

DISCUSSION OF CARMEN'S LETTER

Andrew Samuels

The other night I went to see Brecht's *Mother Courage* at the National. Once, after a people's uprising after an 'election' in communist East Germany, Brecht wrote this poem:

The Solution

After the uprising of the 17th June
The Secretary of the Writers Union
Had leaflets distributed in the Stalin Boulevard
Stating that the people
Had forfeited the confidence of the government
And could win it back only
By redoubled efforts. Would it not be easier
In that case for the government
To dissolve the people
And elect another one?

The quickest way to check me out at this late stage of our election is to go to <http://tinyurl.com/as-ukcp> There are a couple of new videos there.

I am glad that Carmen is now going more detail about her plans and policies. I am sorry that I've already spelled out what I'll do if elected in such horrendous detail. But there is still this very worrying refusal to have a vote about HPC at any stage at all. Carmen's letter has 14 usages of the word 'must' in it, and it is only 1,800 words long.

This anti-democratic stance seems to reflect the view of the whole UKCP leadership, as was made clear at the meeting of the Political Action Group yesterday. It seems so strange to me to go on about important you, the registrants, are – but then continue to deny you your voice. Actually, it is not just strange – it is *wrong*, and I will stick to the promise, made in my very first election statement, to conduct a vote at the appropriate moment. I am so glad CPJA has stuck to its policy of calling for a poll.

The problem we have is that UKCP is functioning like the state. That is why people have become upset at the documents issued by UKCP Central. And we have so identified with HPC that we now have to take comfort in the fantasy that these cool-headed bureaucrats will listen to us when, after the legislation has been issued, it will be too late.

You see, after the special extra meeting of the Professional Liaison Group at HPC in mid-November, the civil servants at HPC will produce a package for the full HPC Council on December 6th. This group, that will be 50% new members, will undoubtedly rubber stamp the package and send it to the Government. Then the Government issues its proposals for a so-called consultation and it will be very hard indeed to get anything changed. So unless we do something now, we are sunk.

Some say that the psychologists managed to achieve changes at a late stage but this misses something. They were the only group involved. For psychotherapists and counsellors, there is no agreement on the issues. Why would we at UKCP prevail over other groups such as BC and BACP?

If you read the response to HPC which Carmen has provided a link to, you'll see that there are 18 specific standards that we regard as sticking points. But, as I said at the PAG meeting, these are not

presented in such a way as to make their acceptance likely. It just ain't going to happen.

It's the same with IAPT, actually. Back in 2007, I was almost a lone voice protesting against the putsch on the part of the CBT world. Now we can see clearly how other psychotherapies are being zapped. What has UKCP done that constitutes vigorous political campaigning on IAPT? We are just too deferential. So-called 'recession counselling' is unethical. I got a letter saying this into the *Observer*.

Why hasn't UKCP been more of a trade union for us, like BACP was for its people? Did you see how radical the BACP's rejection of the HPC proposals has been? They disputed the medical model, attacked the integrity of the PLG process and impugned the Chair of the PLG. These were not small items. Why this about face on the part of BACP? Because the leadership there heard the murmurings of the membership getting louder and louder until there was a collective roar of opposition to having this monstrosity of HPC forced on us.

BTW, I am not against statutory regulation, if it is the right kind – and that just doesn't mean HPC. Do you want even minor complaints against you by clients and patients to be heard in public in a highly adversarial atmosphere with no possibility of mediation and conciliation? A gravy train for the lawyers and ruin for you. UKCP's leadership is now saying that the reason we haven't challenged the absurd ethics and discipline aspects of HPC is because they didn't form part of the HPC consultation! Just accepting what we are told. I would have said 'Never mind the order you think things should be taken in, our members need reassurance right now that these ethics and discipline arrangements will be changed. We will not wait'.

The PLG is stacked against us. If you know the players, you can see that BACP has basically got three to four members on its side and BPC three. We only have one. The leadership have been so concerned to preserve the inside track, believing that this is the only way politics is done, that they have allowed others with a more vigorous negotiating style to muscle us out of the way.

It is great to hear that standards such as the need to wear protective clothing and keep one's machinery in good working order will be dropped! Not so impressive a victory.

OK, so let's look at what we can do. The HPC is weakened at the moment. There's the BACP 'rejection' (their word), and also the Maresfield Report and the book *Compliance, Ambivalence, Rejection*. There's a serious legal challenge in the form of a letter to HPC from Bindmans, one of the country's leading human rights and constitutional lawyers. This was sent on behalf of a number of UKCP member organisations. There are two petitions out there against HPC with a total of over 4,000 signatures (over 1,000 being UKCP registrants).

The Conservatives have seen which way the wind is blowing. I have called for a Convention on the Future of Psychotherapy and counselling and to my amazement my many (yes, too many!) letters to the Shadow Health Minister have actually produced a mini-convention to be held in Westminster Hall on November 2nd. Most registrants didn't even know about this meeting and, of course, no-one in the leadership has bothered to ask you what you want said on their behalf. I'll be there and will look at any e-mail ideas that I get before the meeting. andrew@andrewsamuels.net

I will conclude this short response with a reference to some unfortunate aspects of the election which many of you will know about. Please take the time to read the material at <http://tinyurl.com/as-ukcp>

Best wishes, Andrew