

CAFAS Update

15 September 1994

Next Meeting:

Saturday 24th September 1:00pm
Room MB 307
Birkbeck College,
Malet Street, London WC1
Nearest Tube: Goodge Street

The Aberystwyth Case

Victory for *CAFAS* in the Aberystwyth Case. Following publication of a *CAFAS* report on the matter, the Privy Council has announced an inquiry into the circumstances surrounding Aberystwyth's finding that Mrs Janem Jones, a lecturer in education, had plagiarised the work of one of her students. The terms of the inquiry are exactly as *CAFAS* requested. Sir Tasker Watkins VC, a former Lord Justice of Appeal, has been appointed to look into the way that the college and the University of Wales handled the charge against Mrs Jones; to consider whether a fresh investigation is needed; and to make recommendations about the form such an investigation should take and who should conduct it.

Copies of our report, *The Other Plagiarism Case: Mrs Jones and the University of Wales*, can be obtained by writing to *CAFAS* at Rooms 18, 19 and 20, Maintenance Department, University College of Swansea, Swansea SA2 8PP

The Bournemouth Case

CAFAS assisted in the preparation of an excellent half-hour programme by Meridian TV on the case of Dr Bill Mallinson, who was forced out of the university after exposing the misuse of ERASMUS funds. We continue to press for an inquiry into the case. *CAFAS* members are urged to keep up the pressure by writing to Bournemouth's acting Vice-Chancellor pointing out that the university's reputation will continue to suffer unless some willingness is shown to remedy this injustice. Letters should be addressed to:

Mr Dudley Gibson,
Bournemouth University, Talbot Campus,
Fern Barrow, Poole,
Dorset BH12 5BB

The Westminster College Case

There has been both some progress and a set back in the case of Minya Laher, who was sacked by Westminster

College London after complaining to BTEC about what he alleged was racial discrimination and the college's generally sloppy attitude towards cheating by students. The application for a judicial review prepared by *CAFAS* lawyers has been rejected on the ground that his is a case of wrongful dismissal which should be considered elsewhere. The Employment Appeal Tribunal, however, has ruled that the industrial tribunal which dismissed his racial discrimination complaint showed bias and acted irregularly. Mr Justice Morrison singled out the fact that the chair of the tribunal had questioned whether Minya (who has complete command of the language) could speak English properly. *CAFAS* members should continue to press BTEC for an inquiry into Minya Laher's dismissal.

The address to write to is:
Business & Technology Education Council,
Central House, Upper Woburn Place,
London WC1H 0HH

Appraisals and promotion

The following letter was published last term in the Oxford magazine:

May I make a seditious suggestion? We are almost without exception fed up (to put it no more strongly) with being assessed and quantified by the crude criteria of a management system whose intellectual poverty and inappropriateness are obvious. We seem collectively helpless to resist. How would it be if each of us simply declined to have anything more to do with appraisal, which is the point at which everyone is personally intruded upon, on the grounds that, as scholars of integrity, it is impossible for us to go along with it? The teachers forced the Government at least to adjust a National Curriculum which was creating professional overload and to modify the testing system. I see no reason why we should not succeed in having the really rather dangerous requirement of appraisal lifted. And at least such quiet keeping of our self-respect is something each of us can individually do in an alarming scene.

Gill R. Evans, Faculty of History, University of Cambridge.

CAFAS members who belong to the AUT might perhaps press at local branch level for a boycott.

New CAFAS Report

CAFAS is currently publishing a pamphlet on university promotion procedures. Gill R Evans, a historian at Cambridge, describes the research for the report as follows:

The issue of appraisal is becoming connected with that of promotions. Dr Evans writes of a comparative study begun partly in this connection: 'I approached about two dozen universities through their Vice-Chancellor's offices. I was sent material for others informally by friends and colleagues. This latter route was explored in order to see what those on the 'receiving end' knew about the way their universities did things. I have not attempted a detailed comparison at every point. I have confined myself mainly to the procedures for promotions to Senior Lecturer, Reader and Professor. But the main points of practice over criteria and procedure which emerge from this limited exercise say a good deal about the underlying assumptions of the system.

The universities approached almost all immediately sent their materials with complete openness and it seems likely that universities can be encouraged to work together on promotions procedures if they are actively urged to do so now.

Within the structures of promotions procedures a new set of problems is visibly being created by the Government's imposition of an appraisal process on the universities. This is a dangerously undefined area in terms of the powers of appraisers and whether they stand in a 'peer' or a 'hierarchical' relationship to the appraisee. If an appraisal record is used where the appraiser is a relatively junior member of staff it will presumably carry less weight in a promotions exercise than where the appraiser is more senior. But the important paradox here is that while universities have done their best to keep appraisal records safely under lock and key it can now be expected that candidates for promotion will be asked to allow their appraisal records to be taken into account. To refuse is to be open to the suspicion that there is something to hide. Worrying here is the text of the joint agreement between CVCP and the AUT on promotion procedures quoted by Durham: 'The design and conduct of advancement, promotion and appeal procedures...should be linked with the appraisal and staff development process'. Appraisal statements are in some places included routinely, as they are at Nottingham. 'It is open...for an individual to agree with his/her appraiser a submission for promotion based on past appraisal reports' at Aberdeen. At Sussex it is acknowledged that 'the career development and appraisal system' is related to the promotions process 'in several ways'. There 'the procedure for making appraisal records available to promotion committees is for the appraiser and [the candidate] to produce an agreed summary of them.

