

CAFAS Update No 42

15 April 2004

Council for Academic Freedom & Academic Standards

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

AGM and Next Meeting:

Saturday 24 April 2004 1.30-4.30pm

Room.

Birkbeck College

Malet Street

London WC1

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

THREAT OF CLOSURES AT SWANSEA

Update readers may have seen reports on the threatened closure of departments at Swansea University in the *Times Higher Education Supplement* and elsewhere.

The Visitor, Her Majesty the Queen, has asked Colwyn Williamson and Michael Cohen, both in the Department of Philosophy at Swansea, to draw together under the umbrella of one Petition all the different complaints about Swansea arriving at the Visitor's Office.

It will be 'an enormous document' under the title *The Mission Betrayed*. Its themes - the commercialisation of HE, the corruption, the contempt for all the regulations - are ones that have application throughout the sector.

The essence of the Petition is outlined in the resolution below. We urge members of the different unions to take it to their branches.

It will be proposed at the meeting on the 24th that Cafas publish the document as a report.

RESOLUTION:

We note:

That the management of Swansea University are seeking the closure of five major subject areas (Anthropology, Chemistry, Development Studies, Philosophy, and Sociology)

That they refused to consult with the recognised trade union, the AUT, under the terms of their Procedure Agreement

That there was no prior consultation with the staff and students in

any of the departments designated for closure

That they announced the closures in the media before the governing body had discussed or approved them

That they wrote to all the students who had already been offered places in these departments withdrawing the offer

That they are proceeding with the closures in contempt of an inquiry being conducted on behalf of the Visitor to Swansea, Her Majesty the Queen

That the Swansea branches of the AUT, AMICUS and UNISON, along with the Students Union, have called for the resignation of the Vice-Chancellor and the members of the university's governing body, the Council

We resolve accordingly

To offer our support and solidarity in the campaign to prevent the closures

To urge other branches of NATFHE and the AUT to do the same

To publicise the issue at every opportunity

To call on the national executives of NATFHE and the AUT to mobilise a national campaign against the closures in Swansea.

Has your CAFAS subscription lapsed?

As always, we are dependent upon your financial support. Unfortunately, a number of members have fallen into arrears.

Your address label shows the date we last received any money from you. A red asterisk tells you that your subscription urgently requires renewal; two red asterisks indicate your subscription has seriously lapsed and needs your urgent attention.

If you have any query/ies, please get in touch! [Subscriptions are £10.00 per annum for waged, £5.00 for unwaged individuals; £25.00 for T.U affiliation.

**NB Please send correspondence to
Dr Eva Link
17 Highcliffe, Clivesdon
Court, London W13 8DP
rekgemL1982@yahoo.co.uk**

Royal Society Report

Regular readers may be interested to know that I received no replies from the Royal Society concerning my report "The Quality of Lies." Still, I didn't really expect one - its primary purpose was to drop the question of scientific lying in among the Royal Society and I know now not to expect rational dialogue about such matters. If anything happens, I shall report it.

The report still served its secondary purpose of summarizing my recent work on generalizing evolutionary theory and on the evolution of sexuality and humour before some senior academics. My current aim is to make the studies of sexuality known through the internet (the web site is below). Since sexuality has a wide potential audience, I can hope it will become better known.

Besides the internet site, I have also submitted a paper, to an academic journal, on the origins and function of humour - I haven't yet had a decision on publication but they have had it for more than four months now. Watch this space.

John Hewitt
sexandphilosophy.co.uk
ahabitoflies.co.uk

Committee

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NOTICES

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

24 April 2004 at 1.30pm

1. Reports.
2. Elections.

**Nominations are called for
all positions on the
Committee.**

**Please send them to
John Fernandes, Chair
76 Bois Hall Rd,
Addlestone
Surrey KT15 2JN
john.fernandes@cnwl.ac.uk**

Ordinary Meeting

2.00pm

Agenda

1. Minutes
2. Matters arising
3. Swansea Report
6. Case reports
7. AOB

**There will be an officers'
meeting in Room at 1.00
pm**

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

**N.B. Please ask at the
reception desk, main
entrance, for the room
number. Apologies for
any inconvenience.**

**Next Update
July/September 2004**

Please send letters, news items and
articles to:

CAFAS Update
7 Benn Street

London E9 5SU

e-mail: g.thorpe@londonmet.ac.uk

Tel/Fax: 0181 986 3004

Disks & email are best. Disks
will be returned.

NEAR

Cafas has linked to the
Network for Education and
Academic Rights (NEAR).
Information is on the website
<http://www.nearinternational.org/>

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 February
1994. It depends on subscriptions
and an active membership. It
meets in January, April and
October.

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

CAFAS Council for Academic Freedom and Academic Standards

PATRONS: Professors Geoffrey Alderman (Middlesex), Michelle Barrett (City), David Beetham, Leeds, Jennifer Birkett (Birmingham), Noam Chomsky (MIT, USA), G A Cohen (Oxford), J B Deregowski (Aberdeen), Michael Dummett (Oxford), Terry Eagleton (Oxford), Chris Freeman (Sussex), John Griffith (LSE), Reuben Hasson (York, Canada), David Howell (Manchester), Richard Hyman (LSE), J F Lamb (St Andrews), David McLellan (Kent), T J Reed (Oxford), Hilary Rose (Bradford), Steven Rose (Open), John Saville (Hull), Phil Scraton (Queens, Belfast), Stan Smith (Dundee), John Westergaard (Sheffield)

CAFAS welcomes widened access to further and higher education. But expansion without a corresponding increase in funding and the attempt to run education on commercial principles have led to standards being undermined and to staff who protest being victimised. Many are too demoralised, or too pressured by inadequate resources, to challenge the decline; others are fearful of redundancies or intimidated by the threat of victimisation.

CAFAS faces the fact that the British educational system is decaying. The Council will not collaborate with the pretence that this is not happening nor will it compromise on the right to say so. The principle of academic freedom enshrined in the Education Reform Act 1988 - that "academic staff have freedom within the law to question and test received wisdom and to put forward new ideas and controversial or unpopular opinions without placing themselves in jeopardy of losing their jobs" - is increasingly under attack, particularly when staff expose instances of corruption and shoddy standards.

- CAFAS**
- * campaigns against the decline in standards
 - * defends individuals against victimisation
 - * gives moral support and legal advice
 - * investigates malpractice and publishes findings
 - * seeks to develop a support network with unions and other organisations

Everyone who shares these objectives should join and persuade their local union branch or association to affiliate. Affiliations from students are welcome. For further information, contact the Secretary: Dr John Hewitt, 33 Hillyfields, Dunstable, Beds LU6 3NS; john.hewitt22@virgin.net

CAFAS website: www.cafas.org.uk

Please photocopy this application for membership and distribute it among your colleagues. Cheques payable to CAFAS.

Send to Dr Eva Link, 17 Highcliffe, Clivesdon Court, London W13 8DP

Name.....Address.....
.....Post Code.....Date.....
Telephone..... e-mail.....Specialism.....
I/we wish to join/affiliate to CAFAS and enclose a cheque for..... I wish to be active
(£10 p.a for individual membership, £5 p.a for students and unwaged, £25 p.a for trade union affil.)

Bankers Order please send to your bank

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

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

Please pay CAFAS the sum of.....every year from (date).....Signature.....

For Bank Information Account: CAFAS Sort Code: 30-95-46 Account No: 0824135
Lloyds Bank plc, Swansea Branch, PO Box 66, Swansea SA1 3AP