

Chapter VI

The Branch Executive Turns the Screw

“More dangerous are the functionaries ready to believe and act without question.”¹

(a) Potting the Black

The union’s merry-go-round continued its frenzied spin with its operator far distant at head office determining the speed of the ride. Head office officials had, at the least, implicitly given the Bournville branch executive *carte blanche* to play its cards in whatever way the *kernels* felt inclined. By failing to act on harassment and intimidation, a green light had been given to the perpetrator and his allies to carry on almost as before but applying different methods, which was to use others including those in the local union’s structures. This was akin to trying to cure alcoholism by supplying the patient with a constant supply of cocaine.

A suffocating aura had for some time settled over Bis Weaver as every avenue where support should be available was gradually and opportunistically closed off to her. This blockade came after instructions from Triesman and was implemented by lay officers comradely whistling head office’s tune. Triesman’s suggestion for the branch to discuss Day’s ‘report’ also appeared to have reinforced the *kernels*’ determination to launch an all-out assault on Bis Weaver – supplemented by his undisclosed exoneration of Gates, that is, undisclosed to Bis Weaver.

Over the previous months we had learned a lot about NATFHE’s operating practices carried out under the glossy image of a progressive union - a front for advertising anti-racism rather than delivering it; and for disguising the various practices used for putting Black and ethnic minority members in their place. Union officers rallied to one of their own rather than assisting a Black rank and file member, who was seen as not one of their own.

Bis Weaver had tried to relieve an overwhelming sense of impotence with a ‘paper bombardment’ to reach out to a wider audience, which might offer up some support. This ‘paper campaign’ cut was also aimed at cutting some of the ground from under Gates’ and head office’s feet. Similarly, my own battles against Gates and Cave were bringing home to those worshipping at NATFHE’s shrine what these two officers were capable of doing. Overall, Bis Weaver and I were drawing attention to the reality of NATFHE’s ‘commitment’ to trade union principles, anti-racism, anti-sexism and rights to natural justice. Each day provided a new dimension to the way that the *kernels* hung together to protect their own and

how a considerable number of 'ordinary' members were prepared to go along with them. It came as no surprise that some form of retaliation was on the cards as the noose tightened around the *kernel*s but it would be Bis Weaver who the branch would hang out to dry.

NATFHE head office's bureaucratic process, already shown to subordinate accountability to authoritarian diktat, exhibited another variation – authoritarianism masquerading as democracy. Branch members were manipulated into using its numerical strength to serve the interests of the *kernel* elite by imposing the 'tyranny of the majority' over a powerless minority. This was a long way from the 'unity and liberty of the workers, both Black and White', advocated by the *kernel avant guard* but was not too distant from the bureaucratic custom and practice that the *kernel*s had readily embraced.

The previous week had witnessed another attempt to put an indelible stain on Bis Weaver's reputation, which resulted in her being called to the Principal's office, although she had yet to discover the nature of the complaint and who made it. This particular attempt was launched on the same day as the Equal Opportunities (Race) Committee had played host to Hartland's motion of support for 'our anti-racism officer, Bis Weaver'. This was out and out conspiracy to discredit her by planting false allegations in the mind of management and then not following them through. The following week provided additional evidence of a blitz to be waged against Bis Weaver to damage her reputation - this time in the eyes of branch members.

The *kernel*s – the 'our' in Day's *Linnaeus-style* classification of union membership, who are able to rely on the union leadership for support, went on the offensive using a secure vehicle to deliver the goods – the Bournville branch, over which they held considerable influence. Their not so surreptitious lobbying was replaced by a direct assault using the branch membership – a supplement to Triesman's proposal for involving branch members. We had expected some reaction from our recent activities but not the kind worked out over the next few days by the *kernel*s, or by whoever may be advising them. The branch executives' 'barking dogs' began to really grind their teeth.

The branch committee meeting arranged to deal with Cave's breach of trade union principles took place on the 28th April but in the preceding few days a different agenda had been adopted by the *kernel*s – an agenda aimed at stifling Bis Weaver with the additional objective of letting Gates and Cave off the hook, as well as trying to do the same for Day and head office.²

The two previous branch committee meetings, since I became a departmental representative, were rife with disagreement but this one was an extremely acrimonious affair.

Several *kernels* were prickly: Gates wracked by the wide negative publicity he was getting; Cave for a similar reason although his place in the limelight was earned by his decision to enter the fray against Bis Weaver; and Downey for having been confronted with his partisanship. Ms Pattinson's attitude may have been affected by her failure to be appointed to the Access post a few days earlier. They were inextricably linked to each other and travelled along a particular path looking for their pound of flesh and were doing everything to eke it out. As for myself, I was hardly in an amiable frame of mind having seen what they had put Bis Weaver through over the past fourteen months; exacerbated by the furore at the 'Race' committee meeting; and by her trip to the Principal's office three days before.

The absence of several branch committee members, under the impression the meeting was about Cave, suggested a desire on their part not to have to make any decision on any issue involving one of the *kernels*, but even if they had turned up it was unlikely to have made a difference to the outcome of the meeting. With or without them the odds were stacked in the *kernels* favour. The lines were drawn and it was unlikely anyone would deviate from that situation.

The scheme the *kernels* came up with to avoid any discussion of my request for action against Cave was outlined by the branch chair. It was submerged under a wider proposal "to include correspondence received from Bis Weaver." Branch officers intended "to make a statement [to the branch] as a means of going forward from the present situation...[by suggesting] how correspondence should be treated as a general rule." While recognising that the issues involving Bis Weaver and I were different, the chair presented a picture of the branch's work "grinding to a halt at Executive, Committee and Branch level" because of the quantity of correspondence having to be dealt with by the executive. She spoke of 40 to 50 letters, sent to the branch executive plus telephone calls, which she described as "causing difficulties for a whole range of...other...important issues,...[consequently], the Branch Committee's work...and individual case studies were suffering." Nonetheless, the branch secretary had answered the letters "even though advice has been given by the Regional Official that all items of correspondence relating to the report should be forwarded directly to Head Office." Bis Weaver was also accused of pursuing issues the regional official was asked to deal with and for creating two further problems: (i) breaching the clause of confidentiality in Day's 'report'; and (ii) "the increasing flood of letters." Inevitably, the chair inverted the whole process, which was not uncommon in complaints against 'the elite', by introducing the "sense of grievance felt by some people [that] the Branch was suffering" from Bis Weaver's and my actions. Yet another example of 'some people' - individual erring officers,

identifying their interests with those of the branch – apparently this affliction was contagious. The chair proposed referring “Bis Weaver’s and Gordon Weaver’s correspondence to Head Office and [to ask] Head Office for a national enquiry into the situation” raised by our correspondence.

The last foothold Bis Weaver had to obtain information about the irregularities in Day’s ‘enquiry’ and a means to call on the branch committee to take action against recent attacks on her by Gates was to be firmly shut – as had other avenues as a result of Triesman’s directive. However, the proposal that the executive was seeking approval for turned out to be more than a means of refusing to answer any correspondence from Bis Weaver or me; it had a much wider remit since it denied to both of us other trade union rights.

The chair would have no problem with getting the motion approved as there were enough people available to offer their support. The branch secretary, so often sympathetic when speaking face-to-face with Bis Weaver, rallied to the *kernels*’ cause by supporting the proposal, described by her as an attempt at reconciliation, and she identified three areas of work being neglected by the Branch Executive. * Was the branch secretary - a member of Bournville branch’s women’s group and the West Midlands women’s panel, naive or merely unobservant?

My protest about the meeting being convened solely to discuss the Vice Chairperson’s actions and nothing else was supported by the two SWP members, who called for “action...not further discussion.” They suggested that “a motion of censure and no confidence” in Cave should be put to the branch committee for discussion. Recognising there was no mileage in this proposal due to the composition of the committee, they added that if the motion was “lost in the Branch Committee it should go to the Branch.” They also wanted to differentiate between Bis Weaver’s correspondence and mine by proposing “the Branch Committee should not vote on Bis Weaver’s correspondence because it knows nothing of the specific issues.” Both SWP members, who often had running battles with the *kernels*, wanted the details out in the open. This cut no ice with the branch chair, who called on committee members to listen to branch officers. This was no surprise as three of the four officers were *kernels* – Ms Pattinson, Cave and Gates; with two of them in the firing line.

The time was ripe for the *kernels* to intervene. Downey, with his own axe to grind, expressed his resentment at having letters sent to him during the past six months. In fact,

* Youth Training Scheme; one item of case work; and salaries - the latter always a good card to put before the voters

letters went to him in the past seven weeks, consisting of the small questionnaire sent to all Branch Committee members (10th March) and the letter sent to Downey two days before (27th April) drawing his attention to a few home truths about his involvement and partisanship. * Harking back to some golden age in the branch's history, Downey reminisced about his ten years on the branch committee, waxing lyrical on the previous practice of face-to-face dialogue when anyone wanted information. Downey conveniently overlooked the fact that when Bis Weaver spoke to him about matters relating to her complaint in September 1985 he had turned tail and stormed off in a huff – face-to-face dialogue when it suited him.

Downey did not disclose to the committee, the contents of the letter recently sent to him but went off at a tangent. He questioned “the appropriateness of the Branch to deal with the issues...[and suggested] the Branch should contact Head Office...to deal with the situation.” He also “supported send[ing] Bis Weaver’s and Gordon Weaver’s correspondence to Head Office.” Downey also put on the back burner the fact that the last official to come from outside to carry out an enquiry was Day, strongly supported by Downey despite the regional official’s poor record. Day had then conducted a *Whitewash*; left a Black woman member of the branch with all kinds of difficulties; and thrust the branch, and union, into its present dilemma. Downey’s maxim seemed ‘once bitten twice willing.’

Gates’ contribution was a further diversion from the relevant topic – the motion on Cave. He referred to Bis Weaver’s refusal to accept Day’s ‘report’, thereby, preventing the ‘report’ from being released. Gates seemed keen, in line with Triesman’s recent suggestion, to have the ‘report’ released, or at least the proposed joint statement, but undoubtedly without the critical assessment accompanying it. Attempting to prevent Triesman’s tentative suggestion from becoming a reality, I reminded the committee that neither the ‘report’ nor the complaint could be discussed in the branch; and, as an aside, I asked Gates to explain his comments at the BLCARC. All I heard was Gates’ advice that “someone should tell [me] to watch it.” Nothing about being a ‘F.... liar’ and, at least, my finger was apparently where it should be!

Hartland stood firmly behind the motion and accepted that the correspondence was affecting the branch’s work. Coating the toxin with sugar, he stated “the Branch Committee

* Several members on the fringe of the branch Committee, that is, those attending meetings occasionally and not attached to the *kernels*, had replied to Bis Weaver’s questions. They all claimed to know nothing of the manoeuvrings in the branch executive/committee during the early days of the complaint, which was accepted by Bis Weaver as valid. Contacting those who we knew were not involved was for the purpose of having written records while identifying those who refused to answer the questions. Those refusing were the kernels and fellow travellers.³

was not asking Gordon Weaver and Bis Weaver not to write but to send their correspondence to Head Office...[as] the Branch Committee was not prepared to deal with it.” This contribution came from a person who only a few days before, alongside Gates and Cave, had joined in the chorus of unfounded allegations made against Bis Weaver; this time to the Principal over the HMIs visit.

The *kernels* were more astute than given credit for because, if in the event of Bis Weaver finding out about their recent disreputable behaviour, there was no formal written way available to her to bring it to the attention of branch committee members as they were to be prevented from reading or acting on any correspondence. Any attempt to raise the issue orally in a branch committee by me or in a branch meeting by either of us would be subject to the chair’s veto and with Ms Pattinson in the chair there was little chance of that veto not being used. Should the veto be challenged, John Stuart Mill’s ‘tyranny of the majority’ could be relied on to do the bidding of the *kernel* elite. * In the Bournville branch, members falling foul of this elite, irrespective of the seriousness of the offences, were expected to accept the treatment without protest or have the full weight of the union mobilised against them.

