

# *CAFAS Update No 46*

*11 March 2005*

*Council for Academic Freedom & Academic Standards*

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

*AGM & Next Meeting:*

*Saturday 30 April 2005 1.30-4.30pm*

*Room 633.*

*Birkbeck College*

*Malet Street*

*London WC1*

*Underground: Goodge Street, Euston Square, Euston, Russell Square, Holborn*

## **CRITIC VICTIMISED**

### **University of Swansea Suspends Cafas Founding Member**

The University of Swansea has suspended veteran campaigner for academic freedom and natural justice, Colwyn Williamson, in the middle of a dispute over department closures and in the Process of a Petition to the Visitor.

Swansea has blocked his email for the past two weeks, so denying him access and preventing the

many others from communicating with him.

It has shades of the row at Swansea in 1990 when he and the other critics were victimised and suspended. Sir Michael Davies, 1994, reported this in the *Davies Report*.

Below is a resolution that Cafas members may wish to use or adapt and send to their own union.

Please send resolutions and messages of support to Julia Cutmore, AUT President, University of Swansea, Swansea SA2 8PP. ([j.t.cutmore@swan.ac.uk](mailto:j.t.cutmore@swan.ac.uk))

Letters of protest should be sent to the Vice Chancellor, Professor Richard Davies,

University of Swansea,  
Swansea SA2 8PP

## **Resolution**

'This branch condemns the action taken by the University of Swansea to suspend (not for the first time) Colwyn Williamson veteran campaigner for academic freedom and natural justice and former president of Swansea AUT, in the midst of a dispute over department closures and during the process of a Petition to the Visitor, which he had helped to draft. It calls on the union to protest against this victimisation to Swansea University in the strongest possible terms and to campaign for his reinstatement.'

## **ACADEMIC FREEDOM: THE ABUSE OF INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY AND CONTRACT RESEARCH**

### **Meeting hosted by UCL AUT with CAFAS invited to attend**

(Report by John Hewitt)

Eva Link has been a member of CAFAS for several years now. She is a Polish scientist who was invited to join UCL in 1982 to continue her research into cancer that she had begun in her homeland. Her work made good progress and enjoyed international recognition – she even became an adviser to the US Government on one of their cancer programmes.

However, back in England, Eva worked on a succession of temporary contracts and this lack of tenure became significant when she began to fall foul of UCL Medical School authorities. One hardly needs to tell the story from here - it is played out so often in so many different universities. Can it be that leaders do not like others to become so successful that they gain any independence? Eva found her work being blocked, her funding terminated, her precious strain of mice destroyed and her employment ended.

However, the Polish nation is not noted for doffing its collective hat to bullies, then saying, "Yes sir" and, in this respect, Eva Link is most definitely Polish. Despite the personal and professional circumstances that UCL actions have inflicted upon her, Eva Link has continued her work through five years without a salary and through nine years without a paid

contract. She has now endured twenty-two years at UCL.

Moreover, while UCL management may disapprove of her work and even of her presence, a growing number of outsiders disagree and are becoming increasingly vocal in their dissent - so much so that the role call of Eva's supporters has grown to remind one of a "Who's Who?" of English science in London and even beyond.

Onlookers are left with little doubt that her work has merit and bemused by UCL management's unwillingness to recognise it. Consequently, on the 19th of January 2005, in UCL's auditorium, the AUT and CAFAS jointly hosted a meeting to discuss Eva's circumstances. The speakers included Dr. Ian Gibson MP, Chair of the House of Commons Select Committee on Science and Technology, Prof. Richard Bruckdorfer, UCL/AUT President and chair of the meeting, our own Prof. John Pickering and Charlie Owen AUT HQ. Attendance was something over seventy academics from London and beyond - Eva's work attracts the kind of support the rest of us can only dream of.

So, this was a good, well-attended meeting intended to advance a point of view that has high level of support, both within the academic community and beyond. However, the meeting did not produce the kind of dialogue Karl Popper would have called scientific; this was not a meeting in which competing views were presented and evidence considered to decide the best approach from those competing alternatives. This was a meeting in which everybody agreed and in

which nobody from UCL management spoke to explain why it was necessary to destroy an ongoing and apparently worthwhile research programme, or render a productive scientist unemployed.

And, when the following final resolution was proposed no management hand was raised in opposition, although their representatives were present.

"This special meeting of the AUT considers that the endeavours of both academic staff and contract workers are the life blood of our university system. Despite the pressures of the current climate, we urge UCL to offer the maximum protection to the careers of contract research workers and academic staff alike, their academic freedom and intellectual property rights. It appeals again to the college to look again at the events which led to the dismissal of Dr Eva Link and to reverse the damage this case has done to her career, to the prospects of patients with melanoma, the confidence of researchers at UCL and to the reputation of the college."

So, the above resolution was passed and passed unanimously, with not a single vote of dissent.

Of course, in the unlikely event that the UCL management disagree, I feel sure CAFAS Update would be delighted to publish any explanations they might want to offer.

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# Letter

3 March 2005

Dear Friends,

A meeting on Academic Freedom: The Abuse of Intellectual Property and Contract Research held at UCL on January, 19th went exceptionally well owing to the hard, well thought through work of Professor Richard Bruckdorfer, UCLAUT President, and Members of the UCLAUT Branch Committee, as well as of the invited speakers: Dr Ian Gibson, MP and Chairman of the House of Commons Select Committee on Science and Technology, Professor John Pickering, CAFAS and Charlie Owen, National AUT.

