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**Comment**



**Reports**

**Cedric Pugh, Obituary**

***Cedric Pugh - Courageous Campaigner and professor of international urban economic development and disability rights activist, born April 6 1938; died May 4 2001***

Probably the most high-profile campaigner for disability rights in higher education in recent years, Cedric Pugh, who has died suddenly aged 63, was a courageous advocate of equal opportunities and academic freedom.

Based at Sheffield Hallam University, where he was professor of international urban economic development, Cedric was a prolific writer and researcher. The author of numerous books, monographs, international journal articles and commissioned reports, his academic work sought to advance welfare rights in developing countries and to influence policies for

the masses in poverty. As an international social and urban economist he was engaged with projects in all corners of the globe from South Africa to Canada, Hungary to Hong Kong, and he played a key role in the International Coalition of Urbanisation and Sustainability.

Within the disability rights movement, Cedric first came to prominence in 1998 when he was accused by senior managers at Sheffield Hallam of being partial and biased in his submission to the House of Commons Education and Employment Committee, which was reviewing opportunities for disabled people. It was not a view shared by the Education and Employment Committee, which published Cedric's submission the following year.

Sheffield Hallam's heavy-handed attempts to censure Cedric did not deter him. On the contrary, it convinced him of the need to adopt a more open and challenging strategy in the public domain. In 1999 Cedric spearheaded the formation of a national group of disabled academics. The aim of the group was to highlight the deplorable record of higher education on equal opportunities æ just how deplorable this record is can be seen from the recent figures published by Hesa (Higher Education Statistics Agency) which show that a mere 0.8 per cent of academics are disabled compared to a figure of over 16 per cent for the workforce as a whole æ and to press for root and branch reform. The group took their campaign to the Department for Education and Employment, and the Disability Task Force, where it was well received. Following coverage of the campaign in *The Times Higher Education Supplement*, Sheffield Hallam's director of human resources told Cedric that he risked disciplinary action for bringing the university into disrepute by speaking out about discrimination.

Sheffield Hallam's campaign to silence Cedric backfired. Cedric would not be muzzled. And he said so publicly too. First in a paper, "Suppression, Discrimination and Some Disabled Scholars in Higher Education in Britain", which he gave at a National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education conference in November 1999, and then in an article, *Why We Won't be Silent About Discrimination*, published in *The Lecturer* in February 2000.

Cedric brought the same armoury of intellectual talents to his work as a disability rights activist as he did to his academic work. He read widely in the burgeoning field of disability studies. He understood and used the power of irony to puncture the puffed-up promises of mission statements and to show how deeply embedded discrimination is in the bureaucratic corporatism of the higher education sector. He had a firm grasp of the attitudes, policies and practices within higher education which cause disadvantage. He was also under no illusion that in the absence of an ethically based and principled basis for equal opportunities, suppression would continue to be the preferred approach to those who complained about overt or covert discrimination.

It was Cedric's underlying commitment to an ethical approach to eliminating discrimination in higher education that made him reluctant to take legal action against Sheffield Hallam in his own long-running dispute over allegations of disability discrimination. It was only in the spring of 2000, when Sheffield Hallam failed to honour an agreement to refer his long-standing grievances on salary and health issues, failures in reasonable adjustments, and discrimination in appointments and promotions to ACAS for a solution that Cedric finally lodged a complaint of disability discrimination at the Sheffield employment tribunal. A further complaint of victimisation was added when Sheffield Hallam decided to exclude Cedric's work from the 2001 Research Assessment Exercise æ a decision that was subsequently rescinded following publicity in *The THES* and the intervention of officials from the DfEE.

In the weeks since Cedric's death, I have shed many tears. Some of those tears stemmed from a deep sense of personal loss. Like Cedric, I too have trod the litigation treadmill these past two years. It is impossible to take the route of legal redress against disability discrimination without in some way being scarred by its adversarial nature and mercenary logic. But we journeyed together æ friends and fellow travellers. And there were the tears that welled up from the sense of the public loss of a man who had given so much to further the cause of equal opportunities and academic freedom. His influence was profound. And it abides. As Bert Massie, Chairman of the Disability Rights Commission, said on hearing the sad news of Cedric's death, "he has ignited a torch which will guide us all in the future."