Committee members followed the script and, at the end of the meeting, the chair disclosed that a statement would be distributed to the branch at the next day’s meeting. My request for the two issues to be voted on separately was all grist to the mill because the chair refused a separate vote. When put to the vote, the branch executive/*kernel* motion was accepted eight votes to three.⁴ The ‘forward march of the *kernels*’ had been resisted at various points during the meeting but there was nothing to stop the branch committee, and soon the branch, being railroaded by the vested interests that had risen to an unassailable position in the branch.

The continuing harassment of a Black women member; and a union officer reporting an anti-racist member’s views to management; did not rate highly on the list of union priorities in this branch committee. The *kernels* displayed a peculiarly ambivalent concern for how they used their time as a considerable amount of time, albeit in college roles, had been expended to contravene the employment rights of a Black woman by trying to dislodge her from her post in the interest of one of the *kernels* and then trying to enforce acceptance of a *Whitewash* report by subjecting her to increased pressure. As for me, none of my letters included matters concerning Bis Weaver’s original complaint, therefore, the time allocated to

* This would be demonstrated all too clearly in two weeks’ time

me had resulted in preventing any action against Cave, as had been the intention. It was their way of tidying up the loose ends irrespective of the principles involved.

After the meeting, I phoned Bis Weaver to let her know of the latest scheme concocted by the *kernel*s and their advisers. No one on the branch executive thought it incumbent upon them to officially inform her of their intention to introduce a motion restricting her right to have correspondence answered or accusing her of breaching confidentiality. She was certainly not invisible when it came to removing her rights but definitely invisible when it meant informing her of their intentions.

Bis Weaver found it impossible to attend the branch meeting the following day; she was still much too ill. In contrast to her state of health, the *kernel*s were definitely not off colour as they conjured another trick from up its sorcerer's sleeve. This took the form of the chair's statement to the branch delivered on behalf of the branch committee, even though the committee had not seen or approved its contents. Stencilled copies of the chair's statement were distributed to branch members - thirty or more, as they moved along the benches in the lecture theatre used for meetings. Sitting in the audience was a speaker from the liaison committee and five visitors to the branch – described in the minutes as observers, including one who in another capacity was a delegate to the Selly Oak Constituency Labour Party, Roy Pinney - the same constituency where Phil Murphy was a delegate. Given that this meeting concerned case work, no outsiders, whether visitors or observers, should have been present but they, too, were given copies of the statement, showing that protocol and form were not graces associated with the *kernel*s when their own interests – individually or collectively, were at stake.

There were two apologies for absence submitted to the meeting, one from Bis Weaver, so if the branch executive and other *kernel*s failed to notice that she had not turned up they would surely have noticed when her name was announced as an absentee.

The first item was a report back from the regional council's AGM informing the congregation that Gates and Ms Pattinson were to assume the posts of chair and vice chair of the West Midlands region respectively in June. *⁵

The 'heir presumptive' to the regional vice-chair, who was also the liaison committee's women's rights officer, opened the meeting, only to vacate the chair

* The new occupants would serve during a time when considerable hostility was shown to any initiatives or proposals pursued by the Black Lecturers' Group through the REC and attacks were made on Bis Weaver and her few supporters

immediately, in favour of the vice chair, Cave. This action was to enable her to deliver “A statement...on the functioning of the Branch Committee” – a euphemism for an attack on Bis Weaver, which was all too obvious from the statement lying in front of each member and visitor. I protested strongly about the contents of the printed statement and, as Bis Weaver was absent, I submitted that it might contravene her trade union rights, rights to natural justice, and, for additional effect, her ‘civil rights’.

The meeting was destined to go in one direction when Cave dismissed my appeal and opened the way for the chair to deliver a diatribe against Bis Weaver in a partisan attack masqueraded under the banner of branch interests.

The statement was the work of Ms Pattinson and the items she presented were: Bis Weaver’s complaint against D Gates for which both parties agreed to the union’s regional official handling the case and to abide by the outcome;

- (i) Bis Weaver’s rejection of the regional official's report while D Gates accepted it;
- (ii) the regional official’s referral of the report to the national secretary where it has remained;
- (iii) the report’s clause of confidentiality preventing discussion of the report or matters pertaining to it unless “all parties named in the report were agreeable”;
- (iv) Bis Weaver’s correspondence, approximately fifty letters in all, “relating directly or indirectly to the report..., * which have necessitated considerable time being spent answering [them].” This was carried out despite the regional official’s advice to send “all items of correspondence relating to the report...to Head Office”;
- (v) Gordon Weaver’s recent and considerable correspondence to different levels of NATFHE, which, although not ostensibly linked to the ‘inquiry and report’, was considered by the branch committee to be linked to them;
- (vi) Bis and Gordon Weaver questioning the integrity of branch officers, the branch committee, the regional official and other regional officers and circulating letters to people at local, regional and national level;
- (vii) the liaison committee’s approach to Bis and Gordon Weaver to find out what they wanted from NATFHE but this was to no avail;
- (viii) NATFHE head office’s offer of “a re-run of the initial enquiry” but this was turned down by Bis Weaver;
- (ix) the committee’s recognition of the right of individuals to pursue grievances, but Bis Weaver breached the clause of confidentiality in the report by asking the branch committee to comment on issues Day had investigated.

Bis Weaver’s actions were considered to be serious and the branch committee contended that “its work, and...the Branch officer’s capacity to function effectively [had] suffered to the ultimate detriment of the branch,...In the light of [this] the Branch Committee...make two suggestions” – which were two parts of a motion. However, one of the motions – part two,

* The only comment on the details in the ‘report’ made by Bis Weaver in her correspondence with branch officers was the request for the branch chair to draw the regional official’s attention on one item of which she was aware that Day had omitted, namely, the f...ing finger incident

agreed by the branch committee, the day before, had now changed, showing the *kernel*s had sharpened the axe after the branch committee meeting. The chair did not explain the reason for the change in the motion, which now read “that we write to head office seeking a national enquiry to investigate the behaviour of these two members.” By the time the motion was sent on to head office, it had reverted to its original form.⁶

This hardly disguised attack on Bis Weaver was rounded off by an attempt to justify it on the grounds that it “serves to protect: (a) the interests of the branch and branch committee to pursue its legitimate aims/objectives; (b) all parties directly/indirectly associated with the issues; (c) the health and well-being of all parties concerned.”⁷

The statement was a complete distortion of the prevailing situation and the reasons for Bis Weaver’s actions after Day released the ‘report’; and went far beyond what the branch committee agreed the previous day, namely to draw branch members’ attention to the correspondence and the alleged effect it was having on the branch committee’s work plus the added call for a national enquiry. This was no statement of those issues in black and white; it was all shades of grey or, more appropriately, shades of Day.

Nor did the statement deal with Bis Weaver’s reasons for rejecting Day’s ‘report’; the procedural question marks hanging over Day’s enquiry and the false evidence strewn through Day’s ‘report’; or her objections to Gates’ post-report behaviour to her. The only breach of confidentiality came from the chair, herself, in disclosing the confidential March meeting between Bis Weaver and representatives from the Birmingham Liaison Committee. Furthermore, the Chair presented a groundless account of that meeting’s outcome – the failure of the liaison committee’s initiative was down to Triesman’s *dictat* and not to Bis Weaver. This was the usual one-dimensional, jaundiced view served up by officers and officials at all levels of the union. Like latter day *spin* it was a partisan exercise - a sample of what John Stuart Mill described, when he said, it is “Not the violent conflict between parts of the truth, but the quiet suppression of half of it, [that] is the formidable evil.”⁸

After the chair had completed her ‘contribution’, I sought to make a counter-statement but Cave overruled it and further ruled that only questions on the motion could be asked. When I protested about the misleading presentation, Cave ruled me out of order. He seemed in his element, not skulking off to complain to management about an anti-racism letter or participating in the allegations concerning the HMIs visit. Instead, he was in control of the branch meeting and, as a consequence, the chair’s presentation went unchallenged. This was far from being a discussion of Day’s ‘Report’ but it illustrated what Bis Weaver would face if

Triesman authorised the branch to discuss the ‘report’ and she was foolhardy enough to turn up.

Not all branch members were acquiescent. The indomitable Gil Butchere backed me up and let it be known “that a person...involved in the controversy was in the chair” – many of those attending were not aware of Cave’s recent escapade in approaching management over my anti-racism letter. Cave, overlooking the concept of the ‘likelihood of bias’ and the legal maxim that no man can be a judge in his own court, dismissed Gil’s pertinent point by stating that “if [he] could not operate impartially [he] would not occupy the Chair.” However, he did ask “if there was a challenge to the Chair.” The lawyer had spoken and was backed by a member of the business studies department, * who supported the branch executive because “it looked after the interests of the Branch...and to change the Chair would undermine [it].” This was another interesting insight as to how the removal of the rights of a Black woman and her supporter was seen as serving the interests of the branch.

Several members called for me to be given the opportunity to speak and, under this minor outburst of democratic sentiment, Cave yielded to the pressure. I briefly provided limited information on: Bis Weaver being offered the inappropriate Rule 24 with additional conditions; her rejection of Day’s findings due to irregularities in the investigation; the offer of “an ad hoc investigation by two head office officials but head office turned down an enquiry with a wider remit.” However, the misrepresentations embedded in the statement made it difficult, in the few minutes allotted to me, to perform the hatchet job required. Instead, I explained that Bis Weaver’s correspondence sought information on Day’s ‘enquiry’ as “there was the possibility of NATFHE members being involved in unusual circumstances [and] she [was] considering taking a complaint against...the regional official.” I pointed out that if branch officers denied this information to her they were “not providing the protection and assistance that she [was] entitled to as a NATFHE member and, as...a Black person, if treated less favourable than others then it may be a contravention of the Race Relations Act.”

Expanding on Gil Butchere’s point, I let them know that some branch committee members were associated with the issues and, as such, they were “not able to recommend any action [affecting Bis Weaver] because of the likelihood of bias.” The members were also

* This member was to confront Bis Weaver at a later date with some observations that showed the type of people who were prepared to support the *kernels* when they took on ethnic minority members. We dubbed him *Mr ubiquitous*

informed that Bis Weaver had “been given no opportunity to be represented at the meeting * [and that] could be considered as acting against her rights to natural justice.” I strongly “advised the Branch to vote against the motion because...those who vote in favour [were] equally complicit.”

The fairest way for the members to act would have been to do as several suggested and defer the motion until Bis Weaver was able to attend a meeting. This put the branch chair on the defensive and she claimed the motion was “not an attempt to say that Bis Weaver’s case was not proven or not right.” If this was the case why was the Branch being asked to support a motion calling for a national enquiry into Bis Weaver’s’ behaviour?

The chair’s appeal was accompanied by a collection of members rallying to the branch executive. One member, of six years standing, saw my statement as a threat, which she claimed never to have experienced before. Hartland turned the legal implications I raised upside down by claiming that those implications gave him “reasons for supporting the motion,” adding that he did not “get remission time for reading correspondence from branch members,” ** This gave an indication of the extent of his concern for legal responsibilities in the employment situation and for union members’ rights. Another member backed the branch executive for “doing a good job”; called for arbitration to avoid splitting the branch; *** and wanted to put another motion to the branch. The proposal was to hand over decision-making for dealing with members’ correspondence to the branch executive without reference to the membership. This would have given even greater power to the *kernels*, who made up 75% of executive posts. The ‘voice’ articulating this proposal was that of the person receiving *kernel* support when elected as chair of the EO(R) committee six days before. One good turn deserves another seemed to be her maxim! How did this member come to terms, as ‘temporary’ chair of the ‘Race’ committee, with a motion depriving the only Black member of the branch of some of her trade union rights and then giving support to the motion? Downey resurrected his branch committee whinge about people previously coming to see him personally and not writing letters to him; and, with an obvious dig at my contribution, doubted whether he [Downey] would pass the ‘likelihood of bias’ test himself – an assessment that undoubtedly had substance. He did not respond when I asked him to answer Bis Weaver’s questions.

Towards the end of the ‘debate’ the chair admitted “that it would have been more

* I was attending as a member of the branch and, at the time, was not acting as her representative or spokesperson

** Remission time is time off from teaching for administrative duties

*** An alternative to ‘splitting the Left’?

preferable if [Bis Weaver] had been at the meeting...and [revealed that] the Branch Executive had intended approaching her but did not get around to it.” How could they possibly fail to inform her; Bis Weaver was the principal subject/target of the motion?

