

Nudge Nudge

NUJ Daily Express, Sunday Express and Daily Star chapel bulletin

15 March 2002

Chapel backs action

The chapel overwhelmingly backed a plan for a series of mandatory chapel meetings in its campaign for a realistic pay offer from the management.

At a packed meeting on Thursday, several members spoke of their reluctance to take action or cause any damage to the papers. But they were convinced of the need to take a strong stand, given the context of the dispute. Only five members voted against.

Members were told that the ballot on industrial action had resulted in more than 80 per cent support for industrial action and more than 60 per cent for a strike.

Last summer we agreed as a chapel not to use our mandate for industrial action because we were assured by management that they would address our key concerns.

The implication was that there would be a generous pay settlement to reward people for staying and undertaking more work.

The past year has seen 135 job losses, the remaining workforce crammed into less and less space, health and safety chaos, the evening and weekend closure of

our canteen and new contracts being handed out that are worse than those agreed with the union.

Yet the management has made millions, £70million according to their own account, and a small number of individuals have been taken on with very high salaries. There are also reports that *OK!* magazine is offering £1.5million to Liz Hurley to obtain pictures of her baby.

There have been rumours that PA could be brought in to fill up the space between adverts but we all know that advertisers and readers demand better quality editorial than that. Freesheet-quality material will not stand up to competition from other national newspapers.

The management needs to address the real and legitimate concerns we have.

The managing editor has given NUJ general secretary Jeremy Dear a cast-iron guarantee that people will not be bullied or intimidated into saying whether they will take part in action or not.

If you are questioned about what you plan to do, please refer the questioner to a chapel committee member.

Now we have gone through the legal process of a ballot, the management has no grounds to sack union members for taking action.

If anyone is sacked, it will constitute unfair dismissal and the union will back members taking legal action for damages.

THE LAW IS ON OUR SIDE

We will take action with the full backing of the law. We have taken

part in a ballot which has given us a mandate to take either strike action or industrial action short of a strike.

THE UNION IS ON OUR SIDE

We have the full backing of the NUJ and our general secretary Jeremy Dear. Jeremy says 'no member of management has the right to quiz individuals about whether they intend to take part in the stoppage.

We will act collectively, giving full notice, when and how we choose to take our action.

THE TIDE IS TURNING

Newspaper chapels across the country are voting to take industrial action – this week Leeds and Wakefield. Last month Bradford won their pay claim after just half a day's action.

NON MEMBERS

Get the protection of the union. If you are not already a member ask a chapel committee member for an application form

STOP PRESS

TONIGHT: Leaving party for Financial Times Father of the Chapel Alan Pike at Bankside Restaurant and Bar, 32 Southwark Bridge Road. All welcome. Some free drinks. NUJ recruitment stall!

USEFUL PHONE NUMBERS

NUJ HQ 020 7278 7916 Jeremy Dear 020 7843 3709 (work) 07855 384287 (mobile) email: jeremyd@nuj.org.uk

The current offer

£1,000 salary increase for every employee (not fixed term contracts) from 1 February 2002.

The following variations have also been suggested and are still on the table:

£906 salary increase for all employees (not fixed term contracts) from 1 January 2002.

£1,000 salary increase from 1 January 2002 for every employee (not fixed term contracts) except new starters over the last six months of 2001.