

Meeting of CAFAS, 1.00 pm, Saturday 23 April 1994 at the Quaker International Centre, London

1 It was agreed that the minutes of the meeting of Saturday March 12 should contain a reference to a discussion of the need to clarify the aims and objectives of the organisation. The minutes of this meeting were then approved.

2 It was agreed to add the proposal to call for an Ombudsman for higher education to the agenda.

3 Chair's report. CAFAS had been active in several cases and there had been good press coverage. The main immediate aim was to learn how to mobilise support for people in trouble. Every member should allow fifteen minutes each week for writing letters to guilty institutions or to the press.

4 It was agreed that the Chair continue to approach potential patrons and that a newsletter be circulated containing a request for suggestions on this.

5 There was discussion of the relations between CAFAS and the unions. It was agreed that local trade union and student union branches be invited to affiliate.

6 David Packham reported that the 'new' universities would not have a Visitor and that this left them with no independent channel of appeal. Jurisdiction of the Visitor in the older universities had also been eroded.

7 Sue Hungerford reported on progress with the draft constitution. George Rehin had written about the question of charitable status and whether this would conflict with political activity. There was discussion of this. It was agreed that Sue Hungerford, Amir Majid and Irene Bruegel would draft a constitution in consultation with the committee.

8 Harold Hillman reported on the establishment of working links with other organisations. It was agreed that he write to union branches and report back on other categories of organisation.

9 It was agreed that the Chairs of CAFAS and Freedom to Care consult on the drafting of the demand for an Ombudsman.

10 Geraldine Thorpe and Pat Brady agreed to act as membership secretaries.

11 There was discussion of a draft CAFAS petition.

12 The meeting closed at 4.00 pm.

Signed.....(Chair)

Date.....

GAFAS Questionnaire

It may be useful to find out if there are any common themes to the problems encountered by members, hence this first and rather hasty shot at a questionnaire (perhaps to be improved in a later version ?)

Please place in the box only where it applies
Insert your comments at as required
circle the most appropriate phrase

I will summarise the results for circulation.
John M. Pratt
3.6.94
Thankyou.

A. Origin and Evolution of the problem; General features

What pattern applies to you ?

1. You initiated the process by attempting either (a) to raise some specific case of unacceptable conduct involving self or others,

or (b) to challenge more general policy decisions (for examples see under B.1.a/b)

on the problem arose more indirectly from

(c) your trade activities,

(d) intellectual differences

or something different

2. Your immediate superior(s) did not want to know/act

3. You persisted in trying to get your concerns addressed (perhaps at a higher level)

4. They (superiors, admin.,) resorted to victimisation (disinformation, enforced resignation, etc)

B. Origin and evolution of the problem; further details

If any of A 1-4 apply, then following up 1a, 1b, 2 and 4:

1a. Did the matter under (1a) concern (circle 1 or more):

- financial irregularities; academic irregularities -
- in marking, award of degrees, plagiarism, cooking results;
- sexual harassment; racial discrimination;
- discrimination in allocation of duties and resources;
- bias in promotion, appointments;
- petty vindictiveness; workplace bullying
- other

1b. Did the policy in (1b) concern (circle 1 or more):

- closure of course or Dept; recruitment, appointments;
- retirement; contracts;
- other

2 a. Your position at the time (e.g. lecturer, HOD)

b. With whom (and up to what level) did you raise the matters under A 1-3 ?

c. You superiors did not wish to act or even to hear because of (circle 1 or more):

- fear of financial consequences
- conflict with some other (? hidden) agenda
- fear of antagonising an individual whose support was required for some other purpose
- perhaps personally involved /guilty
- other

AND did at least one of your superiors listen and discuss but agree to differ

4 a. Was there an attempt to discredit you ?

How ?

b. Did they try to force you to resign ?

How ?

c. What other forms of victimisation ?

C. Attitude of colleagues, unions, etc.

1. Did most of your colleagues show the degree of frankness and willingness to support you openly which you had expected ?

2. If not, was this due to:

fear of reprisals (over promotion, resources, etc)

reluctance to get involved, apathy, disinterest or what ?

3. Did you receive the help you expected from the AUP/NATPHE/AUCL (circle relevant union) and/ or other local body (.....)

D. How to help. In retrospect, would your position have been strengthened by:

1. Recording more events, statements, opinions in writing ?

2. Knowing more about your legal position ?

3. Voicing your concerns more openly (however unpleasant) before they started openly to discredit you ?

4. Contacting your union earlier ?

5. How else ?