Cave then called for a vote on the motion. However, some members were still uneasy. One member (SWP) proposed voting separately for the two people (Bis Weaver and Gordon Weaver) in the motion. He did not want Cave’s trip to the manager’s office to be swept under the carpet. It is more than likely that the *kernels* included me in the motion: (i) to give it the appearance of being non-racially discriminatory; and (ii) to shut me up and take the pressure off Cave. Another member wanted the matter left on the table until Bis Weaver returned as he noted that people were already leaving the meeting. Cave did not want to deal with either of these proposals but had no choice with the second proposal when it was pointed out to him that it was a procedural motion.

The proposal to leave the motion on the table until Bis Weaver was available was put to the vote and defeated 18 votes to eight with six abstentions. The substantive motion was then passed, 22 votes to one, which was me, and nine abstentions. As there were only thirty members listed as attending the meeting, either two members did not sign in or two of the visitors put their hands up during the vote.⁹

Triesman’s threat to release Day’s ‘report’ to the branch had ‘come home to roost’ in another form. The substitute hatchet, whichever way it was swung either by Triesman or the *kernels*, struck home just as effectively. The pseudo-Leftist *kernels* had committed a gross breach of trade union principle and natural justice by removing certain services and facilities from Bis Weaver without preferring a charge; without allowing representation to the accused; without convening a hearing before impartial adjudicators; and without a right of appeal. By introducing a motion for the branch to vote on, the branch executive had created a huge smokescreen to give its unconstitutional actions an aura of legitimacy. Mosca, Pareto and the ‘tyranny of the majority’ were alive and kicking in Bournville College.

The agenda also included a motion that “This Branch reaffirms its affiliation to and support for the Anti-Apartheid Movement”, proposed while the branch committee was trying to suppress its own racism issue. However, the time taken to remove trade union rights from the branch’s only Black member had left insufficient time to discuss a motion supporting the rights of Black people a long way from Bournville College.¹⁰ They had been so consumed with taking away Bis Weaver’s rights in the branch that the *kernels* had run out of time. It was not difficult to see where their priorities lay. Was the Anti-Apartheid motion a belated attempt by the *kernels* to glean some credibility as anti-racists whilst simultaneously

introducing its own brand of apartheid – segregating Bis Weaver, the only Black woman, from the same rights as those enjoyed by the Whites in the Branch? Interestingly, this proposal came at the same time as Gates was impressing on Triesman his long association with the Anti-Apartheid Movement in support of his claim of not being a racist.

Another item on the agenda, which also failed to get discussed, was that “The delegate to the Birmingham Liaison Committee anti-racist sub-committee should be co-opted onto the Branch Committee.” This would have created quite a poser had it been debated – co-opt a Black anti-racism delegate to the branch committee at the same time as the committee was removing trade union rights from her. The *kernels* would undoubtedly be extremely reluctant to have the questioning voice of Bis Weaver calling for accountability; or effective anti-racism action; or the protection of the rights of Black members, as regular topics on the branch committee. Needless to say, the branch executive/committee never again placed the ‘delegate motion’ on the agenda and it was left to wither away just as the *kernel*-dominated Bournville branch committee was eventually to do.

The proposals had been engineered in part by the chair-elect and vice chair-elect of the West Midlands region, who were also members of the Broad Left Coalition, the self-styled vanguard of anti-racism. This was an example of NATFHE’s ‘welcoming’ approach to Black participation and the integration of Black members into the union - a welcome specially reserved for Black members who were not prepared to accept their place in NATFHE’s order of things.

The significance of this incident was the relative ease with which the *kernels* arbitrarily removed a number of union rights and mobilised the branch behind the partisan interests of its leading figures as well as preparing the scene for the isolation of Bis Weaver in the college. They had virtually a free hand to say and do as they pleased without any real opposition. NATFHE bureaucracy’s abdication of responsibility for one of its members, to partially paraphrase Day’s comment on Bournville management in his ‘report’, left Bis Weaver increasingly open to this kind of attack.

The kernels had closed down another avenue to Bis Weaver so that she was in a more difficult position to effectively pursue Day’s *Whitewash* and curb the continuous harassment. The *kernels* could get away with it because it was consistent with the path head office was also treading. The motion also showed that Bis Weaver’s detailed exposés of Gates’ actions and Day’s fabricated enquiry, accompanied by my limited contribution, were hitting the target and the *kernels* and head office would stop at nothing to prevent our disclosures circulating to union members. According to reports from ‘friends’ on liaison and regional

committees, the contents of our letters were a source of interest to some committee members and doubts were surfacing in their minds. As a consequence of this limited success, Bis Weaver and I had our rights removed in the union because we dared to exercise those rights.

Gates was now being portrayed by the union as the ‘victim’, which he would himself promote three weeks later when filing allegations against Gil Butchere. Did Gates really consider himself to be a victim with free rein to do anything he pleased? If so, the *kernels* and branch members assisted this process by subordinating the democratic right of a rank and file member to *kernel* authority and to the *dictat* of unelected NATFHE officials in the region and at head office. NATFHE’s own variation of the ‘democratic’ process ruled the roost in *kernelville* and it would soon exhibit itself among the Broad Left Coalition and the West Midlands REC as well as their allies in officialdom. Authoritarianism was the face hidden behind the mask of NATFHE democracy. *

Before the day was out, the chair had despatched the motion and a copy of the statement to the regional and liaison secretaries, with the comment “We hope that the national enquiry might be able to sort something out.”¹¹ The statement and branch motion were then included in the agenda for the next meetings of the REC and Birmingham liaison committee, based on information that “the Branch could not carry out its normal functions because of the letters received.”¹² The ease with which this motion was allowed on to the agendas of these committees, which were advised not to deal in any way with the ‘Weaver case’, showed the influence exerted by the *kernels* and their allies in the Broad Left Coalition.

The chair referred to the statement as having been “passed at the branch meeting”, which was incorrect because the statement was not approved by the branch as they were not asked to do so; no voting took place on the statement – only the motion was voted on. To claim that this one-sided partisan collection of misleading and inaccurate detail was passed at a branch meeting provided an insight into how branch officers interpreted authenticity. This form of authenticity relied on a show of hands by people who voted on something other than the item being presented to the REC. Nor had the officers been authorised by the branch to

* One member of the Broad Left Coalition - a senior officer in the region and an early participant in the Weaver case, Mackney, was to say at a much later date:

If the history of the 20th century teaches us one thing, it is that the rights of minorities, or even of less powerful majorities, are an important component in any definition of democracy. Discrimination is by its very nature often against people who cannot obtain a majority of the votes.¹³

Paul Mackney, as general secretary of NATFHE, made this declaration in 2000 after the Shahroki v NATFHE industrial tribunal cases. (see Chap 21 Sect (c)) If he had held these views in April 1986, it is a great pity he did not act on them, or, at least, express them at the time of the branch motion against Bis Weaver

send the statement or motion to the regional or liaison secretaries for submission to the respective committees.¹⁴ The branch had voted to involve head office by sending future correspondence there and asking it to initiate a national enquiry. But why would the *kernels* spoil a fictitious story with anything that might disclose what really happened?

A consequence that seemed not to have been considered by the *kernels* was that their action would increase the number of people having knowledge of the *kernels* latest venture. The majority of recipients of the statement were NATFHE members, who may or may not confine that information to within the hallowed walls of NATFHE. However, the presence of ‘observers’ at the branch meeting made it more likely that the contents of the statement would probably spread outside the union.

(b) Repositioning the Black

When I arrived home after the branch meeting, a letter from Triesman was waiting for me. He had written in reply to one of my letters sent just under two weeks before. In my letter, I informed Triesman I was “considering submitting a complaint under Rule 8 against Gates” but was concerned that in such a case it was “unlikely that the procedures would pass the test of the likelihood of bias.” After outlining various ways in which bias might enter the procedures by quoting different sub-sections of Rule 8, I had asked if there were any procedures in NATFHE where this possibility was eliminated.¹⁵ This was a letter sent to see the kind of response it elicited. Triesman did not disappoint, although both Bis Weaver and I were surprised he bothered to reply about the interpretation of procedures, which was an area of union activity that seemed not to interest him. He was unimpressed by my query, replying that “I do not accept that issue of bias arises...Our task is constrained, in the final analysis, by behaving sensibly and honourably, in terms of well established procedures...We have a proven track record which we have no need to defend from anyone.”¹⁶ This letter was received on the very day that ‘sensibly and honourably,...well established procedures...[and] proven track record’ – so sparse on the ground in the last fourteen months, had been scattered in the partisan wind blowing through Bournville branch that was sweeping away rules, procedures, commitments to anti-racism, principle, rights of trade unionists and natural rights.

Triesman flashed a few NATFHE ‘catchwords’ having little relevance in Bournville branch, which was eventually shown to have a similar lack of relevance in the West Midlands

REC. Did Triesman really have any idea of what was going on in the workplace? Perhaps he did but had not yet developed the appropriate terminology to describe it. *

The Bournville branch executive – aka *kernels*, had provided a rich source for us to write on. My copious notes captured every contribution and, in the not too distant future, Bis Weaver would be able to rely on a small support base of Black activists inside liaison and regional committees supplying information on what was taking place in those committees. We set up a launching pad for a ‘paper avalanche’ to branch officers and committee members, not quite a ‘bombardment’ since we were unsure whether the letters would be read. However, we were confident that the recipients might find it difficult to resist having a peek - those directly involved keen to discover what we were writing about and others just as keen to find out more information about the ‘kingpins’ in the branch.

The branch executive’s efforts to curb our pursuit of information, which it had inadequately carried out up until then, might, nonetheless, prevent further answers being revealed. However, they would not be able to harness the questions that would be asked or the revelations to be made. The letters, combining inquisition and clarification, were aimed at exposing the spin-doctoring of the *kernels* and hopefully put a dent in their confidence. Gates’ harassment of Bis Weaver; Day’s *Whitewash* enquiry; and the lengths the *kernels*, their local allies and union officials had gone to keep those issues under wraps were covered. The combination of misleading statements; false allegations; unprincipled actions; the anaemic version of ‘anti-racism’ practised; and the heavy coating of *kernel* malice dominating the procedures; kept the ink flowing from her pen. Too much water had gone under the bridge and too much harm dished out to Bis Weaver for anything to deter her from highlighting those issues. For too long she had been forced to wade through a dung-hill of duplicity that NATFHE had piled around her, now she was dredging her way through the bilge to spell out a few home truths. The *kernels*’ attempt to hog tie her with the branch-assisted motion was to be well and truly severed. What could the branch executive do to combat that? Take her rights off her?

In between the branch committee and the branch meetings, Bis Weaver had sent the branch committee and others in NATFHE’s local union structure a letter. ** She registered her concern that the branch committee had discussed matters relating to her correspondence

* In the *Deman v AUT* case an Industrial Tribunal chair was to make an interesting observation on Triesman’s knowledge of matters in the workplace¹⁷

** The letter was copied to branch Committee members, the liaison committee, the REC, and Birmingham NATFHE’s Anti-racism officer

without informing her that these measures were being taken and without ensuring that her interests were represented. This was in contrast to Gates, who, with an interest in the decision, was given an opportunity to contribute directly to the discussion and to vote on the motion. She also pointed out that the committee's neglect of her interests, bearing in mind she was a Black member, was "contrary to the aims set out in NATFHE's policy...as stated in the NATFHE anti-racism pack."¹⁸ This letter had been despatched before the full implications arising from the *kernel's* intentions with regard to her rights became known at the branch meeting.

