential course members were usually shift workers, with limited experience of formal education, it required a great deal of commitment on the part of the Asian members. As a consequence in only a few courses were members able to attend both parts. After about eighteen months it became very difficult to recruit. This was exacerbated by the recession of the late 70's having a disproportionately greater effect on the Midlands region, especially the heavy engineering industry (e.g. Foundrys). The engineering industry had significantly higher proportion of black workers concentrated on shift work. As part of the redundancies agreement, shift workers tended to be the first ones to lose their jobs. This meant that for the ILT scheme, their trade union clients (Asian members and representatives) decreased in numbers significantly. As the courses were being piloted in Panjabi this meant that they could only be targetted at a section of the Asian trade union membership. It could be argued that as, by this time trade union participation amongst Panjabi membership was relatively high* and there existed support from groups like the IWA for the Panjabi trade union members, the TUC provision in the Midlands should have been targetted at either Mirpuri or Bengali workers who lacked the same degree of community-based trade union support.

*from discussion with IWA

In September 1980 a meeting was organised to evaluate these courses. Taking part in the meeting were Midlands ILT (TU) tutors, TUC tutors from the local centres, TUC Education Officer for the region and a member of the TUC Curriculum Development Unit (CDU). It was decided partly because of the practical problems involved with running evening courses, it would be more effective to adopt a more integrated approach and organise the courses on a day release model. The courses were to incorporate information giving (the old Panjabi section) together with communication and skills development. The implication of this decision was that the focus of ILT/TUC training would shift from members to elected representatives. On the whole ILT tutors were sceptical about the value of using Panjabi (or any of the Asian languages) to impart information about Trade Unions. An article by two ILT (TU) tutors argues that;

> *"the immediate aim of any course is to develop confidence in potential activists to use their knowledge and awareness at the workplace and in the branches. Practice in English enables students to learn through role-play and case study approaches to language and procedures of industrial relations. This aims at developing active skills, not passive knowledge. It would be very difficult for a mother-tongue course to even attempt these methods"* (Watkiss & Furnborough (my underlining).

This raises the question of use of bilingual teaching especially for trade union members and representatives who, as stated earlier, had had very little if any formal education. Up till the early eighties there were few bilingual tutors in ILT and therefore bilingual approaches were very rarely used. There were individual tutors in the Midlands who contined to use the bilingual approach as the same article points out;

> *"in one instance, with an ILT tutor who was Punjabi and an experienced trade unionist, the two elements (knowledge of T.U. procedures and communication skills) were integrated."* (Watkiss & Furnborough).

For a period of three years, up till 1983, very little contact between Regional TUC.EO and the ILT scheme existed. The reasons for the breakdown in relationship have been attributed to:

(a) different teaching methodologies adopted by the TUC and ILT.

(b) TUC perception of ILT provision as pro-management.

(c) ILT perception of TUC provision for black workers as a token gesture rather than an integral part of their education strategy.

Formal contact between ILT and Regional TUC EOwas established in late 1983. By now there had been a change in ILT personnel who had been negotiating with TUC E.O. The new recruits to ILT were mainly black, grass roots activists who had knowledge of industrial relations and were in many cases active trade unionists. The TUC was also redefining the causes of racial inequalities, especially within the union movement. The issuing of the Black Workers' Charter by the TUC is an indication of change in direction. As a result of sustained efforts by one black ILT tutor with vast experience of trade unionism from its industrial work, new provision was negotiated with the TUC in the West Midlands. The TUC was prepared to sponsor ILT organised courses for Asian shop stewards in language and communication on a ten-days release basis. At the present time these courses are being run by Birmingham ILT with bilingual tutors.

Initially these courses were promoted as language and communication courses for Asian shop stewards (see appendix one) but in response to comments by course members and demand by potential members the courses are open to any black shop steward. The main focus is no longer the 'language' though it is still important if identified by the course member. The course provides a forum for black shop stewards who may otherwise feel isolated by the failure of TUC education to take up issues affecting them. These courses are seen very much as confidence builders for black stewards who are equipped with access to information by being made aware of the existence of all the appropriate T.U. support organisations that may be useful to them in their day to day problems as shop stewards.

