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Democracy v Unelected Bureaucracy

DEFEND THE FOUR

DROP THE BAN

Five years ago four London branches Bromley, Greenwich and Hackney and Housing Corporations branch sent motions to conference calling for regular elections of Senior paid officials of Unison and speeding up the process of balloting for strike action.

For this heinous crime four branch officers Glenn Kelly, Onay Kasab, Brian Debus, and Suzanne Muna were barred from holding any office in UNISON for between 2 and 3 years. Not content with the banning orders they closed down three of the four branches in March 2010.

£500,000 DOWN THE DRAIN!

These branches are now run by unelected regional officials of Unison with no lay member control. As a direct result over 1,000 members have now joined Unite in these areas running vibrant branches. This alone has probably cost Unison £150,000 year in lost subscriptions.

The Union has already spent over £100,000 in legal fees, plush hotels and untold hours of officers' time on this case.

An employment tribunal (ET) an employment appeal tribunal (EAT) have now found UNISON guilty of taking 'Unjustifiable disciplinary' action against the four socialist party activists. Yet unbelievably Unison is now going to spend up to another £100,000 appealing this decision and take the case to the Royal Courts of Justice on the Strand. They were charged with unintentional racism and challenging the integrity of the Standing Orders Committee (SOC) for the use of the cartoon of 3 wise monkeys to depict the SOC who had barred the motions.

TRIBUNAL VICTORY – THREE WISE MONKEYS INNOCENT

The EAT found as follows:

“All four claimants are committed anti-racists who have fought against racism. They quite reasonably assumed that anyone who saw the leaflet would understand the

cartoon to be saying that the SOC was out of touch in closing its minds to and ignoring issues that concern the membership. Looking at the context in which the cartoon was used (ie. To depict the attitude of the SOC towards controversial motions) it cannot be said that any reasonable person would or should have realised that it would cause racial offence and that not doing so was somehow 'careless'. That is reinforced by the fact that [it] never occurred to many people who saw the cartoon before the publication. These individuals included an equalities and diversity officer and black members.”

The tribunal found that the main reason for disciplinary action against the four was they produced a leaflet criticising the SOC for rejecting a large number of branches resolutions. The two judgements taken as a whole are a devastating indictment of the role of unelected and unaccountable paid officials in UNISON, usurping democracy to retain their positions of power and influence.

One unelected national officer is reported to have said “we will take this case to Strasbourg if necessary” pity the same commitment and energy is not devoted to a fighting strategy to defend our pensions with further strike action, prevent three years of nil wages rises by this government and the hundreds of thousands of job losses.

Two of the four are no longer UNISON members and are now active officers in UNITE Glenn Kelly's ban finished in March this year so only Brian Debus is affected and he is taking flexible retirement. This just proves how out of touch and arrogant these officials are without recourse to any elected body in the UNION they are now set to waste another £100,000.



TO FIGHT THIS CASE IN THE COURTS COULD COST THE FOUR UP TO £10,000 SO PLEASE DO SOME OF THE FOLLOWING:

1. Please circulate and sign the online petition here:<http://www.change.org/en-GB/petitions/democracy-not-bureaucracy-in-unison>
2. Pass motions of support through your union branch to drop the bans and lift the regional supervision from the branches and sign our petition.
3. Send letters of protest to the National Executive Committee of UNISON and to the General Secretary Dave Prentis at UNISON Centre 30 Euston Road London NW1 2AY or email d.prentis@unison.co.uk. Copies should be sent to info@stophthewitchhunt.org.uk.
4. Organise a collection in your workplace/ union branch towards the legal costs of the four. Please make cheques payable to Stop the Witch-hunt and send to Defend the Four campaign Po Box 858 London E11 1YG
5. Campaign for the elections of officials and democratic control over all UNISON structures.

To keep up to date with the campaign email info@stophthewitchhunt.org.uk and visit the website www.stophthewitchhunt.org.uk