When the chair's statement with its range of allegations came to her notice that evening, she wrote immediately to draw the branch committee's attention to another implication arising from the motion. This addressed the committee's failure to abide by normal procedures and the right to representation contained within the Race Relations Act 1976. * As Bis Weaver was "not offered...the same facilities as D Gates, there is a possibility that [the committee] may have contravened the...Act."¹⁹

But this was not enough! Telling branch officers, committee members and a few officers in the region and the commissar at head office was unlikely to bring a sea-change in the way this union did its business. An appeal had to be made direct to the wider membership in Bournville College to show how union procedures were manipulated to serve the interests of a few *kernel's*, who were up to their necks in anti-trade union practices. The distribution of a rejoinder to all branch members was required. This task was left to me and I set out to produce one subject to Bis Weaver approving the contents. In the meantime, far from well, she decided to phone Triesman to let him know the latest development, if he did not know already, arising out of NATFHE head office's refusal to conduct an investigation into Gates and Day, which was now turning into a witch-hunt against her. He was out but returned her call the next day.²⁰

Bis Weaver informed him of the outcome of the branch meeting; of her absence from the meeting; and of the lack of representation for her; while Gates had attended; been a participant; and voted on the motion. She explained she was ill with back problems – one of the signs of stress, which prevented her from attending the meeting. Triesman sympathised with her for her state of health, extending his sympathy by speaking of his own bad back,

* Section 11 point 3 RRA 1976 states that "It is unlawful for an organisation to...discriminate against [a member] in the way it affords...access to any benefits, facilities or services, or by refusing or deliberately omitting to afford him/her access to them"

which no doubt was not the result of continual harassment. Triesman mentioned he would come to the branch at some undefined time in the future for some undefined purpose, as if that would relieve the on-going pressure piled on her by Gates and his co-conspirators. This was another proposal serving the interests of the union but doing nothing to aid Bis Weaver. It looked like opportunism on his part when he urged her to take out a Rule 8 complaint against Gates. Triesman had apparently put aside his caveat of January that Rule 8 was a laborious procedure, confirmed by Mackney a couple of weeks before in a letter also sent to Triesman. Triesman then disclosed that Gates failed to win a seat on the National Council, as if that was any sort of consolation to her.

Triesman had opened the conversation with what appeared to be an empathetic response but he offered nothing constructive to resolve her difficulties. Nor did he tell her, and it never came out until the Industrial Tribunal hearing, of his recently arrived at conclusion that Gates was not a racist and that this conclusion was based solely on a letter from Gates. Triesman's reluctance to disclose this judgement, which apparently gave *carte blanche* to Gates, said little for Triesman's comment two months earlier when he wrote that "I must make available to other concerned parties a copy of what I had proposed so nobody can suggest that Head Office has been secretive. This step is simply to ensure that everyone is properly informed."²¹ Just like the regional senior lay officer, he did not disclose important information to her when presented with an opportunity to do so. Sauce for the bureaucratic geese was certainly not sauce for the gander.

Bis Weaver was determined to ensure that every branch member received a copy of the rejoinder, therefore, a list of members' names was required. To get the list, she phoned the branch secretary but, when she asked for the list, was hit by an additional restriction arising out of the branch motion. Apparently, the branch secretary needed to obtain branch committee permission to release the list because "the Branch members had passed a resolution to send every request to Head Office." As Bis Weaver pointed out the motion applied only to written correspondence and not oral contact, but the branch secretary was adamant that she must refer the request to the branch committee. Waiting for a branch committee decision, even if it was within its powers, would create even more difficulties as the next meeting was not scheduled until the 21st May.

Bis Weaver informed the secretary of her contact with Triesman and of having informed him of the motion. Dropping Triesman's name certainly had an effect as the branch secretary moved away from seeking the branch committee's approval to replace it with her intention to speak to Triesman. The branch executive was making it up as it went along.

Triesman had yet to be formally informed of the motion and we thought he might have already recognised the motion to be an infringement of Bis Weaver's rights and that any scrutiny of her correspondence by NATFHE head office officials might be considered *ultra vires* and reject the task offered to them. This turned out to be another pipedream!

Bis Weaver decided to raise other issues with the branch secretary, orally, which was beyond the restriction applied by the motion and was the method of contact approved of and preferred by that union stalwart – Downey. This provided an opportunity to see what emerged and to determine how committed was this anti-racist lay officer to those principles she espoused in branch meetings.

The secretary was asked straight out if she thought Bis Weaver had a right of reply to the statement. The secretary's response was plainly stated as "The issue was raised at a Branch meeting and [she - Bis Weaver]...cannot reply in writing." This interpretation was incorrect because a right of reply – for or against - was never raised at the branch meeting and, furthermore, several members had expressed a desire for Bis Weaver to put her side of the case and they did not specify either written or oral. The secretary seemed incapable of understanding a rejoinder was one possible way for Bis Weaver to address the contents of the chair's statement. Did she not accept that a person accused of disrupting the branch and then penalised for it had the right to a defence? The branch secretary seemed of the opinion that once the branch had spoken, however unjust was its decree, Bis Weaver was required to comply – a kind of 'the union could do no wrong' philosophy.

The secretary had to be made aware of the implications of the branch committee's actions of which she had been a willing party. Bis Weaver asked her to "suggest how a rank and file member, the only Black woman in the Branch, can be given the right of reply. Can [she – Bis Weaver] have a Branch meeting? Do[es she] have the support of the Branch Committee...the Branch Executive...the Bournville Branch?" And the most poignant comments "Can I count on your support [and] Did you protest that I was not represented or invited to state my case at the Branch meeting?" Bis Weaver was met with silence, then came two comments from her: "I am in a difficult position," followed by the claim of having looked "for [her] to apologise...for not informing [her] of the meeting."

Bis Weaver required no apology "but the right of reply." As far as she was concerned, the secretary's actions were those of someone not to be taken "seriously as an anti-racist or for a democratic union." To support her view, she drew attention to the secretary voting "for a White person to chair the Race Relations sub-Committee - "the only sub-Committee out of 17 in the College where a Black woman can envisage being nominated and voted as Chair

and even this was not possible because of a vote by ‘Union’ Committee members.” In return, “they had a vote of confidence in the Branch meeting [from] the [same] White woman...when [Bis Weaver’s] rights were taken from [her].” This was “a case of ‘you scratch my back I’ll scratch yours’” and it did not matter whose back was scratched “as long as it [was] not a Black person’s.” Bis Weaver hoped that “as a Labour party member...[the secretary] will support a Black person to fully participate in decision making processes.” She took the opportunity to dispense a few home truths and this virtually one-sided conversation ended with the branch secretary’s intention to phone Triesman. Shortly afterwards, the branch secretary phoned to say Triesman had given instructions for the list to be made available.²² What kind of a union was this – a full-time official telling the branch what to do while the branch ignores the rights of its members. The secretary also asked her what she thought about “a possible visit from David Triesman to the Branch.” Bis Weaver certainly had “things to speak to Triesman about on [her] own and...nominate [her] own representatives to be present.”

While the rejoinder was being prepared a number of letters were sent to the branch executive and committee. These letters were informative as well as inquisitorial and gave the recipients the opportunity to compare their actions with their professed political and philosophical doctrines.

The machinations taking place after the branch committee meeting and before the branch meeting, undoubtedly organised by the *kernel*s, resulting in a changed agenda were drawn to their attention and linked to my protests at the branch meeting. The branch executive was asked “when it was decided to...change the agenda...and who decided it; and...to change the agreed statement and who decided that?” It was pointed out that one of the changes had extended the scope of the motion from the one agreed. This resulted in the inclusion of “the whole of the correspondence from B Weaver and [G Weaver]” even though the chairperson said at the branch meeting that “the correspondence of B Weaver and [G Weaver] were not concerned with the same issues.”

The branch chair’s statement also came under scrutiny. The greater part of that statement was devoted to Bis Weaver and “was not in accordance with the Branch Committee’s decision.” Protests had been made at the meeting about the executive making no effort to ensure Bis Weaver had representation at the meeting and, although I was the representative of the department she was in, “without advice or authority from Bis Weaver...I was unable to provide the...representation to which she was entitled.”²³

Bis Weaver referred to the chair, “whose association with these issues [has] already [been] mentioned to the Executive in the context of the likelihood of bias.” As for the chair’s statement, that was condemned as “misleading” and its contents seen as “prejudicial to [her] interests...and the discussion directed to it in the Branch might be considered by the reasonable person to contravene [her] trade union rights and [her] rights to natural justice.”²⁴ The chair had “accused [Bis Weaver] of breaching the rules of confidentiality” and also misled the branch over her “meeting with Officers from Liaison and...the ‘supposed’ offer of a ‘re-run’ of the initial enquiry.” The claim made of Bis Weaver attacking the integrity of branch committee members was also rejected because “no Branch Committee member who acted impartially should in anyway feel that his/her integrity was questioned.” But she did raise the inappropriateness of the discussion taking “place in the presence of D Gates, who...mentioned [her] by name and [her] rejection of [Day’s] ‘Report’, and actually voted on the issue of [her] correspondence.”

Several other points were made in the correspondence dealing with other elements of the motion, hidden or neglected by the *kernels*. In a joint letter, the wording of part (a) of the motion was given a literal interpretation. It referred to “all FUTURE correspondence,” therefore, “we would respectfully request that the Branch Executive and Branch Committee honours its obligations to...Gordon Weaver and Bismillah Weaver by responding to the correspondence which it... received prior to 1.15 pm on the 29th April 1986” - the time when the motion came into effect. We distinguished between the two types of correspondence - Bis Weaver’s correspondence sought answers concerning the ‘enquiry’ whereas my correspondence asked for branch action against Gates and Cave.

The branch executive’s purported aims for proposing the motion were contrasted with the reasons why Bis Weaver had sent letters to branch committee members. According to the branch executive, the reason behind “the introduction and passing of this motion was based on the ‘interests of the Branch and Branch Committee to pursue its legitimate aims/objectives’” We pointed out that “the correspondence [to] which [the Branch Committee] should now respond...falls within the category [of legitimate aims/objectives because: “(a) the right of women and Black people to work without abuse and harassment [was] a legitimate aim/objective”; (b) “the members’ right to have Branch Committee members accountable for their actions [was] a legitimate aim/objective” and (c) “members have a right to express legitimate and progressive anti-racist views without those views being discussed with and criticised to Management by Branch Officers in formal meetings.” The

committee was again requested to respond to the correspondence in accordance with “the Branch Committee’s obligations to members, Rule 21.1.2 and Rule 2.1.”²⁵

In a second joint letter, a further breach of procedures was raised over the status of the four people at the meeting from Weoley Castle Adult Education College and one from Handsworth Technical College - a liaison committee member.²⁶ The point being made was that outsiders should not be present at any meeting involving case work; nor should case work be discussed in the presence of Bournville non-branch committee members.

The wider implications of the motion as different from its obvious restrictions were addressed. The motion “not only denied [her] the right to ask questions of the Branch Executive or Branch Committee but also has been interpreted to [deny] access to individual branch members without...permission of Head Office”, as shown on the 30th April when she was denied “access to Branch members until D Triesman had been consulted. The interpretation by the branch secretary was described as “an unusual way to satisfy the rights of Black people within NATFHE” and she pointed to those rights being “covered by the Race Relations Act.” Nor was she given any indication of how long she was “going to be deprived of [her] democratic and trade union rights.” She contrasted that with the fact that the branch executive/committee “have never questioned D Gates’ rights not only to have access to the Branch Committee and information but also to sit on it and to vote.”²⁷ Control of information as the real intent of the motion was unmistakable because if her letters interfered with the work of branch officers, as was claimed as the reason for introducing the motion, how could correspondence to branch members interfere with branch officer’s work? It seemed to matter little that this correspondence (rejoinder) was not directed to the Branch Committee.” She then posed the question, “What next”?

She also referred to the branch committee’s intention “to recommend that the Branch should co-opt [her] to the Branch Committee [as she is] the delegate to the Anti-racism sub-committee, a Black person and a ‘specialist’ in anti-racism.” She contrasted this with what actually happened at the 29th April branch meeting. Instead of branch members being presented with this proposal, they received a statement containing “allegations against [her] which were not true.” She informed the secretary and committee that the restrictions on her rights would be brought to the attention of the BLCARC, WMARC, the ARNP, regional and liaison secretaries, not knowing that the *kernels* had already submitted the branch motion to region and liaison committees, as well as to Triesman.²⁸

Bringing a few home truths to committee members was a feature of these letters; confronting them with their apparent limited understanding of the concept of natural justice;

their limited commitment to anti-racism and the rights of ethnic minorities. The undemocratic practices witnessed by *non-kernels* should have caused some concern because the *kernels* manipulated the committee's decision and transformed it into something different. However, at the branch meeting none but Gil Butchere protested about the motion with a few others disagreeing as the target was not present – the rest merely acquiesced.