On his good days as well as bad days, Cedric kept alive the vision of a world free from

oppression. A world in which everyone could flourish irrespective of their colour or ethnic origin, class or creed, sex or disability. And there is no greater vision than that.

Claire Hobbs



## Articles

# Corruption of Scientific Integrity

### Meeting Report Wednesday 2nd. of May 2001 at the Royal Academy

The four main speakers were Prof. John Ziman, Prof. Nancy Olivieri, Sir David Weatherall and Prof. George Monbiot. Also present, as chairpersons, Prof. Fergus Millar and Prof. Ray Dils, as panel members, Dr. Michael W. Fox and Dr. David Secher and, as the organisational force behind it all, our own Gillian Evans.

I've never really been a meeting man myself. Many colleagues have enjoyed jetting off wherever but I always found such things a strain and was glad to get back to test tubes and books and computers. However, the CAFAS meeting, held on Wednesday 2nd. of May at the Royal Academy, was different. It came so close to directly addressing my own concerns that, inevitably, I would attend it. This report is partly factual and partly a report of opinion from the meeting but it is also interspersed with my own take on the issues raised. In other words, it summarises the understandings and feelings with which I left.

Attendance was very good, about 100 people, and the four main speakers, delivered four very good talks. I can do no more than touch upon main points and the final discussion.

**John Ziman** asked, "down what river is academic science being sold" and his answer was, "down the river of utility." He gave an account of science divided into two camps. On one side, the non-instrumental science of the academic institution, something he also called mode 1 science and what was once called pure science. On the other side of science is the instrumental, mode 2, useful or applied science supported by commerce. These two sides, argued Prof. Ziman, are distinguishable by the values they espouse.

Characteristically, non-instrumental science is publicly accessible, universal, imaginative, self-critical, has public and open debate and is pursued in a disinterested way. In short, non-instrumental science epitomises the search for knowledge for its own sake. By contrast, instrumental science is proprietary (someone's property), local to certain elites or power groups, prosaic to a few defined problems, pragmatic in being judged only by practical success and partisan.

Modern science, argues Prof. Ziman, is being increasingly taken over by the instrumental science championed by commerce and Prof. Ziman is far from happy about this trend. He believes that it makes the scientists into a serf or even a slave, a mere instrument to serve the purposes of commerce. He does not deny the need for such workers but points out that society looks to scientists for more than new products on supermarket shelves. Society needs scientists to give it realistic conceptions of the world around us, awareness of areas of public concern and even a sense of wonder and curiosity. On a philosophical level, he argues, the scientific attitude of critical rationality, gives society a benchmark way of thinking that helps to keep other, more dictatorial modes of thought in check.

Over recent years, scientific philosophy has been a part of my reading and I have to declare the pre-existing bias that Prof. Ziman has not been my favourite author. To me, he seems to express a series of opinions, rather than develop a coherent framework within which to view the scientific process. His talk contained an example relevant to the concerns of CAFAS; he listed a series of opinions, some of which were, "theories are for testing, dogmas are for doubting, conjectures are for dismissing." I wonder how Prof.

Ziman can tell, when presented with a new scientific theory for test, whether it represents a dogma being doubted or a conjecture he should dismiss.

Later, when asked by Prof. Connerade about the hypocrisy visible in many institutional claims, Prof. Ziman suggests this shows old institutions still claiming old virtues. Perhaps so but I have serious reservations about Prof. Ziman's position and I doubt whether those virtues ever really existed.

Although couched in up-to-date language, he painted a quite traditional portrait of academic science, one that I think is a myth. Though I am sure many individual scientists have tried to personify it, it seems to me doubtful that science ever had any "good old days" when the ideal of disinterestedness was a dominant, institutional, virtue. I think scientific inquiry has always been motivated by the carrot of personal gain. Following the greedy eighties, today's generation are increasingly pressured into pursuing that carrot.

Desire for gain has always led to scientific corruption but open reporting, numerical rigour and experimental tests have made science more objective than many commercial fields. If scientific corruption is becoming more visible now, it is because the existence of company funding makes the vested interests of individual researchers easier to identify, showing up the corruption in much sharper relief.