In common with other TUC education provision, recruitment for ILT/TUC courses has been difficult. Whilst acknowledging that owing to plitical and economic reasons, some employers are reluctant to release trade union representatives for training, that in itself would not explain the failure of these courses to attract greater numbers of students. According to a TUC tutor, the take-up of courses is most successful when the recruitment is carried out by the education officers of individual unions. The normal TUC publicity material does not appear to be very effective in reaching the potential course members. It has been suggested that the publicity material for ILT courses never gets past either full-time officers or branch secretaries. Consequently course members for ILT run

courses have to be recruited by the word of mouth system using the community grapevine. This involves a lot of work, which could be avoided if individual education officers were prepared to:

(a) keep a record of shop stewards and other representatives based on ethnic origin

(b) recruit members to the course themselves and thus demonstrate their genuine commitment to equal access to education and training (possibly leading to equal opportunities in participation in T.U. activities) for black members.

Having run five such courses in the last two years, certain changes have taken place, based on tutors and students evaluation of the course. As mentioned above the aims have been redifined as more shop stewards from Afro-Caribbean backgrounds have been attracted to the course. The following are some of the comments made by stewards on the current course:

> *"We have been able to discuss here openly the problems facing the black workers. If we had been on a course where the majority of participants were white we would not have been able to raise half the issues we did here for fear of being isolated."*

> *"The course would have been more effective if white stewards were present and were able to listen to what we have to say."*

Training for white trade union officers and representatives

As mentioned earlier, a number of factors in the second half of the 1970s led to the trade union leadership to take certain steps within the education sphere to attempt to ensure that the issue of racial inequalities was discussed. For example, a report by the T.G.W.U. produced following the investigation of the role its local officials and local branch had in the dispute at Imperial Typewriters , suggested that:

> *"At national and at local level, the unions need to educate shop stewards and rank and file membership on the task of combatting racialism via the inclusion of the subject in shop stewards training courses and extensive propoganda for the shop floor."* (BBC/TUC 1971:61)

The creation and perpetuation of racial inequalities as suggested earlier, was perceived by the TUC to be a result of white shop

stewards' ignorance about the culture of black workers and the difficulties of communicating effectively in English by the black members. The TUC, therefore recommended to branch organisers in the late seventies to;

> *"arrange some training sessions for shop stewards and branch members, on the social and cultural background and the problems of adaptation to British ways of their immigrant workers."* (BBC/TUC 1975 :61)

Although many agencies including the CRE, Open University, CRC and RREAS, besides ILT have worked with the TUC in this area, I shall only be looking at the contribution made by the ILT scheme, as the only training organisation.

Although the TUC run a programme of short courses on "tackling racism" and "tackling discrimination" it favours the approach whereby the issue of racial inequalities and equal opportunities is tackled on all TUC courses. It is suggested that the theme of equal opportunities and racial inequalities are not seen as a 'slot' on the course but have to be dealt with at all stages of the courses. The reality is somewhat different as a recent report by the Regional TUC has shown. With the exception of one of two sessions by ILT tutors on stage one and stage two of the TUC course, the ILT scheme has had very little direct or indirect impact on the mainstream TUC education provision in this area. Being aware of the inability of the TUC to respond effectively in this area, the ILT units in the regions have organised short courses, normally of one or two days' duration). The range and nature of these courses I will look at a little later but first the historical development.

Whilst the ILT scheme was still finding its feet in relation to work with the TU movement, TUC national (at least the Education Service) had been forced to review its analysis of the creation of racial inequalities. Race Relations Training, based on a recognition of the discrimination against black workers was beginning to be developed. This shift in TUC position (developed in another essay) on the creation of racial inequalities has been attributed to three factors. Firstly, Miles and Phizacklea suggested that the TUC was awakened by a number of strikes led mainly by black workers in the face of opposition from the white members and hostility of the white management. Secondly, the TU's criticism by the Home Affairs select committee for failing to take up the issues facing black workers, and thirdly, the growth in extreme

right wing organisation at the place of work. This change in approach was apparent in the TUC criticism of:

> *"a one-day course on equal opportinities [which] was devised [by ILT] for the [TUC] Curriculum Development Unit (CDU) and piloted in London. It was never adopted for the TUC introductory course because the CDU considered that it placed too much emphasis on communication and not enough on legislation and race relations."* (Murray 8:37)

It would appear that in the early stages of ILT development, TUC (Education Service) played a significant role in attempting to give direction to the work of ILT rather than ILT training providing the focus for change for the TU education. Eight years on the positions appear to be reversed as ILT press for TUC education service to give high priority to the issue of Equal Opportunities and anti-racism. What are the factors that have brought about this situation? What was the ILT response to the criticism by the TUC in the late seventies?