One letter for a specific committee member was sent via the branch executive. Downey had made it clear on two occasions that he did not like correspondence, preferring face-to-face contact, or so we were led to believe. Therefore, the branch executive was requested to ask face-to-face questions on her behalf. The questions concerned Downey's position on the branch committee when he attended the meeting to determine who would investigate her complaint as it was possible he did not hold a branch post at the time. He was asked "in what capacity [had] he sat on the Branch Committee on the 18th June 1985." To make his task less onerous and to avoid any misunderstanding – rather like writing to Triesman, the questions were: "Was he attending as a representative of the Branch? If so, what position was he holding?" Or did he attend "as a co-opted member? If so, what was the date of his co-option?"; or "as Chair of Birmingham Liaison Committee? If so, did he report back to the Birmingham Liaison Committee?"²⁹ No answer was expected and the letter was merely for the record to show yet again that 'like-stick-with-like' but, of course, there was now a motion to hide behind. No answer came!

The *kernels* made the most of openly attacking Bis Weaver, however, the motion to prevent her securing information was of little consequence as the important questions were unlikely to be answered anyway. One of the *kernels'* intentions was to put a stop to her correspondence being read and this was virtually a non-starter because neither the *kernels* nor the other recipients would be likely to overcome their curiosity of what information was being circulated.

The rejoinder was completed on the 4th May. It opened with the branch secretary's refusal to provide "a list of members to enable [Bis Weaver] to exercise [her] democratic and trade union right of reply." She explained that the correspondence referred to in the statement consisted of requests for information from some of the membership to assist in the pursuit of her grievances. The inappropriateness of the executive's action was shown by placing a motion on her correspondence on the agenda of a branch committee meeting where Gates, with "a direct interest in the decision", was in attendance, whereas Bis Weaver was not even informed of the meeting or that such an item would be discussed.

The statement approved by the branch committee for circulation to the branch was supposed to deal with matters relating to the alleged amount of correspondence “creating difficulties for the Branch Committee [which it proposed]...should be directed to Head Office. No mention was made of including...matters relating to [Bis Weaver’s] complaint against D Gates.”

Points raised in letters to the branch executive and committee were included – the likelihood of bias on the part of the branch chair; the misleading information dealing with discussions with liaison representatives and the ‘re-run’ enquiry; the alleged breach of confidentiality; and the alleged questioning of the integrity of branch committee members. Overall, the chair’s statement was described as prejudicial to Bis Weaver’s interests and a contravention of her trade union rights and rights to natural justice.

Brief details were also provided of events in June 1985 involving discussions between the regional official and local officers, including Gates, and the implications arising from those discussions but the rejoinder kept away from the specifics of Bis Weaver’s complaints against Gates and the regional official, focussing instead on their misleading statements, false allegations and the misuse of procedures.

She rounded off with a request for members to find out when the decision was made to change the contents of the branch chair’s statement and who made the decision.³⁰

The rejoinder was typed on a stencil and, the next day, I went to collect the list. The obstacles continued with the branch secretary refusing to allow me to use the branch’s duplicating machine to run off the rejoinder despite my taking a ream of paper to carry out the task. With the list of members and the paper in my hands, I set off in search of someone with a machine. The students' union at Birmingham Polytechnic allowed me to use theirs after I explained the intent of the rejoinder. On returning to college the rejoinder was distributed to all members via their college pigeonholes. Why did Bis Weaver need the list of members when all I did was put the rejoinder in pigeon holes? The answer was simple – not all staff members were in NATFHE - other unions operated in Bournville College and there were also non-union members of staff. We sought to avoid an accusation by NATFHE’s ‘biting dogs’ of involving non-NATFHE members in NATFHE affairs. However, the rejoinder stirred little observable interest because when Bis Weaver eventually returned to college only two members of staff approached her. The first was a member of an ethnic minority, an Armenian - another invisible person, who expressed support for her and asked if

there was anything he could do to assist her. * The other was the *Mr ubiquitous*, sporting a different facial make-up, but delivering similar *spiel*, who went out of his way to tell her why he “voted for the Branch motion.” But when she asked if she “had a right to make that decision as well” by being at the meeting, his response was that she “could have attended.” When that was shown not to be possible – she was ill and did not know the intent of the meeting, he brushed it aside with the ‘observation’ that Gordon Weaver had represented her.³¹ He obviously did not read the rejoinder but this was the calibre of support now available to the *kernels*.

It was an invisible rejoinder from an invisible person understood only by one other invisible person from Armenia.

The following day the branch secretary formally wrote to Triesman enclosing a copy of the statement, which he already knew of from his telephone conversation with Bis Weaver. The secretary reproduced the same misleading claim of the statement being passed by the branch and that vote showed the membership’s concern about the amount of correspondence from Bis and Gordon Weaver. The second part of the motion had reverted to its original form when initially presented to the branch committee: “That there should be a national enquiry into the situation.” The recent “five letters...from the Weavers” were also enclosed. The secretary wanted to know what head office proposed to do as “the situation [was] having a detrimental effect on the Branch as a whole and...an early solution [was] both advisable and necessary – preferably with the enquiry being dealt with before the end of the Summer term (July ’86).”³² Mackney was right about the complaint being no ‘end-of-Summer-term tiff’ although he obviously did not see his caveat stretching out until the Summer term 1986!

Whether head office officials were parties to events in the college was never established, although we had our suspicions, but the actions of the *kernels* did complement head office’s objective in closing down all union avenues to Bis Weaver. This reaffirmed the view we held that by refusing to surrender to the *diktat* of officialdom and accept another *Kangaroo court*, she was to be cut off from all assistance in the expectation that she would leave the union. Her resignation would solve the problem as the cases against Gates and Day within the union would evaporate. Or, alternatively, with no other avenues available for redress, she might crawl back to head office to ask for some union-determined respite. Maybe these possible outcomes were too subtle for the branch executive to figure out for itself and,

* He had witnessed the outburst at the EO(R)C meeting on the 23rd April

if this was the case, it added weight to the possibility of head office involvement. * However, the *kernels*' determination to squeeze her until the pips squeaked probably went much further than was acceptable for head office, who wanted the issue laid to rest. The *kernels* had gone too far in calling for a national investigation into the activities of Bis and Gordon Weaver, which the national officials certainly did not want. Triesman's initial option of an informal enquiry and then trying to channel her into the inappropriate Rule 8 seemed to be confirmation of this. **

We were writing for the record because there appeared to be no way out of this grinding machine. Perhaps, something might turn up but we had little idea of what it might be. We picked on certain points to stress but had no particular direction to follow – it was a pick and mix approach but there were plenty of irregularities to write about. Whilst these loopholes represented cracks in NATFHE's stonewall edifice, these cracks remained virtually unseen but, like the invisible complainant, not for long. Bis Weaver picked up on the chair's breach of confidentiality – explaining that the approach made by officers “on behalf of the Birmingham Liaison Committee Executive [was] to discuss in *complete confidentiality* aspects of [Bis Weaver's] complaint against D Gates...[but this] was made public in [the Branch] statement.” She wanted to know “who brought the confidential information to the attention of the Branch Committee” and when?; “which members...were present when it was decided to disclose...this confidential information to the Branch membership?...[and] why the Branch Committee decided to disclose this confidential information to the Branch?” Expecting them to hide behind the branch motion, she reminded them “the issue involves a serious breach of confidentiality on the part of the Branch Committee and its disclosure...was...prejudicial to [her] interests.”³³

A couple of days before, she had contacted the liaison secretary, to inform him the confidential discussion between herself and liaison delegates had been made public in a statement produced by the Bournville chair. She wrote that “Apart from the fact the statement is misleading and does not represent the discussion that took place”, she wanted to know “if [the] BLC authorised this confidential discussion to be disclosed to the Branch” and if not what action could the liaison committee take.³⁴ Bis Weaver already knew the discussion was

* The crude operating technique of the *kernels* and their allies in the Broad Left Coalition in the West Midlands region, with or without other external advice, was graphically demonstrated between October 1986 and May 1987.

** When Triesman visited Bournville branch on the 12th June 1986, he asked the branch committee to withdraw this part of the branch motion.³⁵

not reported back to the liaison committee, it had been prevented by Triesman's *diktat* to the secretary not to involve liaison in the 'Weaver case', therefore, it must have been leaked by someone on the executive committee.

The discussion Bis Weaver had with liaison representatives centred on what kind of action she wanted, which was the same as she told Triesman in February 1986. The point now being made to both the branch committee and the liaison committee was that rules, procedures and protocol did not apply to *kernel*s who rode roughshod over everything and everybody in pursuing their own interests.

Discovering another loophole, Bis Weaver wrote to Downey pointing out that her letter (27th April) was "not covered by what could be described as an attempt to stifle legitimate questions", otherwise known as the branch motion, as it "was not sent to the Branch Committee but to" Downey as an individual. Noting Downey had "taken exception to [her] ask[ing] questions in writing," nonetheless, she saw it as important for questions to "be clearly recorded to avoid what could be considered as an unsubstantiated informal discussion." Repeating Downey's electoral commitment as a delegate to the liaison Committee "to open, accountable trade unionism", she expected him to "honour those obligations by answering the questions...that [she] asked."³⁶ This was the same election when she lost out to Nedjat.

Downey could not possibly consider the previous letter sent to him interfered in the operation of the branch or that the motion covered correspondence sent out to any member of the branch. That would be even more dictatorial than the motion intended. What next, NATFHE's Gulag!

Several weeks had passed since first writing to Nedjat and nothing had turned up, so another letter went by recorded delivery. The questions asked in the previous correspondence were repeated. To try to secure a response, as with the others, she drew attention to his electoral platform, articulated by Gates, as "a Black person...able to represent the Black voice at Liaison [and] if this was part of [his] platform," she called on him "to provide [her] with information."³⁷ Like all the others – electoral addresses failed to be turned into action.

The branch chair's monopoly contribution to the statement warranted her getting a missive of her own. The letter brought together a number of points already raised with branch committee members – "misleading information, confidential information, unfounded allegations [and matters]...prejudicial to [Bis Weaver's] interests." In a nutshell, the statement was the instrument delivering this prejudicial treatment. Further criticism covered the chair's failure to disclose that: (a) Day's 'Report' had been officially distributed to a

number of people in the union – the unofficial distribution was left aside, therefore, she had “a right to address [herself] to those who [had] access to the ‘Report’”; (b) she had “rejected the ‘Report’ because [Day] had failed to address [it] to [her] complaints against D Gates”; (c) she had asked “legitimate questions...in the light of the ‘unusual’ occurrences surrounding [Day’s] ‘investigation’”; and (d) it was the chair, who was “responsible for the selection of witnesses to see A Day, an activity that the reasonable person might consider would not satisfy the likelihood of bias test bearing in mind the close trade union and social relationship between D Gates and [the Chair].” The chair was also criticised for inaccurately disclosing information of a confidential nature while making unfounded allegations against Bis Weaver of breaching the confidentiality of Day’s ‘report’. To put the chair right, she quoted page 24 point 9 (i) & (ii) to show that at no time had she breached the confidentiality clause.

Bis Weaver described the reasons cited, by the chair, for producing the statement and motion as spurious because the correspondence could hardly prevent the branch committee from operating efficiently because “the only people who need answer [were] those [with] access to information and this should...take [them only] a short time to complete [as] several members of the Branch Committee, including [the Chair] have supplied [her] with information already.”

Having dealt with substantive points, reasons were put forward to show what the reasonable person might consider were the grounds for producing the statement. Bis Weaver “had made a complaint against a Branch Officer, who was a close friend of [the Chair], and because [she] asked” branch committee member’s questions, she “was being victimised by having...unfounded allegations made against [her] and... denied access to information from Branch Officers, who [were] there to represent NATFHE members.” Quoting from section 11.3 of the Race Relations Act, she wrote that “the reasonable person might think that because a Black person [made] a complaint against a white union official (officer), the Black person [was] victimised by discriminating ‘against him/her...in the way it [the institution] affords him/her access to any benefits, facilities or services, or by refusing or deliberately omitting to afford him/her access to them...or varying the terms on which he/she is a member...or by subjecting him/her to any other detriment.’”

