

CAFAS Update No 36

5 July 2002

Council for Academic Freedom & Academic Standards

<http://www.cafas.org.uk>

Meeting:

*Saturday 12 October 2002, 2.00-4.30pm
Room 2074
Birkbeck College
Malet Street
London WC1*

Underground: Goodge Street, Euston Square, Euston, Russell Square, Holborn

Essex County Council List 98

Majzoub B Ali reported in Update 35 that Essex County Council has been keeping a secret 'pre-employment check', called List 98, since the 1970s. He learned in February 2002, 18 months after changes in the Data Protection Act, 1998, and following the introduction of the European Convention of Human Rights, that he had been placed on this 'blacklist' in March 1995. Despite his and others' strenuous efforts, his name still remains on the list.

Cafas has written to Essex County Council's Learning Service Directorate, the Leader of the County Council, Lord Hanningfield, Robert Hellen, Head of Cecil Jones High School (from which Majzoub was dismissed) and the Secretary of State for Education & Skills and Majzoub wrote to Sir Teddy

Taylor, the local MP. The responses were evasive and disappointing. Sir Teddy Taylor echoed the Secretary of State in saying that she had no powers to intervene.

The Department for Education & Skills has its own pre-employment check List 99, which is governed by legislation and procedures. All teachers placed on it are informed and are entitled to a right of appeal. The police also have lists for employers to consult. Majzoub was not on List 99 or a police list. The question is why was he on any list at all? The only answer seems to be that List 98 is illegal. If it is not illegal, it contravenes principles of natural justice insofar as it allows vindictive head teachers to ban for life teachers who have stood up to them.

The NUT has been making enquiries regarding List 98. It has established that

there are "current" criteria for placement on the list. Under the heading, *List 98 criteria for inclusion*, they are:

- Criminal Convictions related to sexual, violent or drug related offences
- Dismissal following disciplinary action
- Resignation following compromise agreement
- Resignation prior to Disciplinary where dismissal likely (especially child protection issues)
- Provision of false information (e.g. false qualifications)
- Breach of contract
- Exceptional ill health cases
- Concerns re: child protection issues inside or outside of school
- Awaiting decision re: List 99

It appears that the decision to establish the Essex County Council List 98 was taken in

the early 1970s by one or two unelected, 'named' officers of ECC, under the authority of the Education Officer.

If this is true, it contravenes all principles of natural justice and democracy and has no place in education and a civilised society.

Pat Brady
Geraldine Thorpe

Somerset County Council List 98

It appears that every LEA in England operates a list 98 or equivalent system, and has done since the 1970s. In no case that we are aware of, are the principles of natural justice adhered to. The system is clandestine, and does not belong in a democracy. Social services operate parallel systems of their own. It is some years since we asked CAFAS to help us find out what was going on in our area, and we have only just discovered the whole truth underlying this.

Twenty-three years ago, Somerset County Council put on record totally apocryphal professional CVs for both of us, despite the fact that no-one from the County Council ever met us, or sought to inform themselves first-hand. These included the assertions that we had both left full-time work, as a result of psychiatric illness. Both assertions were completely false. We now know the sources of these assertions, which boil down to nothing more than malicious gossip. One of us (AP) is a teacher as well as a lecturer, and some of the allegations were quite serious enough to have justified a referral to List 99. This would have brought matters to a head and created an opportunity for appeal.

Instead, the allegations were made covertly.

The County Council, and other agencies with which they have conspired, including Somerset Health Authority, have consistently, over many years, refused to address our questions on these matters, or to correct the errors in their records, even despite an independent Inquiry, convened by the then Regional Health Authority, which vindicated us as far as it could go, given the lack of cooperation it received from the County Council. We believe that Mr. Ali has suffered from the same thing, and that authorities, when challenged, deliberately obfuscate in order to evade their responsibilities, and that as a result the matters in issue become steadily more complicated.

Derek and Anita Pheby

(For more on the Data Protection Act, 1998, see, "Cambridge breaks law by withholding data", Phil Baty, Whistleblowers, The Times Higher Education Supplement, June 7, 2002, p.8)

Those in Authority

The Cambridge University Reporter is published "by Authority" and many actions in the University are taken by "those in Authority", although it is often unclear what that authority is and how it was delegated to the body or person in question. Attempts to probe are usually met by bland assertions that the University is democratically run by a triangular hierarchy of control extending upwards from the broad foundation of the Regent House to an apex at which stands the Vice-Chancellor. Administrators and their staffs

occupy the upper tiers: the Director of Personnel, the Secretary General of the Faculties and the Registry.

Such senior administrators are in a curious position. They attempt to formulate policies and to implement government and legal requirements but, in theory at least, they need the consent of democratically elected lower tiers of the triangle to do so. This cumbersome and lengthy process leads to the cutting of corners which, as I explained in my last article "Just do it" versus "Everything by Committee" can be disastrous for an individual who has been penalized by an off-the-cuff decision of a Head of Department but then finds that his attempts to lodge an effective Grievance are frustrated by interminable reference to and interaction between the tiers of the administrative triangle.

