

CAFAS Update

23 May 1994

details of next meeting overleaf

The Stanley Jenkins Case

Stanley Jenkins, a lecturer at Thanet College in Broadstairs, was called "nigger", "sambo" and "wog" in the classroom from as early as 1983. Instead of taking action to prevent this abuse, the college treated his complaints about it, an Industrial Tribunal found, with a "habitual...irrational and unwarranted...attitude of prejudice related solely to his racial identity". Many of Stanley's white colleagues displayed "general acceptance and endorsement of the attitudes towards him which were based on racial characteristics". The college was guilty of an "act of victimisation": it forced him "by threat of disciplinary proceedings, to take a cut in teaching hours". When he applied to the Tribunal, the college responded with "a manifestly unfair attempt to put pressure on him to curtail his proceedings". "We regret", the Tribunal said, "that it should have to be stated, to an educational institution, that Mr Jenkins, like any other citizen, had a perfect right to commence legal proceedings against his employers".

CAFAS wrote to Thanet asking three questions: What is happening to the college officials responsible? How is Stanley Jenkins being compensated? and What measures have been introduced to prevent other black lecturers being similarly victimised? The response from the college gives firm assurances on the last two matters. It does not say how many senior officials are offering their resignations. Views on the case should be communicated to: *The Chairman, Board of Governors, Thanet College, Broadstairs CT10 1PN.*

The Minya Laher Case

In 1988 Minya Laher, a senior lecturer in accountancy, complained to ILEA about racial discrimination in Westminster College London. The findings included an apology, compensation and a direction to the college about reforming its recruitment and promotion procedures. The Chief Executive of ILEA states that he was visited soon after this by the Principal and the chairman of the governing body, Sir Ashley Bramall, who protested strongly about the decision and described Laher as a "troublemaker".

In December 1992 Minya wrote to the CRE about the case of a black student he thought had been unfairly treated. In February 1993 he wrote to the BTEC examining board on the same matter. Westminster suspended him and charged him with "gross misconduct". Writing to BTEC, the Principal said, was an "action seriously prejudicial to the interests of the college".

The disciplinary hearings were chaired by Sir Ashley Bramall. The regulations permit the accused to be accompanied by a "friend" of his choosing, but Sir Ashley ruled that the CAFAS representative could not attend. Minya was found guilty and summarily sacked. For his appeal, CAFAS arranged for him to be represented by a barrister who is a former professor of law. The appeal was rejected. The barrister described the appeal proceedings as a "travesty".

CAFAS has written to BTEC urging an inquiry, saying that their role as monitor of standards is undermined if a lecturer can be sacked for approaching them. Their replies take the line that employment practices are nothing to do with them. CAFAS members wishing to express a view on this case should write to: *Peter Seddon-Causey, Company Secretary, Business & Technology Education Council, Central House, Upper Woburn Place, London WC1H 0HH.*

The Bill Mallinson Case

Bill Mallinson was a senior lecturer in the Communication and Media department at Bournemouth University. In 1990 he exposed the misuse by his department of ERASMUS funds, which Bournemouth was therefore obliged to repay. But he was removed from the leadership of an MA course and pressured into resigning his post. In 1991 Bill signed a severance agreement which included a gagging clause. CAFAS, together with FREEDOM TO CARE, is campaigning for an independent inquiry into his case. On April 14 representatives of the two organisations, plus Don Foster MP, presented a petition calling for such an inquiry to the Secretary of State for Education. As yet there has been no response. Views on the case should be addressed to: *Rt Hon John Patten MP, Secretary of State for Education, House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA.*

The Janem Jones Case

In September 1992, Mrs Jones, a lecturer at University College Aberystwyth for eleven years, was found guilty of plagiarising the work of a postgraduate. Mrs Jones has always insisted that she is entirely innocent of the charge. A CAFAS report (*The Other Plagiarism Case* by Michael Cohen and Colwyn Williamson) is severely critical of the procedures followed and casts grave doubt on the finding against Mrs Jones. Copies are available at £2.00 including p & p. Cheques should be made payable to CAFAS.

Denied any right of appeal in the University of Wales, Mrs Jones has petitioned the Queen as Visitor to re-examine the case. Her MP has called for a visitatorial inquiry without further delay. CAFAS members wishing to add their voices should write to: *The Rt Hon Tony Newton MP, Lord President of the Council, House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA.*

Code of Practice on Academic Freedom

A model code would be useful in several ways. It would help to clarify our own objectives, and it would articulate both for our members and for the outside world where we stand on a number of crucial issues. It could be used to open a dialogue with whatever more progressive elements there are among the Vice-Chancellors and Principals. And demanding its adoption in their own institutions would provide local AUT and NATFHE branches with a focal point for activity on the academic freedom front. An experienced CAFAS member is preparing a draft which will be vetted by our legal advisers and brought to a meeting for approval as soon as possible.

Patrons

CAFAS is bringing together a body of eminent academic patrons willing to associate their names with our objectives and to assist in specific cases of victimisation. Those who have so far agreed are Professors John Griffith (LSE), Michael Dummett (Oxford), John Westergaard (Sheffield), Peter Geach (Leeds), Elizabeth Anscombe (Cambridge), Noam Chomsky (MIT), John Saville (Hull), David McLellan (Kent), Geoffrey Alderman (London), Steven Rose (Open), David Howell (Manchester), Richard Hyman (Warwick), Hilary Rose (Bradford), Terry Eagleton (Oxford), Stan Smith (Dundee), and Michèle Barrett (London).

Any suggestions for other potential patrons, particularly if they are in the sciences, would be welcome. Members are asked not to make any direct approaches to our patrons about individual cases.

The Davies Report

The report of the University of Wales Visitor on the Swansea affair (the Davies Report) is an important and quotable document for all advocates of academic freedom. CAFAS has overcome government objections to its publication and arranged for a commercial publisher to bring it out in time for the start of the next academic year. AUT, NATFHE and AUCL have agreed in advance to purchase between them several hundred copies.

AUT & NATFHE National Conferences

At the end of May, CAFAS is holding fringe meetings at the AUT conference in Weston-super-Mare and the NATFHE conference in Southport.

Membership Fees & Affiliation

If you haven't already done so, please pay your membership fees. And try to get your local AUT or NATFHE to affiliate to CAFAS. A membership/affiliation form is enclosed.

Next Meeting:

Saturday 4 June 1.00 pm
Room 3A
University of London Union
Malet Street, London WC1
Nearest tube: Goodge Street
