

CAFAS Update

8th March 1995

Next Meeting:

Saturday 18th March 2 - 4:30pm
Room 106,
Gordon House,
Gordon Street,
London WC1
Nearest Tube: Euston Square

CAFAS AGM

The meeting on March 18th will be the first *CAFAS* AGM. All members are invited to attend and we look forward to meeting you there. If you are prepared to take an active role in *CAFAS* please contact Colwyn Williamson, or the membership secretaries as we would be delighted to increase the number of active members.

CAFAS Meeting of 26th January 1995

The following was discussed:

- Further patrons, and these may include politicians.
- Nolan Committee have advised that *CAFAS* might be called in phase 2.
- The current published cases and others not yet in the public domain.
- A Handbook to be produced to help academics with *CAFAS* problems, historical case information to be collected that would also aid in publicising the suffering and victimisation that academics face in their protection of standards.
- The need to advertise the services that can be offered to academics in trouble.
- How *CAFAS* might be structured, whether a group of individuals that have experienced and are prepared to fight the dysfunctional aspects of bureaucracy can operate within a traditional bureaucratic structure, or if any alternatives are workable and/or effective.

CAFAS Handbook

CAFAS is hoping to produce a handbook outlining patterns of institutional behaviour in cases where individuals have found themselves disciplined or dismissed for drawing attention to problems about academic standards or academic freedom. The intention is to provide a manual of self-help, and also to point up areas where the law offers inadequate protection, with a view to eventual reform. If anyone has a story or wishes to make points to be included, please write in confidence to:

Dr. G.R.Evans,
Faculty of History,
West Road,
Cambridge CB3 9EF

Act now on De Montford Case

CAFAS is not a heavily funded bureaucracy, but a do-it-yourself campaigning organisation. Members are asked to spend a few minutes every so often writing a letter of protest about one of the numerous cases of victimisation brought to our attention.

One such case is that of Robert Bowman a lecturer at De Montford. He was at loggerheads with his management on quite another matter when, returning after a weeks illness, he found a letter from the Vice-Chancellor, Kenneth Barker summarily suspending him on grounds of ill health. Mr Bowman has an absenteeism record of 20 days in 14 years service. Independent health assessment specialists state that he is in first rate medical condition.

CAFAS has asked the Vice-Chancellor whether he took the trouble to consult ant medical opinion prior to suspending Mr Bowman. The Vice-Chancellor has repeatedly waxed indignant about being asked the question but has repeatedly refused to answer it. Letters of protest should be written as a matter of urgency to:

The Vice-Chancellor,
De Montford University,
The Gateway
Leicester LE1 9BH

The Case of Iris Brooksbank

After 11 years as Head of the Wellesbourne Adult Education Centre, run by the Buckinghamshire County Council, Iris Brooksbank, also NATFHE Branch Secretary, was dismissed in December 1994 for allegedly bringing the BCC into "disrepute".

She was accused of being party to the production and distribution of an unsigned leaflet, the purpose of which was to give information to the public. The leaflet explained the unprecedented delay of a prospectus which had been put "on hold" by a Council Officer while he vetted it. The result of the vetting was the removal of concessionary fees for OAPs and Under 18s.

The leaflet pointed out that the removal of concessionary fees effectively debarred many prospective students from enrolling and urged concerned people to write to the press. It was produced by a panel of councillors, community activists and student representatives.

The Council Officers initiated disciplinary proceedings before she was given opportunity to explain what had happened or given counselling.

Mrs Brooksbank was suspended on full pay pending an investigation in July 1994. She was banned from all Council premises, including public libraries, and forbidden to have contact with any member of Council staff other than the Education Officer who had initiated the disciplinary action. She was thus denied her basic rights.

There was at this time no written disciplinary procedure in place for adult education staff in Bucks although the Council had been urged by NATFHE to rectify this following the suspension in 1993 of another Head of an Adult Education Centre. Between the time that disciplinary action was initiated and the time of Mrs Brooksbank's dismissal, the Council wrote a disciplinary procedure which enabled them to change retrospectively the original charge to gross misconduct so they could dismiss her. Contrary to her contract, which stipulated that any disciplinary procedure would have to be agreed with NATFHE, the union was not involved in negotiations.