Despite the TUC's criticism of the ILTS for over-emphasising the role of improved communications at the expense of dealing with race relations and legislation, the ILT scheme in one form or another continued to work on the model of changing shop stewards' attitudes and behaviour by making them aware of the linguistic and cultural differences. This programme continued to be used even when the white shop stewards expressed open racist attitudes. To give credit to the ILT programme, the information giving aspect of the course was undoubtedly to show the white shop stewards how little they knew about race relations in Britain. Information was provided on the background to immigration (social, political and economic reasons) as well as on the diversity of the "immigrant" community in Britain. Unfortunately ILT/CAT training programme failed to tackle the problem as perceived by either the white representatives (e.g. blacks are taking over our jobs, overcrowded inner cities; they only join the unions when it suits them) or by the black members [racist attitude of TU officers; unfair procedures and lack of representation].

An indication of how some ILT trainers had completely failed to understand the causes of racial inequalities , and ways of eradicating them is shown by an article by an ILT tutor in his discussion about why the issue of racism had not been tackled effectively on TUC courses;

> *"Probably one of the reasons that race relations has proved to be perhaps the most difficult topic in shop stewards training is that the ethnic minority population in different parts of the country is so different. Areas can be practically all-white as in the South West, or a mixture of black and brown, from several communities, as in the West Midlands, or a dominant minority from one area of Pakistan, as in the North West, Lancashire. To provide effective race relations training for stewards in each of these areas using common materials is almost impossible."* (A. Murray 1981) My underlining.

To claim that diversity of black communities is the main problem as to why 'common' materials cannot be used is a nonsense. However, if the basis of training is CAT then the argument may be acceptable but not if the purpose is to provide training in anti-racism by the examination of practices and procedures which work against the interest of all black workers. Furthermore it is questionable whether there is any point in providing a half day "training" when the aim is to encourage people to shift their attitudes. The usefulness of such courses, whether CAT or Racism Awareness Training (RAT) that aims to bring about attitudinal change is discussed in another essay.

In the last few years, however, with the TUC publishing Black Workers Charter, the CRE (with TUC support) issuing the code of practice, individual unions have taken measures to start reviewing their structures to ensure the barriers to racial equality are removed. Whilst nationally most unions have formulated policies, they don't appear to have been translated into practice regionally or on the shop floor. This is where the Midland region of the ILT scheme can be effective. The iniatives taken in the recent period include work with both white union representatives and black shop stewards. Of the six units in the West Midlands, neither Dudley or Walsall have been engaged in providing training for trade unions. This, however is not due to any ideological objections but purely because of the staffing problems.

Coventry ILTS has run a number of one-off, two-day training sessions for NUS and NATFHE members in a local college. They have also organised training for NUPE full time officers and members of the divisional council. The focus of the training is very much the personal racism of union members, relying heavily on Katzian experimental exercise to make them recognise and own up to the racism within themselves..

Sandwell Unit's approach is based much more on an 'organisation change' model. Unfortunately not enough courses have been organised to evaluate the effectiveness of this approach as opposed to the 'attitude change' model favoured by Coventry ILTS. Other recent initiations by Sandwell ILTS include a one-day training for TUC tutors based at Warley College. The purpose of this course was to raise the issue of racism on TUC courses. Unfortunately as with most of ILTS courses of this type, there exists no meaningful mechanism for evaluating the effectiveness of the projects.
A major contribution to ILTS' work with Trade Unions was over two years ago, managing successfully to negotiate with TUC EO for day-release terms for Asian shop stewards. One particular course was organised for Asian women shop stewards who were on strike for union representation in a clothing manufacturing sweat shop.
I mentioned earlier that Birmingham ILTS is continuing to run these specialist courses for black shop stewards. One significant effect of this training has been to create an informal network of black shop stewards that can act as a source of advice and support for each other. As for courses on equal opportunities targetted at white representatives and officers, the response has been abysmal.
Wolverhampton ILTS have organised a three-day course for public sector union representatives. The course attemps early on, to raise members' awareness of the levels of inequality suffered by the black members. It then goes on to look at the importance of such documents as the CRE code of practice and the Black Workers' Charter.

ILT Tutors' Comments

None of the tutors I spoke to was satisfied with the low level of work with the Trade Unions. Whilst recognising the 'conservative' nature of trade unions in Britain which makes it almost impossible for an external agency such as ILT to make a meaningful impact on the policy and the structure; all the trainers I spoke to were of the view that ILT promotional work with the TU/TUC has been ineffective. What is required of ILTS is to develop a strategy for getting the TUC nationally to give active support for the ILT range of service for union representives and members.
In the past, ILT courses for trade unionists were more of a promotion

exercise for ILTS in-company courses for which they required Trade Union backing. ILTS took the view that unions "ought to know better" and should put their house in order by themselves. Work with unions was always considered to be a means to an end rather than being the end itself.
Apart from one or two occasions in the past years there has not been a concerted effort to work with one union at a time over a period, the tendency has been to maintain minimum contact with one particular union at the expense of detailed work with the main unions.