At the end of the letter, the chair was informed that the executive had opened the door to outsiders to become acquainted with internal union affairs as she had been contacted by people – non-NATFHE members, about the statement, “*signed by S Pattinson on behalf of the Branch Committee.*”³⁸ The latter revelation was to haunt the *kernels*, local NATFHE officers and head office officials in the not too distant future.

Branch committee members were now fully aware of the gross mischief performed by the *kernels* under their name. Whether or not this knowledge would have any effect on them would be judged at the next branch meeting arranged for the 14th May. Determined not to allow the *kernels* to ride roughshod over her completely, Bis Weaver, having recovered sufficiently to return to work, had prepared a short piece to read to the branch. The meeting convened but the minutes of the previous meeting were not available and, as this absence appeared intentional to avoid dealing with ‘matters arising’, I questioned their non-appearance on those grounds. With this one avenue for raising the ‘right of reply’ showing a ‘no-entry’ sign, Bis Weaver skirted that obstacle by directly asking for a right of reply to the branch chair’s statement. Ms Pattinson, in the chair, again illustrating the concept of ‘likelihood of bias’, referred to the written rejoinder put out by Bis Weaver as being her ‘right of reply’ and “ruled that no right of reply would be allowed.” * Bis Weaver insisted on having the same right that Ms Pattinson had exercised, which was to put out a written statement and to speak to its contents. She also protested at having no representation at the previous meeting. The chair asked if she was challenging her ruling and Bis Weaver said she was. Cave assumed the chair and decided to allow one speaker for and one against the challenge to the chair’s decision.

Bis Weaver reminded the branch “she should have been entitled to representation at the last meeting when a statement was distributed and an oral presentation was made. Therefore, she should have the right of reply at this meeting. The branch secretary, who tended towards displaying loyalty to NATFHE - known as union patriotism, “spoke against the challenge” citing as reasons: (i) “there were a number of issues that must have priority...and resolutions to be debated” and (ii) “the minutes of the last meeting had not yet been produced.” The first point showed little consideration for a member’s right to contest allegations made against them. The second point was confirmation of our suspicion that the minutes were held back for this very purpose. The secretary suggested that Bis Weaver spoke at a later, but unspecified, date. On this basis as long as the branch executive kept a full agenda and failed to produce the minutes, she would never get the opportunity to reply. Ms Pattinson then began to speak against the challenge and I reminded Cave of his decision to

* In the formal minutes, not released until the 26th June, no mention was made of Ms Pattinson refusing Bis Weaver a right of reply. Two additions were also made to the minutes that did not occur – the branch secretary was said to have agreed that “Biz (sic) was entitled to a right of reply’, which was not said but seemed to have been inserted to support the claim that the only reason for refusing her a right of reply was the heavy agenda. Nor did Bis Weaver reserve her right of reply for the next branch meeting as claimed in the minutes

allow only one speaker for and against. By some strange logic Cave announced that, as Ms Pattinson was the chairperson, she “was entitled to speak” overlooking the fact that she was temporarily not the chair having vacated it a few minutes before in order for Cave to assume that role. This had no effect on Cave and after Ms Pattinson made her contribution along the lines set out by the branch secretary, the challenge was put to the vote and of the forty-one members in attendance only three voted in favour of the motion, with sixteen against, six abstentions and sixteen not even bothering to lift their arms. Cave announced the result and returned the chair, as he put it, “to the capable hands of Sue Pattinson.” This was the same Cave who announced at the previous meeting that he would not take the chair unless he knew he could remain impartial. The *kernel*s gave a strong impression of wallowing in the dominance they held in the branch! Ms Pattinson resumed the chair and was immediately put under pressure by two speakers to allow Bis Weaver to reply. As a result, she agreed to allow her to speak at the end of the meeting if there was time.

On the agenda was a motion proposed by the branch secretary, who had just spoken against the only Black member in the branch having the right to reply to a scurrilous statement. The motion called on the branch “to reaffirm its affiliation to and support for the Anti-Apartheid Movement.” The objective was to give the branch the opportunity to express support for Black people in South Africa and this was to be achieved by: (i) organising a meeting; (ii) arranging a social gathering; and (iii) leafleting Tesco’s in Northfield.

In supporting the motion, I said it was reassuring to see the branch doing “something positive for Black people in South Africa...facing intimidation, harassment, abuse, denial of the rights of representation [and I] hoped that the Branch Executive and the Branch would generalise the solidarity and support offered to Black brothers and sisters in South Africa to Black people in Britain and in this college,...[who also] needed support and their rights of representation protected.” Bis Weaver followed on by reminding “the Branch that it had just voted to prevent her from speaking to the meeting and [had] disregarded her rights of representation.” This petition fell on deaf ears but it did prompt some dialogue because Ms Pattinson suggested that Bis Weaver “might like to help Black people by helping to organise some events.” This just about summed up the branch’s commitment to Black South Africans, that is, have a few social events with a token Black fronting the branch’s anti-apartheid gigs – a slight upgrade from the ‘kitchen door’. Bis Weaver’s response was that she did not need to be taught “how to support Black people as she lives the life of a Black person every day.” It brought to mind, Steve Biko, the prominent anti-apartheid activist in South Africa, who said

“Not only are they kicking us they are telling us not to react to being kicked.”*

A number of members, almost falling over themselves in their haste to support the motion, spoke enthusiastically in its favour, and when the motion was put to the vote it was passed unanimously by the forty plus people there. We stood witness to this hypocrisy where the branch was prepared to support the rights of Black people several thousand miles away but acquiesced when a Black member's rights were removed on their doorstep and were unwilling to give that Black member a platform to speak against the arbitrary recommendations of the branch executive. The branch's reaffirmation of support for anti-apartheid was an obvious attempt to glean some credibility as anti-racists while simultaneously introducing its own brand of apartheid, or more accurately *Baaskap*, by segregating the only Black member from the White members in the branch by providing her with fewer rights.

The meeting went on to discuss a number of other issues and by 1.25 pm most people had left and the meeting became inquorate. Bis Weaver was then generously granted the 'right of reply' to a virtually empty meeting. She abandoned her original intention and in the space of the couple of minutes allotted to her told the remnants that “the Branch's prevarication has taken away...her right to be heard” while it “raises motions about the rights of Black people in South Africa.” She asked the Branch “what the Branch intended doing about her rights.” Ms Pattinson defended her own position by reiterating that the branch had voted against a right of reply but had allowed her to speak at the end. Bis Weaver rebutted this 'generosity' by sardonically saying “The Branch should be proud of itself [for what it had done] today.”³⁹

Immediately after the meeting, Bis Weaver wrote to the branch committee to make her views known on the charade she had just witnessed and to put the events on the record. She described the way she was treated in the meeting as showing that “on the issue of the rights of Black members, those Officers have: [i] little 'sensitivity' to the vulnerability of Black people or to their interests [and] [ii] that [Black members] should have equal rights and facilities without first having to ask for the membership's agreement.” To deny her “the same facility and to offer [her] the less favourable option of being heard at the end of the meeting

* Steve Biko, Black consciousness leader in apartheid South Africa, sustained serious injuries while in police detention on the 7th September 1977 causing his death several days later. South African Minister of Justice, in an attempted cover up, falsely blamed Steve Biko's death on a hunger strike. The South African government then stifled all protests by banning individuals and organisations associated with Steve Biko. In 1997 the *Truth and Reconciliation* hearings found Steve Biko's death to be “a gross Human Rights violation.”⁴⁰

when, as most people know the attendance declines to an iniquorate number..., shows that NATFHE's policy of promoting the interests of Black people is just a paper commitment....Like an increasing number of Black people in this society, [she was] rapidly coming to realise that there is a considerable gulf between the rhetoric of support for the rights of Black people and the actual practice..."⁴¹

The activity engaged in by the *kernel*s went from misinformation and false allegations as in the branch statement to adopting an increasing level of lobbying and tailoring it to suit individual members. Immediately after the meeting, Bis Weaver asked a member of the branch's women's panel why she voted against her right of reply. The reason put forward by this panel member was that she had been told by a branch committee member that Gordon Weaver had voted in the branch committee (8th May) not to support her appointment to a temporary lecturer's post. This I certainly did not do nor would I call for the revocation of a member's contract of employment. Not only that, the branch committee was in no position to seek to revoke a member's contract of employment, although in this branch anything was possible bearing in mind the previous attempts to remove Bis Weaver from her job. But even if I had taken such an irresponsible and injudicious step what did that have to do with this 'feminist and anti-racist' denying another member, in this case a Black woman member, the right of reply.⁴²

Shortly afterwards I spoke to this woman. I outlined the discussion that took place at the branch committee meeting, which had been on the general principle of advertising posts. In the discussion, one committee member turned it into a personal issue as he coveted the post to which she had been appointed. The question of a vote on her appointment never arose. My contribution in the discussion was that "the permanent Lecturer's post in Sociology should be open to competition in accordance with the principles of equal opportunities." I was unfamiliar "with the circumstances of her appointment as an Associate Lecturer but she had a legal contract of employment, which would make any action [by the Branch Committee] futile." I stressed the point to her that "there were a lot of people in the College who would knife me in the back [and] that [both] Bis Weaver and I had a lot of enemies who would tell her and others anything to isolate Bis." I advised her to "be cautious when people attribute to me any statements."⁴³

The ease with which the chair's statement and the committee's motion were accepted by branch members; the lack of response to the rejoinder; the refusal of the basic right to address one's accusers face to face, and the general atmosphere in the college, demonstrated the strength of the lobbying done by the *kernel*s and the receptivity of the membership to the

‘information’ fed to them whatever its content. As briefly referred to above, * this rumour-spreading was illustrated in a chance meeting I had with a branch member – one time branch officer before the *kernels* came to dominate the branch. He appeared somewhat distant and spoke of a “personal dispute that had got out of hand” and of Bis Weaver “want[ing] only Black people and women to investigate the complaint.” I pointed out that this was inaccurate but that seemed to pass him by and he thought “the issue had gone too far.”⁴⁴ That was as far as the conversation went. His interpretation surprised me because, on the 23rd April, we had a conversation about the specific incidents making up the complaint and the general issues raised by the case. For this member, who always came across as fair-minded to be under the impression that Bis Weaver asked for an investigation team of that particular composition and for him to accept the ‘rumour’ without question, shows there must have been a considerable amount of lobbying going on around the time the branch executive launched its assault on Bis Weaver’s rights in the branch. Appealing to the Branch membership to do the right thing was a lost cause as it probably always had been.

On the same day, Bis Weaver received a note of a different flavour saying “I do not know exactly what’s going on but I can see the effect it is having on you. I feel helpless knowing that I cannot do anything to help but I wish you all the best in your struggle. Be strong.”⁴⁵ This note came from a Black woman student on the Access course, previously taught by Bis Weaver. This student had seen no more, perhaps much less, than members of staff but she had identified more from her observations and was prepared to offer moral support while the majority of staff did nothing or actually acted against Bis Weaver’s interests. The ‘invisible people’ see what the ‘visible people’ cannot.

Despite not knowing where this whole sorry saga was taking us, one thing that was becoming apparent was that it was not going anywhere with the branch and similarly going nowhere with the leading lights among NATFHE’s lay-officer caste, who were the targets of her appeals for assistance. The time had since passed for assistance the ‘radical anti-racist activists’, or more accurately those who perceived themselves in that image. The answer was simple - dispense with them!

Ms Whitbread was the first in the queue and, despite her April letter not worthy of a reply, the policy, as already stated, was not to allow anything directed at Bis Weaver to go unchallenged and this provided another opportunity to get more on the record. The President’s patronising and myopic conclusion of her letter was dealt with first. Ms

* Chapter V sect (d)

Whitbread had claimed that Bis Weaver had “misinterpreted the motives of various NATFHE lay persons and officials who have genuinely tried to help, and [she was] sorry that should happen.” Bis Weaver did recognise there were “some lay officers...prepared to offer...assistance within the context of [her] rights as a trade unionist” but they were not the ones alluded to by Ms Whitbread. Those now rallying to her support had not been aware of her “complaint against D Gates until after [Day’s] ‘Report’ was distributed. However, the same cannot be said of a number of lay officials (officers) who were aware of her complaint” before the ‘enquiry’ was conducted. She enclosed recent correspondence to “assure [Ms Whitbread] that [her] rights as a trade unionist were hardly protected by these officials [officers] and...there [was] little to suggest these officials [officers] ‘have genuinely tried to help’ [and] If they have been trying to help it most certainly wasn’t to help [her].”