This is an example of the unforeseen ways in which recent changes can alter the ground-rules and a reason to be extremely vigilant and vocal where the problems begin to be perceived.'

Copies of: *Prospects of promotion. A comparison of promotions processes for academic staff in British Universities: Towards a common code of practice* may be obtained for £1.50 from CAFAS:
39 College Street,
Grimsby DN34 4TN

We badly need a similar pamphlet on promotions procedures in further education. Any volunteers?

Pressures on marking

A number of CAFAS members have expressed concern about the pressure on them, in the further education sector, to pass students who ought to fail and, in the higher education sector, to alter marks in the borderline region between degree classifications. If you feel that this is an issue for you, write to CAFAS with your experiences. When required, confidentiality is guaranteed. Anyone prepared to conduct research in this area with a view to publishing a CAFAS report on it should contact us urgently.

Letters

Turkish Academic jailed for documenting Kurdish repression.

On December 15 1993 the State Security Prosecutor in Istanbul secured the conviction of a prominent Turkish academic and teacher, Dr Fikret Baskaya of the Bolu School of Economics and Administration near Ankara. His crime, under Clause 8/2 of the Law Against Terrorism, consisted of a chapter in his recently published book "The Paradigm Bankrupt" an analysis of the historical development of the Republic and its 'Kemalist' principles. The chapter traced the position of the Kurdish population in Turkey and, although it concluded in the 1960's was condemned by the authorities to be "terrorism by word". After a protracted delay, Dr Baskaya began his 20 month sentence shortly before Easter.

Set against a background of military repression in the Kurdish areas of eastern Turkey and persecution and violence toward critics of the government, this is by no means an isolated example. Arrest and censorship are increasing as the Ciller administration falters in its handling of civil and economic problems. Shortly after Dr Baskaya entered prison, the newspaper Ozgur Gundem a paper sympathetic to the Kurdish struggle was closed down after months of attempted censorship that included murder and violence towards its staff and supporters. Clearly, his sentence is also considerably less severe than is commonly the case. However, Dr Baskaya is the first academic to be so treated under the Law Against Terrorism, and this indicates the extent to which the authorities intends to silence the dissident voice.

As friends of Dr Baskaya in Britain, we are anxious to ensure that the regime is aware of the condemnation of the academic community. It is

unlikely that any action on our part will secure his release but does provide a focus for attention both within and outside Turkey.

A letter to the Prime Minister of Turkey signed by 29 French university academics has met with attention in the Turkish press where there has been interest in the case of Dr Baskaya since his sentence was announced.

As a result, we are asking academics in the UK to demonstrate their support and condemnation in the same way. Please contact me to enable a similar letter to be sent from the UK and for further information.

*Josh Brown,
University of Portsmouth,
South Downs College,
College Road,
Havant,
Hants PO7 8AA*

**Letters, news items and short articles for CAFAS
Update should be addressed to**

39 College Street, Grimsby DN34 4TN

Forthcoming events

Council for Academic Autonomy invite you to a Seminar on

**Academic Democracy in the Universities:
Collegiality and Hierarchy in a managerial culture.**

London School of Economics - Friday 21 October 1994
2-5pm in the Vera Anstey Room.

Speakers:

Professor Geoffrey Alderman (head of Academic Development and Quality Assurance, University of Middlesex)

Professor John Griffith (Emeritus professor of Public Law, LSE)

Dr Peter Knight (Vice-Chancellor, University of Central England in Birmingham)

Professor John Rear (Pro-Vice-Chancellor, University of Northumbria at Newcastle)

To reserve a seat please contact -

*Professor Anthony D Smith,
Room A452, LSE,*

*Houghton St.,
London WC2A 2AE*

Further information 071-955-7305 or 0225-835100

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), Michèle Barrett (London), J F Lamb (St Andrews), Jennifer Birkett (Birmingham), G A Cohen (Oxford), Ray Dils (Reading), J B Deregowski (Aberdeen), T J Reed (Oxford), Chris Freeman (Sussex) and Phil Scraton (Edge Hill). 24

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.

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. Please complete the form below.

Send to CAFAS Membership Secretaries, 7 Benn Street, London E9 5SU

Name.....Address.....

.....Post Code.....Date.....
I/we wish to join/affiliate to CAFAS and enclose a cheque for.....

(£10 p.a. for individual membership, £5 p.a. for students and unwaged, £25 p.a. for trade union affiliation)

Bankers Order

To (name & address of your bank).....

Your Bank Sort Code.....Your Account Number.....

Please pay CAFAS the sum ofevery year starting on (date).....