There is, however, a much more sinister aspect to this entire system that was identified in the Schneider-Ross Report. The vast majority of our University democracy is white, male, able-bodied and drawn from a small section of our national educational network. The members of this heavy majority are usually contented and self-complaisant; Cambridge is, after all, a centre of excellence and widely recognised as a leading World University. Such people are often "blind" to the difficulties and special requirements of minority groups and apt to dismiss members of such minorities, who are struggling to have basic, legal requirements implemented, as "oddballs", "troublemakers", "destroyers of standards" or "failures". The upper tiers of the administrative triangle should and may formulate Codes and Statements of Best Practice but

it is the good will or prejudice of the majority that usually determines the outcome. What the upper echelons can do is to inform the majority about legal requirements and the general development of attitudes in the community as a whole; they can suggest, and then insist, that delegated foci of power, such as Heads of Department conform to existing Codes and Statements of Best Practice; and they can write-in checks and balances to ensure that things happen in a reasonable way in a reasonable time. But does it work like that?

My own Grievances, lodged as a disabled member of staff suffering from the genetic syndrome Pseudoxanthoma elasticum (or PIXIE) have recently been the subject of a Grievance Hearing at Cambridge and are now waiting a Hearing at an Employment Tribunal. The process was curious, disturbing and ultimately unsatisfactory.

In the first place, there were immense delays. The Grievance Hearing was held in April 2002, three and a half years after the Grievance had been lodged, in September 1998. By the time of the Hearing, two other Grievances had been lodged, one about promotion and another about the delays in getting a Hearing. All three were dealt with in two days (one day for the Hearing and a second day for deliberation) by a Committee of three Professors sitting in private. The delays were recognised and the Committee found that: "The Grievance about the delay in hearing the first grievance lodged on 4 September 1998 is found to be justified in respect of the period following the letter from the Vice-Chancellor of 2 September 1999. There were also undue delays in processing the second grievance lodged on 6th August 2001."

The original Grievance had been about alleged discriminatory treatment by my Head of Department. The Committee found that: "The alteration and use of Dr Tapp's teaching material was in clear breach of his copyright as now acknowledged by the University." and that: "We consider that the process by which decisions were taken to reduce Dr Tapp's role in histology teaching was inadequately clear and failed to respect properly the role that Dr Tapp had hitherto played in the teaching of histology. Insufficient attempts were made by Professor Thomas to identify what Dr Tapp was in fact able and willing to do and to negotiate an appropriate role for him in the changing provision of teaching in the subject. Professor Thomas did not take sufficient steps to resolve at an early stage the grievance to which his decision had given rise." There were also other findings upholding two of my three grievances but the grievance about the promotion procedure failed, the Committee finding that: "The grievance was not justified."

On the whole, the findings were in my favour, so why do I describe the process (see above) as "curious, disturbing and ultimately unsatisfactory"? In the first place, the procedure itself was generated de novo by the Chairman and one of the Committee's recommendations to the University was: "... that the University adopt a code of practice in the handling of grievances that sets out a clear timetable within the various stages of the process should normally be completed. As part of this code the University should designate an individual who shall have the responsibility for monitoring complaints and grievances

brought by members of staff and for ensuring they are progressed within the time limits specified by the Code." From other remarks made by the Chairman in preparation for and consequent to the Hearing it is clear that although the University has conformed minimally to the requirements of the Education Reform Act of 1988 by making provision for Grievances in Statute UVI, it had not bothered to create a framework within which a Grievance could be properly pursued.

In the second place, the Chairman decided that the proceedings should not be adversarial. Questions would be put to those attending only through the Chair and must be submitted at least a day before the Hearing. It so happened that a request for disclosure under the provisions of the Data Protection Act (March 2000) had revealed two documents signed by my Head of Department which had been sent to the Secretary General at a crucial stage in the prolonged attempt to have my first Grievance heard. They contained an admission that my Head of Department did not know how to handle the situation, a request for advice (unanswered as far as I can ascertain) and, most significantly, defamatory and unsubstantiated allegations about my character and teaching that are demonstrably untrue. These allegations are even said to extend back in time some ten years before Professor Thomas took office! They allege such scandalous behaviour that his predecessor would be guilty of gross dereliction of duty in not dealing with them at the time! These letters were, of course, not drawn to my attention and have been on my file ever since, bearing false witness against me. I and my advisor (Dr Gillian Evans) submitted

questions for Professor Thomas and for the Secretary General, who both attended the Hearing, asking what action had been taken by the University on receipt of these documents and requesting Professor Thomas to either justify his allegations or withdraw them. The Chairman did not put these questions and the issues were not pursued!

