

BARNET UNISON

Fighting Apartheid to Fighting Austerity



GUEST SPEAKER:
Paul Joseph, born in South Africa, became a political activist in the anti-apartheid movement working closely with Nelson Mandela with whom he was good friends.

Tuesday 7 March

4PM at Christ Church at Whetstone (Lower Hall) Oakleigh Park North N20 9AR
Food and refreshments provided

AGM 2017

Who is Paul Joseph?

Born in Ferreirastown (area in Johannesburg) 1930

1952 The Defiance Campaign was launched by the ANC and was the first organised action to include all racial groups. It involved defiance of 8 unjust laws e.g. the pass laws. 8000 volunteers were caught and imprisoned for non-violent disobedience including Paul. He was imprisoned for 1 month including awaiting trial.

1955 Paul was banned so had to do background work in preparation for the development of the Freedom Charter which was agreed in Kliptown that year.

1956- 1960 Treason Trial. This involved 156 people being charged with treason including Paul and the main leaders Mandela etc. They were all eventually acquitted in 1960.

In response, the govt. declared a state of emergency and banned all opposition groups and individuals across SA including Paul. In addition to being imprisoned, he was also placed under house arrest at various times.

1961 Mandela & the leadership of the ANC had to go underground and decided to create an armed wing of the ANC uMkhonto We Sizwe (capital M is correct & the name means Spear of the Nation) this was abbreviated to MK.

MK immediately carried out a series of explosions which Paul was involved in. They targeted symbols of Apartheid e.g pass offices, segregated post offices and railway stations. There were no soft targets and no lives were lost.

In 1965, under instruction from the now largely imprisoned leadership, Paul was instructed to escape from the country. There were a number of reasons for this including the fact that he had already been arrested and imprisoned (including a period in solitary confinement) and inevitably would be jailed again. Under torture there was the risk of any activist giving information. In addition, he had a wife and 3 children including a disabled son who needed constant medical attention and care.

He fled the country and made his way through the frontline states and eventually to the UK where Adelaide his wife was already living with their 2 daughters unsure if he was even alive. She worked with Amnesty International and a British MP Dick Taverne assisted in securing political asylum for the family. Adelaide had left earlier with their son Anand but hadn't known then that she would be unable to return. Their 2 daughters Zoya and Tanya had to be smuggled out of the country by plane with the assistance of another person. They had joined Adelaide in London prior to Paul's arrival. Anand was in a hospital in East Germany, he died a few years later.

Paul continued his political work as an ANC member in exile as well as both local and nationally for the Anti-Apartheid Movement and many other international political causes.

Paul and Adelaide were unable to return to SA until after Mandela's release when an amnesty was granted to all political exiles. They were able to vote for the first time in democratic elections for SA with their 3 daughters in 1994 at the SA embassy in London.