I was overwhelmed by your support and kind thoughts expressed in your letters, as well as through so numerous a presence and active contribution to the discussion at the meeting. Professor Pickering delivered an excellent presentation on behalf of CAFAS.

A generous donation to Cafas of £1,650 has been received from Professor Hilary Rose who was also there.

Please accept my sincere and heart-felt gratitude for it all. It did help enormously and still does.

Thank you.

Eva Link

## LONDON METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY OFFICIAL DISPUTE AND

## ACADEMIC BOYCOTT

The attempt by Natfhe to negotiate a contract with London Met under the auspices of ACAS was unsuccessful. (See Natfhe's report below and on [www.natfhe.org.uk](http://www.natfhe.org.uk).)

The union calls on academics worldwide to resume the boycott. London Met Natfhe branch has voted unanimously to ballot a third time for industrial action.

The dispute over the academic contract is entering its second year. During this, there was an academic boycott of the university and the Natfhe branch took industrial action including a strike, which has been widely reported on Natfhe's website and in the press.

At the same time was a most disturbing revelation that the university stands accused of 'book burning'. Apparently it 'shredded' a second draft of a history of London Guildhall University (now City campus following merger) refusing to allow this version to be published. The author of a history of the University of North London reported in the press that the university had also suppressed his book earlier in the 1990s. (UNL is now North campus.)

The academic boycott and industrial action were suspended to allow contract negotiations every opportunity to succeed. According to Natfhe, this approach failed.

This dispute over the contract has far-reaching implications. It has involved a broken promise that the 'preferred' contract would be that of the former LGU. To our knowledge, no other university anywhere in the world has attempted to control academics in the ways that Londonmet's now 'preferred' contract would allow.

It is widely seen as an issue of academic freedom and consequently of standards.

Members may wish to write to Mr Brian Roper, Vice Chancellor,

[b.roper@londonmet.ac.uk](mailto:b.roper@londonmet.ac.uk)

copy to Steve Cushion, Natfhe,

[s.cushion@londonmet.ac.uk](mailto:s.cushion@londonmet.ac.uk)

voicing their concern.

Messages of support to Steve would also be welcome.

## **NATFHE SAYS:**

**NATFHE declared an official dispute with London Metropolitan University last year following the University's decision to dismiss almost 400 lecturers from their existing contracts on 31 August 2004.**

**After the University's Disputes Committee agreed in January 2005 to time-limited negotiation conciliated by ACAS, NATFHE agreed to suspend its academic boycott and industrial action for the duration of the talks.**

**After nine days and 43 hours at ACAS - during which NATFHE put forward a new draft contract (PDF file) in an effort to trigger a real engagement with the University's negotiating team - the talks collapsed. NATFHE's letter to members and letter to Governors (PDF files) explain why,**

**despite NATFHE's efforts, the talks failed. NATFHE has now offered mediation but this has also been turned down.**

### *Next Update*

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.

## **The Swansea Petition to the Visitor**

Copies of *The Mission Betrayed* are available from the authors for £3 (including postage) and of *The Tangled Web* (including the petitioners' final submission) for £2 (including postage).

Mike Cohen, Colwyn  
Williamson

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## **NOTICES**

### **AGM & MEETING**

**30 April 2005 at 2.00 p.m.**

#### **1.30 AGM**

#### **Officers' Reports Election of Committee**

**(All positions excluding  
two founding members)**

#### **2.00 MEETING**

##### **Agenda**

- 1. Minutes**
- 2. Matters arising**
- 3. Case reports**
- 4. AOB**

**There will be an officers' meeting in Room 633 at 1.00 pm**

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

## **NEAR**

**Cafas has linked to the Network for Education and Academic Rights (NEAR).**

Information is on the website  
<http://www.nearinternational.org/>

### **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.

Correspondence to

**Dr Eva Link**

17 Highcliffe, Clivesdon  
Court, London W13 8DP  
rekgemL1982@yahoo.co.uk

## **CONSTITUTION**

CAFAS' aims are outlined on the membership form. The full constitution can be obtained from the Secretary or [www.cafas.org.uk](http://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.

# Committee

## Chair:

### **John Fernandes**

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020 8 208 5000 (w) Fax: 020 8 208  
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john.fernandes@cnwl.ac.uk

## Secretary:

### **Dr John Hewitt**

33 Hillyfields, Dunstable, Beds LU6  
3NS

john.hewitt22@virgin.net

## Membership Secretary &

## Treasurer:

### **Dr Eva Link**

17 Highcliffe, Clivesdon Court,  
London W13 8DP

02089982569;

rekgemL1982@yahoo.co.uk

## Founding Member:

### **Colwyn Williamson**

The University, Swansea SA2 8PP

01792 295 895 Fax: 01792 295 895;

cafas@swansea.ac.uk

## Founding Member

### **Michael Cohen**

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m.d.cohen@swansea.ac.uk

## Update Compilers:

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## Auditor:

### **Majzoub Ali**

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Shoeburyness, Southend-on-Sea SS3

9PT; 01702587995;

majzoubali@hotmail.com

## David Regan Appeal

### **Coordinator: Dr Janet Collett**

University of Sussex, Brighton BN1

9QN 01273 473 717

j.i.collett@sussex.ac.uk

## Health & Safety Spokesperson:

### **Dr David Heathcote**

Dept of Applied Psychology,

Bournemouth University BH12 5BB

01202595283;

dheathco@bournemouth.ac.uk

## Students' Complaints:

Dr Harold Hillman

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Guildford GU1 2BX

hillmanh@breathemail.net

## Website

### **Dr John Hewitt**

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