In the third place, because the obviously negative and damaging opinions held by my Head of Department were not investigated by the University, either by seeking justification or by calling me to account, it has had an impact on the second Grievance, about promotion, which went against me during the Hearing. My Head of Department had to provide the Promotions Committee with a document headed, "The case for promotion". This document was either overlooked or withheld in my initial request for disclosure under the Data Protection Act and the University has not yet produced it although I have requested it very specifically. Could it, perhaps, contain such damaging allegations that the Promotions Committee was influenced against me? It was, after all, the first such exercise in promotion to the newly created post of Senior Lecturer at Cambridge and, as the University admits, no provision was made for an application from a disabled member of staff. The general attitude and will of the Committee would have been crucial in assessing the case of such an unusual applicant and if "those in Authority" were sending a clear message that the applicant was an irresponsible troublemaker.....?

Finally, nobody fights as I have been trying to do without real conviction that their case is a just one. The

personal cost is just too high! The sense of failure, unfairness and hopelessness is enormous; the process takes over one's life and, in my case, led to severe depression. And yet there is little recognition of that in the Report of the Grievance Hearing and no compensation for it. Even although it is admitted that a career has been wrecked by flawed decisions and inadequate care, the consequences for the individual are clinically disregarded. Even worse, the Report of the Grievance Committee is not published and there is no public vindication (or rebuttal) of one's complaint. The delays in bringing the case are so long and the plaintiff has to be so vocal and demanding to get a hearing that rumours grow about them. Committees "leak" and the plaintiff becomes a bete noir, an unreasonable troublemaker who is impeding the work of the University. He should have taken early retirement and not made all this fuss just because he's become disabled and decisions seem to have gone against him. After all, "those in Authority" can't really have got it wrong, can they?

R.L. Tapp
3rd July 2002

LETTERS

Cafas and Mordechai Vanunu

15 April 2002

I am writing, in my capacity as a Patron of CAFAS, to complain in the strongest possible terms about an item that appeared in CAFAS Update No 35.

I refer to the reproduction, at page 8, of an Observer item concerning the imprisonment, in Israel, of an

Israeli citizen found guilty of espionage.

This individual was never to the best of my knowledge an academic. The plight in which he finds himself has no even remote connection with academic freedom, let alone the work of CAFAS.

As a Patron of CAFAS I am naturally jealous for its international reputation. I regard the inclusion of this item in CAFAS Update as a crude attempt to drag CAFAS into the politics of the Middle East. Whether that was indeed the intention of those who presumably asked for its inclusion I do not know. But the inclusion will I am sorry to say be widely so interpreted.

I must ask for your assurance that the item will not be again reproduced, and that the next issue of CAFAS Update will include an apology.

Prof. Geoffrey Alderman
172 Colindeep Lane
London NW9 6EA
(The compilers take full responsibility for the inclusion in Update 35 of The Observer item on Mordechai Vanunu. It was information in keeping with the decision of the previous Cafas meeting to write letters of support to Mordechai and letters of protest to the Israeli Government. GT, PB)

When we founded CAFAS, we conceived of it narrowly, as an organisation which would help staff in the 'old HE' sector in Britain who got into the sort of trouble we got into in Swansea, 1989-93. As early as the founding meeting: when as many from FE as HE, and more 'new HE' than 'old HE' turned up, it became obvious that we would have to extend our scope. And over the years we have found ourselves helping more and more students too.

A second kind of extension came about because of the range of issues brought to us. Although our central purpose has remained the defence of academic freedom, we have through the years assisted a great many academics who were the victims of injustice in other senses: racial discrimination, sexual discrimination, bullying at work, unfairness in promotion.

A third kind of extension came about equally naturally. Other organisations, including those in other countries, began referring cases to us or asking for support, and we reciprocated; and this approach has proved mutually beneficial.

Broadly speaking, this was how we came to comment on the appalling case of Mordechai Vanunu. He is an Amnesty International Prisoner of Conscience, the recipient in 1987 of the Right Livelihood Award (the 'Alternative Nobel Prize') for his 'courage and self-sacrifice', and in 2001 he was awarded an honorary doctorate at the University of Tromsø, Norway.

Mordechai was kidnapped in Italy and abducted by Israeli agents, and has been imprisoned for nearly sixteen years in what Amnesty describes as 'cruel, inhuman and degrading' conditions. He is the victim of what Harold Pinter has called 'sadistic treatment by the Israeli government'. Cafas members seeking more details of his case might begin by consulting a report by Mordechai Briemberg on <http://www.peacewire.org/campaigns/articles/mordechaiVanunu/Conferce.html>

It is true that Mordechai, like the large number of students, and even a few administrative staff, who

come to us for help, is not a professional academic. But we can state with assurance that we have on behalf of Cafas supported an enormous number of people whose cases were much less directly related to our defining ideal, academic freedom. We think it is entirely appropriate for an organisation which fights for freedom of expression to voice its sympathy for him.

Michael Cohen
Colwyn Williamson

Suggestion for support

May I make a suggestion for the CAFAS web site without being offensive? I apologise in advance if this is offensive.

The CAFAS web site is very impressive and I was very impressed with the "cases" section. It is this section that I have a suggestion about.

