

University building bombed

London

BRITISH police now fear a bombing campaign against other universities after the explosion of a bomb, thought to have contained 5 pounds of high explosives, in an administrative building of the University of Bristol last week. The bomb went off in the staff restaurant of the Senate House at midnight on Wednesday, 22 February. There were no casualties.

Responsibility for the attack has been claimed by the Animal Liberation Front (ALF), a well-known group of extremists, and by two previously unknown groups, the Animal Defence Organisation and the Animal Abused Society, which warned the police beforehand of the bomb. The ALF has usually concentrated its attacks on the houses of scientists, which have been daubed with paint, and on retail shops selling items such as furs.

The Secretary of State for Education and Science, Mr Kenneth Baker, visiting the university after the explosion, called the attack "an appalling example of terrorism". He said that tighter security might be necessary at British universities.

British animal rights groups have previously had some success with incendiary

Bomb damage inside the Senate House.

devices, but have not hitherto used high explosives. Animal rights groups which campaign using non-violent means against vivisection have condemned the bombing. A spokesman for the British Union for the Abolition of Vivisection says it will cause extreme damage to the campaign against animal experimentation. There are 50,000 members of non-violent groups, he says, and less than 100 in the loosely-organized group of individuals which makes up the ALF.

Christine McGourty

UCT again confronts government

Oxford

THE University of Cape Town (UCT) is once again in confrontation with the South African government, this time because of a breach of confidence by the Minister of Health and Population Development, Dr Willie van Nierkerk.

The issue concerns Dr Jocelyn Kane-Berman, whom van Nierkerk sacked from her former post as superintendent of the Groote Schuur Hospital, UCT's teaching hospital, and the post of dean of the medical school at UCT, which the university is now seeking to fill against a pending retirement. In reply to parliamentary questions about the dismissal, van Nierkerk said that he would approve Kane-Berman's appointment as dean because, at UCT, she would be "in an environment where the proximity of the ANC (African National Congress) is well-known".

Apart from the slur on the university, UCT is incensed that van Nierkerk should comment publicly on one application for an academic post which is still under consideration. Van Nierkerk, a former professor of obstetrics and gynaecology at Stellenbosch, can hardly be ignorant of the niceties of academic appointments.

UCT now says that the insinuations in the minister's remarks are "disgraceful". Dr Stuart Saunders, the vice-chancellor, and Mr Leo Abrahamse, the chairman of the council, who met the minister to protest, said that van Nierkerk had chosen not to provide an explanation, and that the university would now be making representations through other channels.

The cause of Kane-Berman's sacking from Groote Schuur was her statement, to a weekend newspaper, that Nelson Mandela would be her choice as prime minister in a South African government chosen on merit (see *Nature* 336, 612; 1988). The *South African Medical Journal* has called for her reinstatement, but the minister is unrepentant. Meanwhile, Kane-Berman intends to sue her former employers, the provincial administration, for reinstatement.

Michael Cherry

Activists setting the agenda

Berkeley

THE divisive issue of the use of animals in research was the centre of attention last week at two San Francisco area universities. Stanford University has been debating a genteel change of policy that would affect the use of animals in teaching, while, on the University of California campus at Berkeley, a more acerbic debate over an animal care facility has flared up.

Animal rights activists have been stepping up their activities in California. Last week, six of them scaled a 175-foot crane at a construction site on the Berkeley campus to protest at the building of the

university's new animal facility. Unfurling banners that read "Stop Germ Warfare Lab!" and "No Toxic Animal Lab!", the protesters vowed to remain on the crane for two weeks. But university officials have called the stunt "ironic", because the crane is not involved in the construction of the new animal facility, but instead is being used to put the finishing touches to a plant-biology building.

The university is hesitant to remove the protesters, fearing that somebody would be hurt in the process. Construction of the animal facility has continued undisturbed, but the protest is costing the university more than \$10,000 a day, according to

one spokesman, to pay for 24-hour security guards and lost construction time.

Meanwhile, in an effort to avert future animal rights controversies in the classroom, Stanford University has drafted a policy that would inform students which courses and degree programmes use animals in instruction. The new policy, now being finally revised, encourages students to raise with their instruc-

tors any concerns they may have about animal use. But although it provides room for individual solutions, the policy does not oblige instructors to change course requirements.

Stanford spokesman Robert Beyers said the concept of forewarning students was stimulated by the passage in the state legislature last spring of a law that allows primary and secondary school students to refuse to dissect animals in the classroom.

The new rule may have little impact, because animals are rarely used in undergraduate courses, and no required courses in the medical school or the biology department involve animals. **Marcia Barinaga**

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