TU/TUC Education Officers' comments

Only a limited amount of information was gathered from the education officers. The two public sector unions' education officers were of the opinion that ILT courses were interesting and raised lots of issues but they failed to provide real positive strategies for moving forward. The two EO's were very critical of the RAT training approach and were considering using other organisations to provide training because they felt RAT philosophy did not fit in with Trade Union ideology.
The TUC EO in the West Midlands has been very cautious in using ILT for equal opportunities training. According to the MSC report on ILT review;

> *"one [TUC education] officer (Midlands) had strong reservations about using ILT for any other purpose (besides communications training) because he felt the TUC provided a better service itself in areas such as Equal Opportunities advice."* (MSC 1986:27)

This assertion however has been contradicted by the results of the TUC EO's own survey about the effectiveness of TUC education provision in this area. The main conclusions were:

- racist views are widely held by representatives attending the course
- racism is not a priority issue for most representatives
- most TUC tutors lack confidence in tackling racism during the courses.

Conclusion

In this brief review of the work of ILT with Trade Unions, it has become clear that there has been a lot of rhetoric in what both ILT and TUC say about each other. For example in endorsing the services of ILT in 1980, the TUC said;

> *"The TUC's support for industrial language training is central to the campaign to promote good race relations at work and to secure equal opportunity for all races and ethnic groups in employment."* (*TUC circular : 1980*).

And the ILT Advisory on Trade Union work in a paper presented to a national meeting of ILT representatives explained its attitude to the unions like this;

> *"Trade Unions are not another agency for promoting our work but are a necessary party to <u>any</u> activity which effects workers and effects the workplace....., what we are arguing for is a relationship with the trade union movement at large..... so that trade union's interests and concerns are properly represented in ILT."* (Watkiss :1980 p.1).

In reality however, both organisations have had suspicions and doubts about each other in delivering the 'goods'. As mentioned earlier, some sections of the ILT scheme have ignored the trade unionist either by omission or by design, when initiating and carrying out 'equal opportunity' projects with management both in the public and in the private sector. Some units, having recognised the important role trade unions play (or rather, can play) in implementing equal opportunities for black workers, have ensured that trade union representatives and officers are involved in all stages of the project.

As far as the TUC and individual unions are concerned, just as there is no relationship between their stated national policy on race equality and the actual practice on the shop floor and within their own structure, so there would appear to be a gap between the official endorsement of the ILT scheme and the actual practical support at grass roots levels.

The essay attempted to show that both ILT and TUC in the late seventies and early eighties believed in achieving racial equality by providing training based on the 'deficit model'; communication/cultural awareness training (CAT) for white union officers and representatives and English language training for Asian members. Both the TUC and the ILT scheme have since changed their focus to anti racism training which is based on organisational change. This involves the examination of structures and procedures and policies that may be the source of inequalities. The essay looked at the possible factors that may have led to this change in focus.

As indicated earlier, it was the TUC Curriculum Development Unit (CDU) in the late 70's, which attempted to direct ILT away from communications based training to more race related workshops. Ironically, now in the mid 80's ILT is critical of the TUC provision for failing to give enough emphasis to the 'race related' issues. The TUC regional education officer is aware of the lack of adequate coverage of equal opportunities and anti-racism by the tutor, but is reluctant to involve ILT tutors, with proven trade union background, on the TUC mainstream education. However a joint approach may be possible if the TUC (EO) and ILT recommendation on accreditation of some of ILT trainers as TUC tutors is carried out by the TUC in the near future. If this fails, the other option for ILT may be to provide training for the TUC trainers so that they feel confident about including the issue in their teaching.

In the end, however, if the TUC endorsement of the ILT scheme is to have any meaning, then the TUC Education Committee and the CDU together with regional TUC education officers, need to ensure that ILT training becomes an integral part of its overall strategy in combatting racial inequalities at work and within its own structures. The ILT scheme for its part, as suggested in a paper by the ILT advisory group on trade union work, will have to;

> *"be quite clear about the standing of ILT in relation to the union movement nationally and in our own districts.....we need to decide how much time and commitment we are prepared to give to this dimension of ILT work."* (Watkiss : 1980: 4)

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