As someone who has been through the process of a student vs. university dispute and won I can vouch for how stressful it is and any support that comes is always very welcome. (I am currently petitioning the visitor)

You are obviously aware of Amnesty International and you probably know of their letter writing strategy. If not then let me briefly tell you about it. If someone is in the kind of trouble that comes under their remit then they ask their members to write letters/ email those responsible. It is very successful. The following quote is from a booklet I got from them "When the first 1000 letters arrived I was given food and water. When the next 1000 letters came I was moved to a new cell. When the next 1000 letters came I was granted legal assistance. " It goes on from there.

What may be an idea is to ask CAFAS members for their email addresses and send them an email when the site has been updated or modified, especially the cases section.

When new cases arise if people are asked to email the press officer of the institution in question and copy it to several of the local newspapers (which the victim will furnish CAFAS with) then the same should happen. If the press officer gets 100 or so emails from various people about a particular individual it will make him/her panic a bit, especially if media interest follows, which it should do after 50 or so emails. That panic will spread from the press officer to the department in question. From experience it makes universities "do the right thing." All I can say from experience is that the right form of publicity is the ultimate protection.

I have no doubt that a lot of CAFAS members would be willing to spare a few moments to do this. It may attract more members.

What do you all think?

Sushant Varma

A Habit of Lies

During the last CAFAS meeting, one person suggested that I should write a brief summary for the Update, explaining the background to "A Habit of Lies" and just why I think it important enough to spend so much time on. Perhaps a less polite person might have asked, "why are you so fixated on the topic?" though he was by no means so indelicate in his choice of language. He was also quite right, it would be a useful exercise and this is my response.

My name is John Hewitt and I hold a degree and Ph.D. from Cambridge where, 20 years ago and for a period of 5 years, I worked in the biochemistry department as a demonstrator. In most institutions, a demonstrator would be called a junior lecturer or assistant professor. At the end of that period, my contract was terminated and I found myself unemployed.

Well, that's simple enough then, sour grapes, tough, nothing we can do about that now, get on with your life and stop pestering us. Well, yes, and I do have an abiding resentment at what I saw as vindictiveness and uncooperativeness from the institution. So far as I can understand, I was not merely made unemployed but rendered unemployable by the things the institute saw fit to say about me. These things are difficult to get a handle on but two phrases that did come back to me were, "everybody knows he's no good," (no they don't) and "there is something wrong with him," (no there isn't.) I do believe that was the kind of tone used, though one would be hard put to prove it in law, and I believe it was outrageous, hypocritical and untrue.

But there are other issues too, that are much bigger than one person's career or feelings. These issues speak to underlying scientific problems, to the personal motives of the people involved and to the kind of institutional incompetence that condones, rather than confronts, deceit. The fact is, I was right and they were wrong - and they know it.

It all hinges on a phenomenon that cell biologists see in, more accurately on, living cells. If any kind of small particle is dropped onto the surface of an amoeboid cell, that particle is

actively moved backwards by the cell, where forward is the way the cell is moving. There are a number of other, related phenomena, cell capping and axonal transport being two, but in the interest of simplicity, this one will do here. The question that was pursued for many years was simply this, "How and why does a cell move these particles?" It is a more important question than it seems because, as I say there are many parallel phenomena and, in addressing that question, one implicitly speaks to how cells move, organise themselves and respond to stimuli. The ideas involved concern as much as five or ten percent of cell biology and that is a lot of money.

The field is funded by medical research agencies and charities and rightly so, it has significant medical implications. In the years since I left Cambridge, perhaps £1 billion in research funds will have been spent worldwide in this general area, and about £100 million in this country. How that money is spent is effectively guided by the ideas we are about to discuss.

As happens in many good scientific fields, different scientists proposed different models to explain the phenomena. There are three models, all proposed or represented in Cambridge.

The first is that the cell membrane is flowing and carries the particles with it. This was proposed by Bray and, in modified form, by Bretscher, the latter of whom has advocated it very vigorously ever since. It is a testable idea but is thermodynamically unreasonable. It has been tested and is wrong. It is clearly refuted by experimental data and anyone with a training in physical science would have rejected it out of hand as the energy needed to drive the

membrane flow would be very large.

The second model is the cytoskeletal model. The cytoskeleton is a network of muscle type fibres in the cell that are undoubtedly involved in causing the cell to move. The essential content of this model is simply that, "The cytoskeleton does it." No other content seems to be agreed by its advocates. The problem with this model is not that it's wrong (the cytoskeleton probably does do it) but that it is meaningless; it is what philosophers call a vacuous theory. Like saying, "molecules do it," or that people move with muscles - we already know that, thank you. Obviously, the cell's muscle type proteins are involved in movement, the question is, "how, mechanistically, does the cytoskeleton work?"

The third model, the wave model, was advanced by me, shortly after taking up the Cambridge post. My colleagues in Cambridge seemed unimpressed and seemed to reject it. I say, "seemed," because they actually behaved as if my work did not exist. They published as if there were just two theories (in other words, they lied in the scientific literature) and they taught the same to students, even in my own department, that is, they lied to students as well. When I tried to talk to them about it, they simply claimed that their theories were "experimentally based" and there was "no evidence" for my views. Actually, my understanding is that there are theories and there are experiments and that experiments are used to test theories. I don't know what an "experimentally based" theory is.