A shocking and clear example of corruption was related by the next speaker, **Prof. Nancy Olivieri** of Toronto University's Hospital for Sick Children. She was developing a therapy for children ill with thalassaemia, though the western world has few such children. Thalassaemia is one of several haemoglobinopathies, diseases arising from inherited defects in the haemoglobin gene; sickle cell anaemia is a better known example. These

diseases are quite common in areas where malaria is prevalent because that parasite seems to find the faulty haemoglobin distasteful. Carriers of the gene are protected from malaria.

In the west, thalassaemia sufferers are given monthly blood transfusions but haemoglobin contains iron and the combination of disease and transfusions impose an extra iron loading on the body. This iron accumulates and patients die as teenagers. To delay death, patients receive a subcutaneous infusion of chelating agent, a chemical that binds to iron ions, makes them soluble and carries them away with urine. This treatment is very arduous, lasting several hours per day, but extends life expectancy into the forties or fifties.

Enter Prof. Olivieri. Her aim was to develop a chelation treatment that could be taken in pill form. With public funding, she synthesised a possible agent and carried out initial trials, which looked promising, and she published them. However, further public funding was withheld as this research was considered suitable for commercial development and, to continue it, she was obliged to reach a "partnership" with a local drug company called, I believe, Apotex. They took over the potentially valuable patent rights, undertook further synthesis of the agent and imposed some quite dubious terms about publication of additional work.

Then problems arose. The additional trials did not support the drug's early promise and Prof. Olivieri wanted to publish these new but less promising results. The drug company, facing a sharp decline in the potential value of its patents, did not. They summarily withdrew funding from her work, removed drug samples from her laboratory and contracted other, presumably more compliant, laboratories to continue the trials.

What is more, the university, with substantial other funding from the company, sided with them and against Prof. Olivieri. The following years seem to have been nightmarish. She was, in turn, the victim of each of the four Ds - Deny, Delay, Divide and Discredit. Her two employers, denied there was an issue; delayed resolution of any kind, for example by asserting that it was all a matter of debate, that her results were part of a scientific controversy; divided her from access to allies and the literature; discredited her by character assassination, including accusations of incompetence. She added her own fifth D, dismissal; five times she has been dismissed by the university.

On the plus side, she did enjoy support from colleagues in Toronto, from the CAUT (Canadian AUT), who paid her considerable legal fees and from workers in the same field

overseas, such as Sir David Weatherall. That support at least preserved her job and, if appearance is any guide, her emotional well-being also. A considerable achievement, given that the University outdid even the company in its vilification of her, while its in-house ethics committee maintained a complete silence.

Prof. Olivieri is concerned about the general validity and disinterestedness of drug trials, given that academic Professors are increasingly promoted for pursuing company agendas. The result is, she suggests, that drug trials are not objective. Noting that the Canadian MRC did not take up funding of her work when the company withdrew, she wonders who has an incentive to pursue findings that drugs lack efficacy, or even that they might be harmful. She notes that investigators routinely fail to declare their financial interests in publications, that institutions have no policies in place requiring them to do so and that funding source seems the strongest single indicator of the outcome of medical trials.

All considerable cause for concern but, says **Sir David Weatherall**, the involvement of companies in biomedical science will not go away. He deplores the lack of commercial acumen previously displayed by Britain's pure scientists, mentioning the failure to patent penicillin and monoclonal antibodies as examples.

Then, taking the human genome project as his example, Sir David spoke about the spiralling costs of research and how this makes company involvement inevitable. Unless the culture of commercial naivety is changed, he asserts, companies will not make their funds available. Future studies in molecular medicine, addressed to hereditary disease and the diseases associated with age, simply will not go ahead without company backing.

Sir David is concerned by the way an increased reliance on industrial sponsors leads to conflicts of interest, bias, contractual pressure on scientists and even ghosting of papers. (Ghosting is the practice by which the company writes a paper that is then signed by the "disinterested" academic scientist.) He calls for changes to reduce the pressure for short term gain, rationalisation of patent law for biologicals, funding to give scientists long term careers in clinical science, protection for scientists in disputes and, should any dispute arise, external, disinterested review.

(By which he seems to mean anonymous peer review.) In particular, he calls for open debate about the proper form the inevitable partnership between academia and industry should take.

Apart from his support for anonymous peer review, most people would agree with Sir David's comments. I suspect that the interests of the young people who do science will be squeezed out, as the great and the good from both sides conduct their "open" debate.

