



www.stopthewitchhunt.org.uk

Democracy v Unelected Bureaucracy

DEFEND THE FOUR DROP THE BAN

UNISON's leadership have been found guilty of "Unjustifiable" disciplinary action against four Socialist Party activists for producing a leaflet protesting about the exclusion of resolutions from the 2007 UNISON Conference. An Employment Appeals Tribunal (EAT) on 22nd February 2012 upheld the unanimous judgement of an earlier employment tribunal (27th January 2011). The ET judgement last year rejected false allegations of racism against the four and found that the real reason for disciplinary action was that they had issued a leaflet criticising the Standing Orders Committee and the union leadership of preventing discussion on issues of union democracy. The EAT rejected all five grounds on which the UNISON leadership appealed against last year's ET judgement. The four activists who were disciplined by UNISON were banned from holding any union office for up to three years. The four are Glenn Kelly (formerly Bromley Branch Secretary and Executive member), Onay Kasab (formerly Greenwich Branch Secretary), Suzanne Muna (formerly Housing Corporation Branch Secretary) and Brian Debus (formerly Hackney Branch Chair).

The day after the ban was imposed, three of these four branches were taken into regional administration. Two years later, this is still the case. The judgement of the ET and the EAT completely vindicates the four's struggle to defend union democracy. The unjustified sanctions against the four are part of a wider witch hunt being carried out by the UNISON leadership against activists fighting for union democracy and effective action to defend public services, jobs, pay and conditions. There is now a rising tide of discontent within the union at the ineffective policies of the leadership when faced with a tsunami of attacks on the public sector.

**TRIBUNAL VICTORY -
THREE WISE MONKEYS
INNOCENT**

The UNISON leadership unscrupulously tried to bolster their disciplinary charges with allegations of racism. This related to a cartoon on the leaflet protesting about the Standing Orders Committee's suppression of over 50 resolutions that used the well known image of three wise monkeys who see no evil, hear no evil, and speak no evil. The ET judgement forcefully rejected the

allegation of racism: "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 that they produced a leaflet criticising the SOC for rejecting a large number of branch resolutions.

**£200,000 MEMBERS
MONEY WASTED!**

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. These national officers are estimated to have now wasted 100,000 on the disciplinary hearings in plush hotels and legal costs in tribunals, and a Queens Counsel. 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 wage rises by this government and the hundreds of thousands of job losses. These unelected, unaccountable national officers have now sought leave to appeal the EAT decision to a higher court and potentially 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. Pass motions of support through your union branch to drop the bans and lift the regional supervision from the branches;
2. Send letters of protest to the National Executive Committee of UNISON and to the General Secretary Dave Prentis at UNISON Centre, 130 Euston Road, London NW1 2AY, or email d.prentis@unison.co.uk. Copies should be sent to info@stopthewitchhunt.org.uk;
3. 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;
4. Campaign for the election of officials and democratic control over all UNISON structures.

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