What is more, there is plenty of evidence tending to support my views; in fact, all

the hard evidence is that the wave model is correct. I won't repeat it here, you will have seen the pictures in Update, that I bore everyone with, and it is summarised on my web site. When I try to talk to these people they just repeat the litany about "no evidence" and refuse to communicate further.

That was the way things were in Cambridge. I was pretty much treated as a pariah for the crime of proposing an alternative and correct theory; in other words, doing my job. I think these people have lied, I think they know they're wrong and I think that's why there is never any sensible debate. I believe they lie because they would lose a rational debate and that is why how millions of pounds in biomedical research funding have simply been wasted.

John Hewitt

Questionable Practices

There are some murky practices in universities and colleges to which attention should be drawn in order to find out how widespread they are, and whether they can be stopped.

The salaries of vice-chancellors and principals over the last decade have risen much more than those of the staffs of universities and colleges. Recently, the Times Higher Education Supplement published them annually, and an editorial questioned the justice of this situation. It created such a furore that an official investigation is currently being made.

The salaries and conditions of service of other members of staff are negotiated between the vice-chancellors and principals, on the one side, and the trade

unions, on the other. The pay and resources are decided by the government, when it allocates block grants to each university. However, the individual salaries, accommodation, chauffeurs, pensions and other perquisites of the vice-chancellors and principals are decided by the councils or boards of governors of the universities or colleges.

The latter bodies are composed partly of statutory appointees, but mainly of prominent business persons and citizens, and senior staff of the universities and colleges. It is difficult to find out how the business people and citizens are chosen to serve. Their names are presented to councils and boards by vice-chancellors and principals, and are usually approved on the nod. They are hardly ever contested. It is a great honour to be appointed. It is very unlikely that a vice-chancellor or principal would propose a candidate he or she did not like, or that a council or board member would be reappointed if he or she lost favour with the vice-chancellor or principal.

Those senior academics on the councils or boards are responsible to, and owe their promotions to, the vice-chancellors or principals, whose pay and conditions of service they decide. Thus, the pay of vice-chancellors and principals is negotiated by them with persons they largely choose or are responsible to themselves. This situation seems rather incestuous, and could appear as corrupt, although, of course, it was not set up with that in mind. Nevertheless, since 1979, the pay increases of staff have been kept down well below inflation by people, whose salaries have not and who themselves have enjoyed much greater rises in salary. One may also ask, "Why should

vice-chancellors' and principals' salaries and terms of service not be negotiated by the trade unions?" and "Why should they not have the same percentage increases as all other staff?"

A second practice would warrant explanation. In universities and colleges, as well as in public bodies and companies, lump sums are often paid to settle disputes. They are sometimes paid to members of staff who are sacked. Sometimes, they are considered cheaper than litigation, or are offered to avoid it. Sometimes, they are paid to cover up a misdemeanour, or to obviate its being investigated. Often, they represent compensation for an injustice to a member of staff. Yet, very often, it is difficult to locate these sums of money in the accounts of universities and colleges. Perhaps trade unions and other interested parties should examine the implications of large sums of money, which cannot be seen in audited accounts. Commercial confidence cannot be used to refuse to reveal details of the accounts of public bodies, especially if they are also charities.

This brings one to a further unclear area. Many universities and colleges are charities, yet many run joint companies with members of staff - usually senior - who derive profit from them. Charity law requires that money earned by a charity be reinvested to advance the causes of the charity. That is clearly not the case for academics involved in joint companies with universities and colleges. Another question is whether academics acting as consultants or doing research for private industry, are returning to the public purse as much of the university or college resources as they

use for their consultancies and research. Mine may be a minority view among academics, but I wonder how a full-time vice-chancellor or principal, responsible for say 5-20,000 students and earning £100,000 to 150,000 per year from the public purse has time also to be non-executive director of one to eight companies. Does he or she work more than 24 hours a day, and what are the priorities? It is also appropriate to ask whose permission should a vice-chancellor or principal seek to engage in outside activities, and how often does this occur? Is it recorded, and does the university or college and its staff have access to that knowledge? If not, why not?

The role of auditors in universities and colleges - as in large companies - is also somewhat equivocal. They monitor the accounts for the institutes themselves, for the government and for the public, in return for a percentage fee for the accounts themselves. An accountant who probed into an account too zealously, or indeed, qualified it, is extremely unlikely to be asked to continue with this responsibility, as his or her disclosures would bring a bad name to the university or college. An accountant for a university recently became very agitated when I asked about the accounts, and referred me back to the very body about whose practices I was enquiring.

Finally, I would like to suggest some practical actions. Firstly, we should press for national negotiations about the pay and conditions of service of vice-chancellors and principals between the unions and the employers; secondly, we should strongly resist the idea that expenditure of public money can ever be considered commercially confidential;

thirdly, we should press for more open mechanisms for the appointments of outside people to the councils and boards of universities and colleges, as well as for the appointments of senior university or college staff to the latter bodies.