Also many people are concerned about sciences that have no potential to produce saleable products but are, even now, important for diseases of old age - ecology, epidemiology, large areas of dietetics and other lifestyle issues. What happens to these following a corporate takeover of science?

The last speaker, **Prof. George Monbiot**, is prominent among those who express such concerns and his presence gave the CAFAS meeting an unexpected timeliness. Only the previous day, central London had been faced with the May Day, anticapitalist protests. Prof. Monbiot is not a spokesperson or figurehead for such groups, they are, after all anarchists. However, his writings are often seen to articulate the issues and the media sometimes ask him to explain the origin of these protests. Prof. Monbiot showed himself to be an outstanding speaker. He used no slides or other presentational aids, yet the packed audience sat riveted as he detailed the way modern science is becoming subservient to business interests.

In Whitehall, science is now seen mainly as a driver of industry, and the OST, the Office of Science and Technology, has been moved from the Dept. of Education into the Dept. of Trade and Industry. All modern universities, especially science faculties, now depend upon company finance for as much as 2/3 of research funding and 1/3 of posts. Whole faculties, numerous chairs, research funding of all kinds, now depend upon business backing and business names the tunes these pipers should play. Not only that, he notes, but industrial thinking guides even those bodies one would expect to be independent of business interests. For example, the research councils, have guidance committees stuffed full of company appointees and gives the example of the BBSRC. noting that Zeneca employees sit on every

single one of its committees. Woe betide the grant application that goes against business interests now.

Not only have the companies taken over what scientists do but it seems they have also taken over how they think. He cites the controversy over calcium channel blockers, drugs used to treat some heart conditions, where the opinion scientists express seems largely determined by their source of funds. Among other instances he notes how Ribena Toothkind is approved by the British Dental Association but is no kinder to teeth than normal Ribena.

Two out the four members of the relevant committee had research funded by that company.

"Business," he says, "now stands as a guard dog at the gates of perception," and some of its main victims are the very scientists who stand with their financial backers against the public. The people, he says, want confidence that doubts are expressed, rather than that tricky issues are swept under the carpet.

Later, it was suggested to him that scientists merely play in the system and are not really responsible for how it operates. He replied that nobody would voluntarily hand this power over to the scientific community, they themselves must stand up, ask for and, if necessary, demand it.

The final, short session of the day was given over to a **period of discussion** under the Chairmanship of **Dr. David Secher** of Cambridge University.

Harold Hillman asked whether peer review always worked. Sir David Weatherall replied, "not always, it is open to misuse," but that he could suggest nothing better. Asked how future paradigm shifts could appear, Darwin and Semmelweis being cited as examples, if we had only one system, the panel agreed that this is a problem. There then followed a discussion of the law on patenting genes which, although interesting is not directly about CAFAS' present concerns.

Considerable support was offered to scientists being asked to commit themselves some form of Hippocratic oath or social contract. Dr. Fox, concerned about animals in research, would support that development, while Prof. Connerade, who had raised the question of hypocrisy, asserted that it was necessary to lay out norms and so define the kind of actions that were hypocritical.

Then Gillian Evans suggested creating the scientific equivalent of the Niel/Nolan committee, a body that could create a "case law" of thought through issues. Prof. Olivieri argued that she could see no carrot for the government in creating such a body. Sir David agreed, describing it as an attractive idea but thinking would not be supported and would have no influence. John Ziman felt that, in the past, norms had been maintained by peer review but grants that it does create problems with hypocrisy.

Dr. Secher felt that a national committee would be ineffective. More attention should be paid at a local level and that local codes of practice should be developed. Prof. Monbiot appeared to disagree, arguing that self-regulation never works. National regulation is necessary with the involvement of external, disinterested parties. This author would add that his own experience of Cambridge's local codes supports Prof. Monbiot's comments.

The meeting then broke up. It showed us all that we must express our message if we are to have any influence. I can agree with Prof. Monbiot when he said no one will just give us power, we must take it and we can all agree with Gillian Evans' summing up when she said, "we are not powerless, as long as we are articulate." Quite so.

So, did I learn a lot? Yes. Was it useful? Yes. Did I enjoy it? Yes. Did I become a meeting person? Mmm. well, three out of four's not bad.

John A. Hewitt