She rejected the President’s speculative interpretation of what she had faced and was still having to face. The President “should appreciate that this [was] not a question of sorting out interpersonal problems between members [because she] was systematically abused, harassed and discredited by D Gates, and attempts to discredit [her] have continued since [Day’s] ‘report’ was distributed...on the 25th November.” The letter concluded with a pertinent observation that “Until NATFHE Officers realise that the attacks on [her were] more than interpersonal differences NATFHE [would] be unable to assist the most vulnerable members of the Association.”⁴⁶

If the latest events in the Weaver saga did not sweep the ‘iron-clad’ cataracts from Ms Whitbread’s eyes then they were immovable. Not unexpectedly, Bis Weaver never heard from her again with or without the cataracts. Perhaps, Triesman was fed up of writing or drafting letters for senior lay officers. The President, brandishing the pseudo-Left’s lexicon of useful terms, had fallen into the same error as the ‘Left’ in the West Midlands by attempting to cover up racist harassment with the concept of ‘interpersonal problem,’ or other semantic alternatives - ‘personality conflict’ or ‘conflict of personalities’. This seemed an indispensable constituent in the process of preserving their mythical self-image as anti-racists.

Ms Whitbread, one-time critic of “unilateral intrigues for individual institutional solutions through closed door diplomacy,”⁴⁷ appeared to have no intention of prising open the locked doors behind which NATFHE officials hid their ‘unilateral intrigues’ to the detriment of Black rank and file and woman members. The President was treading the same path as when showing her deferential loyalty to full-time officials (ASTMS members) in their dispute

with the NEC,⁴⁸ which she would replicate in tributes to Dawson in May 1986 and March 1989.

Another doyen of NATFHE's feminist movement was also revisited for the fourth and last time, although she would pop-up from time-to-time to add her considerable insights into the concept of IPDism as a substitute for racist harassment. Bis Weaver expressed surprise, or at least used those words, at Ms Welch's reluctance "to answer the questions." This "continual failure to respond...cause[d] some concern" because Bis Weaver expected "a member of the NEC...to assist a NATFHE member, especially the most vulnerable - a Black and a woman, with information that will help her." Her parting shot was to recognise that she (Bis Weaver) had "a lot to learn about the considerable gulf that seems to exist between the rhetoric of accountability and support for Black women and its practice."⁴⁹

As a poet once said 'When truth is replaced by silence: silence is a lie.'*

One more officer to put on the 'not wanted on voyage' list was the chair of the ARNP, Baker. His free ticket for a journey of discovery into the real world of anti-racism offered to him by Bis Weaver, had not been taken up because he had not contacted her as promised. She sent copies of recent correspondence to him but said nothing else as it had all been said before.⁵⁰ Yet another *papier maché* NATFHE anti-racist hiding behind the barricades of rhetoric when called upon to act; or maybe he had heard of the Bournville branch motion and was showing due diligence to it!

Not everyone associated with NATFHE had Bis Weaver on the proscribed list and she was contacted by someone not involved in NATFHE's murky dealings. A letter of appreciation for her contribution to a NATFHE 'Access and Quality Conference' came her way from NATFHE's Education Officer.⁵¹ At least someone in NATFHE recognised her experience and knowledge; a breath of fresh air from what had been shown to be a fetid pit of double dealing and conspiracy, otherwise known as 'NATFHE principle in action.'

Since the branch motion was passed, copies of all our letters to the branch executive; branch officers; and the branch committee, were sent to Triesman. The real reason for this 'generous' act on our part was to make sure Triesman received a copy and knew exactly what was going on in Bournville branch. ** After several months dealing with Triesman, we did

* Yevgeny Yevrushenko, Russian poet and anti-Stalinist

** The exercise was also to show that everyone connected with the issues had been given an opportunity to address the contents of the correspondence, that is, to contest or question the contents, if they wished. In the event that in the future we decided to publish them, either in full or in part, or as part of a pamphlet or book, no one could say they did not have the opportunity to challenge the contents. We had taken this position because we were of the view, at the time, that Bis Weaver's case was going nowhere and publication would be the only way of exposing the situation in NATFHE

not expect him to seek a remedy for the arbitrary violation of Bis Weaver's rights, let alone the continued harassment and intimidation, that involved an increasing number of union officers and members. Yet, just under a year before, Triesman co-authored an article on Thatcher's Trade Union Act, which was published in *NATFHE Journal*. The co-authors claimed that "Branch organisation is developing energy and effectiveness and its democratic traditions have acquired a new cutting edge....NATFHE will look...to develop further the internal democracy of the Association and retain control of its affairs in their hands."⁵² There certainly was an extremely sharp cutting edge in its application at Bournville branch through dismembering the rights of rank and file members, although it might be argued, by the authors, that the Bournville branch's action represented a form of 'democratic control' in the hands of the branch as a majority of members voted for it – otherwise known as the *tyranny of the majority*. *

Triesman's shortcomings were also in sharp contrast to the rhetoric of his revolutionary days. Triesman had co-authored, with David Adelstein, a manifesto identifying the way to achieve democratic control of institutions through militant action, which were seen as the central objective for workplaces and educational establishments. **⁵³ Perhaps Bournville was a prototype of this 'democratic control' by 'militant members'. Orwell's pigs were certainly up on their hind legs and soon they would be running all over the piggery.

Head office officials were not the only people waiting for the issue to drift away, Bournville management was keeping its fingers crossed for a favourable outcome as long as it did not involve direct action.

Following Bis Weaver's stint waiting outside the Principal's office and the news of an aborted complaint against her adding to the fifteen months of intense stress, her health deteriorated considerably. She returned to work on the 5th May and on the 7th May, she attended the NATFHE Conference 'Access and Equality' for which she received a letter of appreciation from NATFHE's Education Officer for her contribution to the event. Notwithstanding this, as could be expected, the long-term continuous pressure had got to her;

* A majority of those attending voted for the motion but that represented only about 20% of the total branch membership

** Just over ten years later, Triesman returned to his belief in freedom of expression if only for the interests he represented. He likened New Labour to "Orwell's Big Brother Thought Police suppressing free thinking" He grouped the UK government with the governments of Iran, Iraq, and Australia, lambasting its failure "to endorse elements of the 1997 UNESCO Convention...which enshrines academic freedom." Triesman said that "The New Labour Government...should step back from this ill-assorted alliance and guarantee the freedoms I [Triesman] described."⁵⁴ Ten months later Triesman joined the 'Thought Police' by becoming New Labour's general secretary

she was reaching the end of her tether, and it crossed her mind to get out of Bournville College by transferring to another college.

She went to see the Principal, who had occupied the post since January 1986 having previously been responsible for Personnel, and she discussed applying for one of the equal opportunities co-ordinating posts advertised in other city colleges. The Principal recognised that she was “very unhappy in her present job” and knew the reasons for that state of mind, so she was fully aware of why she ‘wanted out’. Keen to keep her at the college, the Principal disclosed that “David Gates was likely to be seconded with effect from” the 1st September, which, in effect, was a year's study leave and if she “could cope with the difficulties for a few more weeks...there would be a great difference by September.” The Principal later described her meeting with Bis Weaver as “a supportive counselling session and...Mrs Weaver left [her] apparently reassured.”⁵⁵

Bis Weaver, not really wanting to be pushed out of the college where she had worked since 1976, left the Principal's office having been dissuaded from pursuing a transfer but knowing that management's way of resolving the problem was to move Gates out of the college on study leave and probably hoping he would not return. Despite knowing that Gates, along with Cave and Hartland, had recently made serious allegations about Bis Weaver's competence and also knowing that another serious issue involving Gates was in the process of being investigated, * all the Principal offered was for Bis Weaver to hang on and ‘all would be well’. College management was waiting for this ‘senior representative of the union’, as Day was to describe him in the next few days, with his ‘long history in the anti-racism movement’, as Triesman would depict him in a few months, to leave the college so that a Black woman employee would be free of these difficulties and be able to carry out her responsibilities without further harassment. ** At least it was a novel way for obtaining study leave on full pay.

* The situation surrounding the appointment of the Equal Opportunities (Race) Coordinator in October 1985 (see Chapter VI Section (e))

** Bis Weaver's situation was comparable with a later Tribunal case where the victim “had made no formal complaint, [but]...had complained to other members of staff... and the personnel department were aware of her deteriorating health...” In those circumstances the Tribunal found that “there should have been an investigation into the cause of the illness and the complaints that had been made, and that by failing to investigate, the employers had committed a repudiating breach of contract.”⁵⁶ This was like Bis Weaver's situation because, at this time, she had made no formal complaint to the employer either. Bis Weaver could have walked and sued and may have set the precedent in 1986 for this 1999 decision but in reality she was too bogged down to see a way out other than to have left the college

(c) The Cuckoos Lay Their Eggs Elsewhere

The informal gagging strategy was again applied by another sector of NATFHE's institutional structure alerted, no doubt, by NATFHE's bush telegraph. The latest example, applied in a different form, was implemented by the WMARC, which was about to meet after the aborted April meeting. The meeting had been re-arranged to meet on the 7th May and it was held almost in secret as neither Bis Weaver nor I were informed. When we heard later of this meeting, it required little effort to work out why there was a need for a clandestine operation. * She had requested the WMARC secretary to raise a motion for assistance against the regional official – the likely reason for cancelling the April meeting. She was intending to raise that issue and the removal of her rights when the WMARC next met – the probable reason for keeping her in the dark about this planned meeting.

Bis Weaver had expected positive action from the WMARC secretary, who had been fully informed of her difficulties, but he seemed content to maintain a low profile until he relinquished the post in June. The 'Trojan horse' he was to write about in the future appeared to reside not only in the discipline of sociology but also among NATFHE's so-called anti-racists.⁵⁷ Needless to say, when this surreptitious meeting took place neither issue was raised. The only reference made to Bis Weaver was a rumour circulated at the meeting that steps were being taken by Bournville management to transfer her out of the college.⁵⁸ The rumour mongers had fertile minds and a never ending store of fantasies to feed the gullible minds of those cooped up in NATFHE's 'Trojan horse.' A few days passed before she got wind of the WMARC's invisible meeting for visible people - a common occurrence for her to be unaware of the intrigues associated with NATFHE 'activists' until after the event. NATFHE's anti-racist commitment was conducted in a bizarre and curious way its mysteries to perform!

Harbouring the deepest suspicions about anything NATFHE did, induced by NATFHE's previous deeds, she continued to communicate with head office to ensure Triesman was fully conversant with events in the Bournville branch. If Triesman chose not to read them and remained ignorant of those episodes then the onus lay on him to explain why. In a union publicly proclaiming a commitment to anti-racism, the official with responsibility for this area appeared to lack interest in the harassment of an ethnic minority woman by

* Bis Weaver would not have been able to attend as she was speaking at a NATFHE-sponsored conference on Education; the one she received a note of gratitude from the NATFHE Education Officer. But I would have attended and proposed the motion

union members using union structures to reinforce the harassment and intimidation.

She drew attention to the branch executive's scheme to produce and distribute a statement concocted several days before the branch meeting without informing her of its intended action. Head office was requested to examine the events "leading to this blatant denial of a Black woman's right to representation and the withdrawal of other services and facilities,... that is if NATFHE is sufficiently interested in what happens to Black people in its ranks." She recognised that the branch executive "interpret(s) the Rules and motion to suit its own ends," which should strike a chord with Triesman as this was exactly what full-time officials had been doing since they became aware of the complaint in June 1985. Just as the branch executive used the weapon of 'no representation' for Bis Weaver when its back was against the wall, Triesman was also to pull the very same stunt of 'no representation' in the not too distant future when NATFHE head office, in the guise of Triesman, painted itself into a corner.