Harold Hillman

Unity Laboratory of Applied Neurobiology
76 Epsom Road
Guildford
Surrey GU1 2BX

OBITUARIES

PROFESSOR RAY DILS

Ray Dils, who died suddenly on 24 March, was Professor of Physiology and Biochemistry [at the University of Reading] from 1976 until his retirement in 1997. After an undergraduate education in chemistry in his native Birmingham, Ray stayed on to study for his doctorate in lipid biochemistry under George Huebscher. Thus started his lifelong interest in the synthesis and breakdown of fats in the body and particularly in the mammary gland, which his own research did much to elucidate. Ray held posts first in Birmingham and then in the new medical school at Nottingham. His research in milk fat synthesis led to collaboration with colleagues in the National Institute for Research in Dairying at Shinfield and this made his eventual move to Reading a natural one.

Ray was a man of widespread sympathies and strong principle who became well-known across the university through his involvement in the AUT. He could be splendidly

courageous and articulate in defence of fair and decent procedures, and he handled personal cases of employment difficulty with scrupulous care and delicacy of judgment. His concerns were never restricted to fellow academics and he acted in a spirit of true collegiality towards both non-academic staff and students.

Ray Dils' honesty, wisdom and meticulous attention to detail were put at the service of the whole university. At the time of the merger with Bulmershe College, Ray was one of those involved in the negotiations and his even-handedness in dealing with both institutions and his clear concern for teacher education were crucial to their success. Later he was appointed to the small committee charged with nominating a successor to Ewan Page as vice-chancellor. He set about this task with typical verve and a real concern for the right outcome.

Colleagues on the committee have noted his enthusiasm for garnering from the academic grapevine opinions of the candidates, likening him to other great detectives of Belgian ancestry, such as Hercule Poirot! And it was this dogged persistence that led to his greatest triumph for the University - gaining the estate of the late Professor Hugh Sinclair (another biochemist with an interest in fats) for Reading and leading to the establishment of the Hugh Sinclair Unit for Human Nutrition.

Ray Dils was essentially an enthusiast, for lipid biochemistry, for lifelong learning, for comparative religion, but above all for people. He was an inspiring teacher who spent much time on the well-being of his students, particularly those from overseas and those whose

potential needed nurturing. In the department he encouraged new and interdisciplinary research, was always supportive of younger colleagues and provided valuable guidance, although he found the responsibility of management a difficult challenge. Ray Dils cared deeply and, seeing his own ambitions as secondary, worked tirelessly to help others achieve their goals.

Chris Skidmore

School of Animal and Microbial Sciences
University of Reading
(Reproduced from the University of Reading Bulletin, 2002)

Colwyn Williamson writes:

I was very saddened by the news of Ray's death. He was a decent man in a world where there are very few decent men. When I asked him to sponsor Cafas he was very embarrassed by the suggestion, saying that he would be perfectly happy to work for us but wasn't eminent enough to be a patron. I remember putting my foot down.

Pat Brady & Geraldine Thorpe write:

We were very saddened to learn of the death of Ray Dils. Ray was a regular attendee at Cafas meetings and was always willing to help Cafas members in trouble.

**PROFESSOR
JAMES H.
(JIMMY) SANG,
1912-2002**

Jimmy was born and educated in Aberdeen as a feisty principled Scot and, true to his roots, he never forgot it

through his life that saw fascism rise and fall, the emergence of at least the principle of egalitarian Higher Education, and the onslaught of Thatcherism upon virtually every gain in social outlook and responsibility made through the century. An energetic combatant in science and for the fundamental role of academic freedom in a democratic society, he was delighted to be able to lend a hand as sponsor and occasional adviser to CAFAS.

He learned his trade as an academic and humanitarian from the greats among the new breed of scientifically educated intellectual leaders of the 20s and 30s. As first an undergraduate and then a young faculty member at Aberdeen, he worked with Lancelot Hogben and admired the commitment of J. B. S. Haldane to thinking out the impact of science upon real life. Starting out as an ecologist and completing his Ph.D. as an "outsider" at Cambridge, he then moved over into genetics. In this he proved for himself the impact of environmental factors upon organismic development, giving real substance to a dominating concern about the thorny question of nature vs. nurture in human affairs. He knew well, as every good geneticist knows, that individuality emerges from complex interactions of unique genomic complements with unique, and un-definable environmental factors. But while the genome is fixed by heredity, the environment, including the social, political and educational elements of society, may be changed. This, for Jimmy, was the central plank of the welfare state.

Jimmy's professional life also included variety.

Following a short stay as a young faculty member in Aberdeen, he moved to Edinburgh where he developed his interests in genetics, including its application in agriculture. During the war he worked as Head of Logistics in the Ministry of Aircraft Production where he came to understand how the civil service influences governmental decision-making. He came to the University of Sussex in 1965 as a founding member of the School of Biological Sciences and was thrilled to be a part of the then new venture in education which aimed to bring an important and needed new outlook to higher education in Britain. His lively concerns will live on for some time among those who knew him.

