

Nothing doing: How academic dissidents usually fail to co-operate

Large organisations are often very firmly held together by interlinked interest groups and such forces as money, and power as compared with the people outside. Members of them may work for thirty years with people they dislike, in buildings they hate, performing tasks they dislike, keeping secrets about sharp practice and frauds for the whole of their lives. This stability is in very stark contrast indeed to the fragile bonds linking dissidents....

[1] **Derek Bryce-Smith**, Professor of Chemistry at Reading University. A leading activist in the campaign against leaded petrol, he regards, or regarded, lead as more dangerous than dioxins, and told me that lead resembles a radioactive material with infinite half-life. He held a patent on a method of manufacturing tetraethyl lead, which no doubt helped his reputation for personal disinterest. He habitually tested water samples from wherever he happened to be; he tipped off Balmoral that their water was high in lead, and was annoyed that the royal handlers hadn't had the courtesy to thank him. I spoke of him to Harold, who remarked dismissively "he's not a biochemist" and never challenged the toxicological bases on which anti-lead campaigners fought. Despite the fact that they lived only about forty miles apart, and weren't in direct academic competition, and shared similar humanitarian views, they never met.

[2] **Maurice Pappworth** was an interesting and abrasive character, who lived in Hampstead; he investigated experiments on human subjects, and wrote a book on the topic, *Human Guinea Pigs* (1967), the material being taken exclusively from published papers. He showed that poor (not paying) patients were subjected to unnecessary, painful and dangerous experiments without their consent. When I knew Pappworth, I believed him to be high in the medical establishment; only years later did I realise that he'd been blackballed, assuming Harold's account to be correct. He told me he had an 'insulting room' in his garden, which I naturally took to be a joke; later I realised he wasn't permitted to describe himself as a 'consultant'. He wrote a textbook (and complained he'd been swindled or misled over the royalties) and set up a medical teaching establishment which, I gather, was highly successful. He told me he'd worked in the Second World War in a secret hospital for homosexual officers, I think on a Mediterranean island. He had somewhat fanatical Jewish beliefs on the usual subjects. In the 1990s he contacted Hillman, saying he was interested in his views. Then he died. The two men never met.

[3] **Dick van Steenis** is a retired GP living in Wales (see [industrial air pollution and asthma](#), a piece he wrote two years ago). His thesis is very simple, using methodology similar to Purdey's on organosphosphates: that air pollution causes asthma (and some cancers), and that industrial interests in league with pollution inspectorates and the medical establishment do their best to cover up this information. It seems extraordinary that the work should be done by a retired man on his own, when the entire national resources of the health industries haven't bothered to collate the information. Unfortunately, there was a financial problem with the funding of this research, as a result of which van Steenis fell out with the organisation of which Harold was or is chairman. Despite the theoretical allegiance to free speech and open organisational information, the full story never came out. Harold told me that, since he'd been elected chairman, in effect he was entitled to give them the information he chose. He would appear to have no objection to using the same techniques he objects to in others. Van Steenis' work remains rather obscure - I've only recently put it on this web site, and he claims to be a year or two behind schedule. I doubt whether he's spoken to Harold for years.

[4] **Gilbert Ling's** career is somewhat parallel to Hillman's; they knew each other. Ling also developed 'controversial' (but true) views, and had resulting career problems. [Gilbert Ling on the Cell Membrane](#) , unfortunately incorporating much doubtful material.

[Dr. Ling objects](#). Dr. Ling objected to the above statement; for correspondence between us on his website, or rather from me as he has failed to reply, click on the link.

[5] **H. G. Wells** writing about the difficulties of co-operating:
All that is now quite familiar to everyone. What concerns us more directly here are those meetings and

movements and discussions that occurred when the idea of the League of Nations was being shaped. These deliberations brought home to me the confused divergence of historical preoccupations among those taking part in them. Their minds were full of broken scraps of history, irrational political prejudices, impossible analogies. Everyone saw the idea from a different angle and seemed prepared to realise it by the hastiest of compromises. *The Outline of History* was the direct outcome of the experience I gathered in these discussions. At first, in conjunction with L. S. Woolf and one or two others, I tried to organise a Research Committee, which would set itself to think out the full significance and possibilities of this great idea. We made William Archer, who was badly out of a job just then, the salaried secretary of this body. With much internal friction we compiled *The Idea of a League of Nations, Prolegomena to the Study of World Organisation*, and *The Way to the League of Nations: A Brief Sketch of the Practical Steps needed for the Formation of a League*. These booklets are still available for the collector. Then President Wilson came to Europe and we were swept aside, because he had his own ideas, and very crude ideas they were, of a League that would make the world safe for democracy. **But the difficulty of producing these two reports opened my eyes to the enormous obstacles in the way of all volunteered co-operation. It seemed impossible to hold a team together. They differed upon endless points and they would not come together to hammer them out. They were all too intent upon what they considered more immediately important things. Our chief financial supporter deserted us to go off wool-gathering upon his own lines. He could not see what need there was for all this highbrow research. But we were all going off upon our own lines. We had already disintegrated before we were disregarded.**

Harold Hillman tried to found the 'International Campaign for Academic Freedom' with these people:-

- **Ivor Catt** to whom I'm grateful for assembling his list of intellectual dissidents many years ago. He now has his own [website](#) , on which you can try to assess his claim to have revolutionised electromagnetic theory. Another piece, on this site, deals with the [psychology of technical employees under hire-and-fire](#) based on his experiences in the early US computer hardware industry.
- **Christian Schwabe (biochemist)** tried to discredit evolutionary theory, relying on biochemical techniques, which 'proved' structures existed which couldn't have evolved. Schwabe naturally thought this disproves Darwinism. Instead, it's supporting evidence that the techniques are defective. Hillman could presumably have pointed this out, but didn't like to. This is my [archived copy of his website](#). (He may have updated it; try [this site](#). )
- **Brian Martin** (an American in Australia). [This is a piece on academic freedom](#) 
- [AIDS dissidents](#) including **Louis Pascal** and **Hiram Caton**, also Americans. The link is to my piece which includes their not very successful attempts to debunk the HIV fraud.
- **Theo Theocharis**, a dissident in physics. ['When Did the Science Wars Start?'](#)  outlines his claim to have started the 'science wars' over the, in my view, extremely feeble 1996 Sokal hoax.
- **Gordon Moran** is another interesting character associated with this group, first contacted as a result of a newspaper piece about his work: he uncovered a fascinating piece of bogus art history in Siena, an equestrian portrait of highly questionable authenticity. His initial point of friction was the Kunsthistorisches Institut, Florence, apparently an art research library which censored out his point of view. (Unfortunately there is absolutely nothing about this on Internet, except the titles of his papers in library journals. Try searching for Guidoriccio or Guido Riccio). His book *Silencing Scientists and Scholars in Other Fields: Power, Paradigm Controls, Peer Review and Scholarly Communications* (\$73.25 hardback, \$39.50 paperback) was published in 1998. Perhaps ironically, the price suggests the book is intended for the library market.
- Halton Arp, a revisionist astrophysicist, was discussed, though I don't think they contacted him.