The Council Officers have gagged the elected councillors by ordering them not to reply to concerned constituents, especially students, and to pass all correspondence to them for reply as the matter was now "sub judice". The whole affair has been "officer driven" and it is clear that these officers have exceeded their powers and have denied Mrs Brooksbank natural justice.

A further breach of procedure is in the three month delay of the appeal which is now scheduled for five days on 10,13,22,23,29 March, at County Hall, Aylesbury, Bucks HP20 1UZ.

Members are urged to write to:

Stephen Sharp, Chief Education Officer, Bucks County Council, County Hall, Aylesbury, Bucks HP20 1UZ	The Editor, Bucks Free Press, Gomm Road, High Wycombe, Bucks.
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What is Education for?

The enclosed pamphlet is advertising a conference to be held at Bradford University on 22nd & 23rd April. This is hosted by students who are questioning their role in

the academic process. They have attracted academics to discuss current educational issues, including Michael Cohen & Colwyn Williamson from *CAFAS* who will be discussing the issue of academic standards. They are very interested in any examples of alternative educational and learning experiments outside the mainstream University systems. If you have been involved in such a process could you contact:

Kathy Symonds,
68, Sowerby Green,
Sowerby,
W. Yorks HX6 1JH
0422-839180

Council for Academic Autonomy

The Annual General Meeting will be held on Friday March 17th at 1.30pm in the Sociology Common Room (Room A375, Old Building), LSE, Houghton Street, London WC2A 2AE.

Agenda

- Approval of accounts for 1992/3 & 1993/4.
- Adoption of revised set of Rules.
- Election of Officers.
- Report to Members for 1994 (already circulated), and further developments.
- Chairman's address: 'Current Threats to Academic Autonomy'.
- Suggestions for further activity.

Please make every effort to attend. We believe that academic autonomy, whether of the individual or of the institution is now being steadily eroded, and that unless some stand is made the freedoms of thought, enquiry and teaching which characterise a university are at risk.

New *CAFAS* Report

CAFAS has now published its fourth report, a pamphlet by John Griffith entitled **Research assessment: as strange a maze as e'r men trod**. John Griffith is emeritus professor of public law at the London School of Economics. It is the contention of the pamphlet that the current research assessment exercise fails to provide a process that is objective and seen to be fair.

Copies can be obtained at a cost of £1.50, either at the *CAFAS* AGM or from

CAFAS
University of Swansea
Swansea SA2 8PP

Note: Reports 1 - 3 and Sir Michael Davies Report are also available at the meeting or from the above address.

Prospects for Promotion

Oxford has put forward radical proposals for reform of its promotions procedures. These plans incorporate a number of the points made in the *CAFAS* report No 3.

Letters, news items and short articles for *CAFAS Update* would be most welcome and should be addressed to:

Sara Brown
39 College Street,
Grimsby DN34 4TN
01472-340018

BBC2 Horizon - 13th March 1995

There will be a television programme on fraud and whistleblowing in Science on March 13th 1995:

'Horizon' on BBC2 at 8pm. Freedom to Care will feature in this programme.

Membership Fees

CAFAS has celebrated its first anniversary, and with it comes the need to renew subscriptions. It would be helpful if you could renew by Bankers Order. This can be done by completing the Bankers Order form below and sending it to the membership secretaries. If you use a telephone banking service you can phone and they will arrange it for you. We rely on volunteers to administer the membership and collection of fees and would appreciate it if you could aid us in reducing the amount of paperwork. It allows us to spend more time helping academics in need, which we see as our primary function. Thank you in advance for your co-operation.

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).

Membership Fees & Affiliation

Photocopy this application for membership and distribute it among your colleagues. If you haven't yet joined yourself, could you pay your membership fees. 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.....

Signature.....

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

For Bank Information

Account: *CAFAS*
Lloyds Bank plc, Swansea Branch, PO Box 66, Swansea SA1 3AP

Sort Code 30-95-46

Account no: 1868136