Janet Collett

***The Guardian:* a correction**

The Guardian, 25 June, carried a report on the AUT-sponsored academic boycott of Israel which contained a reference to CAFAS that members may have found puzzling. 'The issue', the report said, 'has provoked fierce debate within the Campaign for Academic Freedom and Standards [sic] about whether the boycott is exercising academic freedom or abusing it'. I can assure members who are wondering how they missed it that absolutely no such debate, fierce or otherwise, has taken place. To the best of my knowledge, the topic of the boycott has hardly been mentioned, let alone debated. CAFAS's sole contribution to the Israel/Palestine situation is to declare support for the international petition called

Academic Freedom at Haifa, which members will find at <http://www.petitiononline.com/pappe/petition.html>
Colwyn Williamson

(For the benefit of members unable to access the website referred to above we reproduce the petition below. GT, PB)

"Academic Freedom at Haifa
To: Haifa University, Israel

We the undersigned, members of both the Israeli and international academic communities, wish to express our dismay at Haifa University's decision to subject Senior Lecturer Dr Ilan Pappé to a trial.

We have strong reservations about the attempt being made by the University Prosecutor and the Dean of Humanities Professor Yossi Ben Artzi to revoke Dr Pappé's tenure and fire him because he made harsh statements sent by e-mail about individual professors and has allegedly defamed the institution as well as asked for intervention of some professional associations.

Dr. Pappé, who holds a rank roughly equivalent to a tenured Associate Professor, criticized the institution and its procedures following the nullification of a highly controversial Master's thesis that documented the fates of 5 Arab villages in northern Israel during the 1948 war. The thesis, which was originally approved with an excellent grade, was later nullified following pressure from veterans groups. These groups threatened a libel suit because the thesis portrayed them as possibly being responsible for a massacre. Dr Pappé unequivocally asserted in his e-mail postings that the thesis was nullified not on professional or scholarly grounds, but for personal and political reasons.

While we do not take a position on either the nullification of the thesis or on Dr Pappé's assertions, we call on the University of Haifa to rescind its prosecution of Dr Ilan Pappé for the following reasons:

* First and foremost, the revocation of tenure is usually conditioned upon a legally proven criminal act or deviance from academic standards. If there was an ethical violation, it lacked the severity to justify use of academia's ultimate weapon, the revocation of tenure.

* The University of Haifa must avoid the appearance of using its institutional powers to exact revenge on an individual faculty member engaging in legitimate criticism of authority. This is the very core of academic freedom. Without such freedom, the continued existence of the university itself is in jeopardy.

* Dr. Pappé is considered a political dissident. Revoking his tenure cannot be viewed but as political persecution -- an act which completely contradicts the idea of university.

* Establishing a precedent for firing a faculty member on such weak and unusual grounds constitutes a grave danger both to higher education and the entire Israeli society. Especially in these days, when freedom in Israel is under attack, the university should be a stronghold of freedom. Therefore, out of respect and concern for academic freedom in Israel and the image of the University of Haifa, we strongly urge that Haifa University authorities reconsider this decision."

NEAR

Cafas has linked to **the network for education and academic rights.**

The information below is taken from the website <http://www.nearinternational.org/>

"The Network for Education and Academic Rights (NEAR) is a membership-based, non-governmental organisation which facilitates international collaboration between organisations active in issues of academic freedom and educational rights, and committed to promoting an understanding of, and respect for, the values

enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

NEAR was launched at the UNESCO offices in Paris on 18-19 June 2001. The UNESCO-sponsored event brought together representatives from over twenty human rights organisations, educational associations and professional bodies to establish a clearing house of information on academic freedom and education rights and facilitate joint action.

NEAR receives reports of academic rights violations from its member organisations and credible media sources which are posted as alerts on the NEAR website. Membership is open to independent, non-governmental organisations that have interests that promote academic freedom and/or human rights in education. The NEAR offices are hosted by the Council for Assisting Refugee Academics, a charity."

COMMENT

This issue again illustrates that education is in decay. This is a necessary outcome of governments' attempts to inject market criteria, reduce public spending and downgrade public services. Cafas members continue to suffer from a bureaucracy intent on ruling by climates of fear. Petty revenge, secrecy, undemocratic procedures, career destruction and 'questionable practices' in the management of public funds in education reflect the corruption and scandals in the private sector. The best way to fight this, as our contributors show, is by exposure.

A Habit of Lies

Well, here I am again, back on my soapbox about scientists preferring to lie rather than debate.

Toward the back of this issue of the CAFAS Update readers will find the

latest version of my poster, this time it even has pictures. Most people can see waves on these cells, as do the authors of the papers from which these pictures were taken, who report them as such. Even so, quite a few people who work in the field of capping and particle movement insist that there is no evidence for such things.

These experts then proceed to falsely review the field, making their own, rather feeble theories, look victorious in a debate that actually never happened. So that's how to get promotion or a FRS!

Will those members of CAFAS who can see these waves, put that poster up on a notice board in their institute. Give people a chance to make up their own minds.

John Hewitt

www.ahabitoflies.co.uk

CAFAS Case-worker guidelines

- We set out to befriend and support.
- If a colleague, friend, parent or other family member approaches CAFAS we explain that the individual concerned must approach us directly.
- We act only at the wish of the individual concerned and with his or her full knowledge.
- We protect confidentiality.
- We can offer advice about the way forward and general guidance about moves to avoid.
- We can be of use in explaining about the procedures institutions ought to follow and helping to make sure they keep to them.
- We can often obtain free legal advice informally, but we cannot offer free professional representation.

- We can accompany individuals to meetings or hearings and offer CAFAS representation.
- We can liaise by writing letters to the institution on behalf of the individual in difficulties.
- We can ask CAFAS members to write general letters of support.
- We can often arrange for media coverage.

NOTICES

Agenda 12 October

Ordinary Meeting

1. Minutes
2. Matters arising
3. Tabled Items
4. Case reports
5. AOB

There will be an officers' meeting in Room 2074 at 1.30pm

Informal lunch and chat from 12 noon in the Junior Common Room, 4th floor, extension wing (above the meeting room), Birkbeck College, Malet Street. All welcome.

CAFAS ON THE WEB

<http://www.cafas.org.uk>

The Web Site

It looks as if we have now reached agreement with Bournemouth University about charges for hosting the CAFAS web site.

Accordingly, we will be able to stay with www.cafas.org.uk as our domain name and it remains viable.

John Hewitt

Has your CAFAS subscription lapsed?

AS always, we are dependent upon your financial support.

Recent Publications

The magazine *Planet: the Welsh Internationalist*, 10 June 2002, contains an article by Mike Cohen and Colwyn Williamson mentioning Cafas. It is called "Does the University of Wales have a future?" and it is based on their Cafas pamphlet, "Why the University of Wales is under attack", February, 2002.

G.R. Evans, 2002, *Academics and the Real World*, SRHE & Open University Press

Active Risk Management in Education

Members of CAFAS may like to know that the first 'good practice procedures' produced by the HEFCE-funded project

ARMED are now up on the web for comment. ARMED stands for Active Risk Management in Education. The project is run by five university in-house lawyers.

There are procedures on student discipline, student debt, public interest disclosure and research misconduct. Universities are encouraged to use these as models. Anyone may send in comments.

Access at www.bristol.ac.uk/armed (leave space before 'armed').

Gill Evans

Committee

Chair:

John Fernandes

76 Bois Hall Rd, Addlestone
Surrey KT15 2JN

020 8 208 5000 (w) Fax: 020 8
208 5260 (w)

john.fernandes@cnwl.ac.uk

Secretary:

Dr Anthony Agathangelou

Old Froggnal Court, 23 Froggnal
Lane, London NW3 7DB

020 7 435 0440
lesleyagathangelou@hotmail.com

Membership Secretary &

Treasurer:

Dr Bob Potter

98 Addison Road, Hove, Sussex
BN3 1TR

01273 203 545

Case Coordinator:

Colwyn Williamson

The University, Swansea SA2 8PP
01792 295 895 Fax: 01792 295
895; cafes@swansea.ac.uk

Public Policy Secretary:

Dr Gillian Evans

Faculty of History, University of
Cambridge, West Rd, CB3 9EF

01223 335331(w), Fax: 01223
335968, 01223 362356 (h), 01865
311 427(h);

gre1001@cus.cam.ac.uk

Minutes Secretary:

Dorothy Regan

Update Compilers:

Geraldine Thorpe & Pat Brady

CAFAS Update, 7 Benn Street,
London E9 5SU

Tel/Fax: 020 8 986 3004;

thorpe@lgu.ac.uk

Auditor: Sara Brown

4 Conwy Court, Park Cres.,

Rottingdean, East Sussex BN2

7JB

01273 304 193

David Regan Appeal

Coordinator: Dr Janet Collett

University of Sussex, Brighton

BN1 9QN 01273 473 717;

j.i.collett@sussex.ac.uk

Health & Safety Spokesperson:

Dr David Heathcote

Dept of Applied Psychology,
Bournemouth University BH12

5BB

01202 595 283;

dheathco@bournemouth.ac.uk

Students' Complaints:

Please contact the Secretary.

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28 September 2002

Please send letters on any
issue, news items and articles
to:

CAFAS Update

7 Benn Street

London E9 5SU

e-mail: thorpe@lgu.ac.uk

Tel/Fax: 0181 986 3004

Disks & email are best. Disks
will be returned.

*CAFAS Update seeks to
provide an open forum
for opinion and
discussion.
Items do not necessarily
reflect the views of the
Council.*

CONSTITUTION

CAFAS' aims are outlined on
the membership form. The full
constitution can be obtained
from the Secretary or
www.cafas.org.uk.

CAFAS was founded in March
1994. It depends on
subscriptions and an active
membership. It meets in
January, April and October