She asserted that events "over the last 15 months...[make it] incumbent on NATFHE Head Office to investigate fully the behaviour of these members...Or is NATFHE supportive of action taken by [its] officials (officers), which is contrary to NATFHE's stated policies and possibly statutory requirements." This was a definite call for a national enquiry but one differing considerably from those proposed by the branch executive, whatever version of the branch motion was on offer. She signed off by criticising NATFHE head office for failing to deal with "the activities of some Branch officials (officers), brought to [NATFHE's] attention some time ago, [that] has continued to leave [her] vulnerable..."⁵⁹

The next day, having obtained a copy of the branch secretary's letter to Triesman (6th May), she again wrote to him hoping he would "appreciate that if this statement was agreed by the Branch then [it had] agreed to disclose confidential information and agreed to the publication of false allegations against [her]...that any reasonable person would consider...detrimental and prejudicial to [her] interests." She also hoped that he recognised that point (b) calling for "a national enquiry into the situation" (letter to Triesman) was different from "a national enquiry to investigate the behaviour of two members" (statement to branch members) and she wondered "why the accusative terminology of the statement was dropped when it was included in the letter" to him.

As for the date of any intended enquiry, as far as she was concerned, "the most significant factor is not the speed of conclusion but that justice is done and is seen to be done, which is something not in evidence in the Branch Secretary's letter..." Also noticeable was the concern shown by the secretary about "the detrimental effect on the Branch" but there

was “little concern for...the victim of abuse and harassment.” She concluded by remarking on the “strong determination [of] the Branch Executive to misrepresent what actually happen(ed).”⁶⁰

As these letters wended their way to Hamilton House, the branch secretary, in conformity with the ‘party line’ – the motion, despatched our latest paper contributions on the on-going saga to head office – a few more snippets for Triesman’s memoirs. The secretary also wanted Triesman to “put in writing [his] suggestion made in [their] recent telephone conversation on...30th April that [he] will visit the Branch in person after National Conference and discuss the matters with all concerned.” The prospect of a visit was considered useful and once confirmed “it can be discussed as an option at Branch Committee”⁶¹ The branch executive now wanted Triesman’s purported intentions put in writing – everything for the record was catching on.

The *kernels* were also implementing the next in their strategy of isolating Bis Weaver. The formal muzzling of Bis Weaver was to be extended beyond the Cuckoos’ Nest at Bournville but carried out in the usual underhanded way associated with the *kernels* and those connected with them. The previous approach of snide, abusive comments and underhand manoeuvres was abandoned as the *kernels* adopted a more overt stance.

The branch motion was the weapon to bring Bis Weaver to heel using the procedure outlined to Bis Weaver by David Evans when she sought to obtain support from the regional council, namely, to raise a motion in a NATFHE branch or sub-committee; in the *kernels* case in the Bournville branch.

With the branch sewn up, the ill-conceived contraband – the motion and statement, was hauled before the REC by Gates and Ms Pattinson in an attempt to mobilise comrades in the union’s bureaucratic structures to settle with Bis Weaver and her complaints. However, in their haste to stitch her up even further, the *kernels* were opening up those very avenues Triesman had closed down in order to nullify her attempts to secure redress for her grievance, or more aptly described as, to hide the fact that natural justice was an extremely elusive quality in NATFHE.

On the 15th May, the day after the branch meeting had rejected Bis Weaver’s right of reply, the Bournville chairperson went to Wolverhampton Polytechnic to present and speak to her statement and to the Bournville motion. She called for regional executive support to give the motion greater weight at head office, that is, point (b) of the motion calling for an investigation into Bis and Gordon Weaver’s behaviour. This was another negative characteristic to set against the Bournville executive’s concept of right as Bis Weaver was not

informed of its intention. Yet again, Bis Weaver was put at a disadvantage of not being able to contest the allegations in the statement or the misleading information on which the motion was based. This showed the contempt held by the branch executive/*kernels* for branch members, who had passed a motion to be sent to head office and not paraded around the region looking for additional support.

Considerable discussion took place in the meeting during which a number of amendments were put forward to change the motion from “an enquiry into Bis Weaver’s and Gordon Weaver’s behaviour into a call for an enquiry into Bis Weaver’s and Gordon Weaver’s allegations against officers and officials.” During the discussion, one committee member argued against the REC’s request for an enquiry because it was not in the constitution, which followed the same line as Triesman. However, constitutional finery had not entered the reckoning when Ms Welch, in July 1985, and Triesman, in January 1986, offered Bis Weaver unconstitutional investigations. * Nor, conveniently, did any member enquire upon what constitutional grounds Bis Weaver’s rights had been removed without a charge, a hearing, representation and in her absence. When it was suggested that an equal number of Black and White members should be on any enquiry it was pointed out that no Black member could sit on any enquiry since there were no Black people on the NEC. **

Another member of the women’s panel’s *Band of Sisters* showered praise on Ms Pattinson for “the objective role she was playing in what must be a difficult situation for her.” This demonstration of sisterhood, however, did not extend to a Black woman confronted with harassment from a member of the REC sitting in on this discussion. The speaker may not have been familiar with the acute problems under which Bis Weaver laboured or what the effects were on her and why she was taking on influential union officers. There was a simple remedy to cure any ignorance on her part – a phone call to Bis Weaver at Bournville College. However, interest in the problems faced in the workplace by Black women and, if she had pursued the issue, White women married to Black men, seemed not to be in vogue in NATFHE West Midlands. This clan-like loyalty was typical of those on the women’s panel, directly faced by Bis Weaver on two occasions, and was also to be found in a section of members on the REC, who accepted the line fed to them by the Bournville *kernels*. It cast

* Ms Welch was probably more in tune with what NATFHE officials did not want – a full scale inquiry. Triesman came out openly to make it quite clear in less than a month’s time that head office wanted no such inquiry. Triesman and Ms Welch were to collaborate to produce a new anti-racism policy for NATFHE after it was shown at the Weaver v NATFHE Industrial Tribunal that NATFHE did not have anything resembling such a policy.

** There was one ethnic minority member on the NEC – Fawzi Ibrahim – an Iraqi

serious doubts on the women's panel being for all women when it resisted extending 'feminist' solidarity to Black women.

The Day-Gates pre-enquiry 'advice-session' also received a mention but only to dismiss it as of no consequence. Apparently, it was described as a harmless 'informal discussion' not jeopardising the investigation. Perhaps, NATFHE's 'officer training programme' should include familiarising its trainees with concepts, such as: likelihood of bias; natural justice; trade union rights; and distinguishing racial harassment from interpersonal dispute. * Nonetheless, despite opposition from close allies of Gates, a combination of other Broad Left Coalition members and unattached members won the day and an amended motion was approved. **⁶²

The motion to be sent to head office, overriding the one passed by the branch, read:

West Midlands Regional Executive calls upon the General Secretary to instigate immediately a national enquiry to investigate the allegations made by Bismillah and Gordon Weaver against Bournville College Branch Officers, West Midlands Regional Officers and the Regional Official since the Regional Official's Report (November 1985) Furthermore we would strongly urge that the enquiry panel be structured so that at least 50% of its members are black.

This was a catch-all proposal as the REC also agreed to what appeared to be a codicil to the motion, namely, that "all future correspondence to Branch, Liaison and Regional officers or Executive members should be passed on to head office unanswered, that Branch, Liaison Committee or Regional officers should not involve themselves informally any further in the matter, and that the matter should not be discussed formally or informally by any members of the West Midlands Regional Executive during conference other than through the regional secretary."⁶³

The proposal to include Black members in the enquiry team would hardly endear itself to head office officials to whom the idea of Black investigators was anathema nor would a proposal to have an all-embracing 'national enquiry' fill them with enthusiasm.

Bis Weaver, a member of a NATFHE-recognised disadvantaged group, had the REC's decision sprung on her a few days later. This was a variant of standing at the kitchen

* Given the reluctance of any participant in the early stages of the Weaver complaint to draw the Day-Gates advice 'session' to Bis Weaver's attention, or anything else for that matter, it was not difficult to infer that those present when the discussion took place had not been keen to have it disclosed to Bis Weaver; and why they picked up on Gates' description of the harassment as an interpersonal dispute. That discussion would certainly have remained unknown to Bis Weaver if Day, in trying to justify his involvement, had not carelessly exposed the 'advice session' in the first of many inappropriate practices he engaged in ⁶⁴

** One person who was specifically referred to, by 'the eyes and ears', as playing a positive role was Barry Lovejoy, who showed a more positive role than any of the other Broad Left Coalition members

door while the masters and mistresses decided what to do and then conveying their decision to the unsuspecting subject. However, prior to the official notification being received, the REC's proceedings and its decision came her way courtesy of a pair of 'eyes and ears' on that committee.

Redrafting the motion did not satisfy the *kernel*s, as they apparently wanted an enquiry into the situation created by Bis and Gordon Weaver. They did not seem to appreciate that the REC motion was likely to turn into a time-consuming activity that was to their advantage, especially as Gates was due to leave the college in July on study leave. Instead, rebuffed by the REC from achieving their objective, a Bournville contingent proceeded to the Birmingham liaison committee to hawk the motion to another NATFHE committee and, if successful, would be able to resubmit it to the REC with greater authority. The Bournville delegation on this expedition numbered six, exceeding its official number of four. * Yet again, another pair of 'eyes and ears' were in attendance ready to 'report back' to Bis Weaver on the meeting.

The liaison chair, a member of the women's panel, was absent, so Gates, as ex-chair, assumed the chair but relinquished it when the Bournville motion was presented. With a new chair, Downey began to speak to the motion, listed on the agenda under the generalised heading of "problems in branches" – hiding the real intent of the motion from all and sundry. The liaison secretary objected on the grounds that "Head Office had clearly stated that the matter should not be discussed at Liaison." Nor did the motion fit the remit for those motions eligible to be discussed. Branch resolutions/motions submitted to the Liaison Committee "are normally about points of policy" or "taking up case work with the LEA",⁶⁵ neither of which applied to this motion. The acting chair upheld the objection and a challenge came to his ruling from the Bournville delegation. This happened shortly after Bis Weaver's challenge to the Bournville chair for the right to be heard was voted down by the Branch, of which the six Bournville delegates played their part and who were now demanding the right to be heard in this forum. The challenge was successful and another chairperson, Lovejoy, presided over what was described as an acrimonious debate during which Gates demanded support with Downey apparently backing him all the way. The effort did not bring the desired result as the committee decided not to endorse the Bournville motion. Instead, it agreed to allow Bis Weaver "a right of reply" to the Bournville statement. Barry Lovejoy, who again took a

* The delegates were Gates, Ms Pattinson, Downey, Hartland and two others noted for acquiescence to the interests of the *kernel*s⁶⁶

positive approach, was designated to chair the next branch meeting at Bournville College.⁶⁷

During the exchanges one of the Bournville delegates, incensed by the committee's decision, remarked that "the next thing the committee will have is a Black woman as Chairperson." Taken within the context in which the comment was made and the tone of the delivery, two committee members distanced themselves from this delegate for what they interpreted as an implied racist slur.⁶⁸ The committee's decision led to Gates, Ms Pattinson and Downey resigning from the committee although it took them almost four weeks to put their resignation in writing.

Two days later, Downey, using his preferred face-to-face approach when it suited him, told Bis Weaver that, as a result of a request from him, "in the interests of the Branch," the liaison committee agreed to provide "an independent Chair for the next Branch meeting...[as] things had not been going well at the last two meetings." The decision to appoint an independent chair, which she did not know at the time had nothing to do with Downey, cut no ice with her. She made clear to him that it was too late because twice recently "her rights [had] been violated." She asked him if he thought "that this rectifies what went on" but nonetheless she found it "interesting that [Downey] did this in the interests of the Branch and [she asked] why not in the interests of [her] rights as a trade unionist."

I joined the conversation to hear Bis Weaver pose the question that "if Gates hadn't done the things [she was] accusing him of, and which [he – Downey] was aware, [she] would be making false allegations against him, so why [didn't] Gates take a Rule 8 against her...for defamation..." Downey's inverted response was to ask her "why she [didn't] take a Rule 8 on Gates if he [had] done all of these things to her." Downey left himself wide open for her to point out that when she complained about Gates "the union chose not to advise her to take a Rule 8" and as Downey was "on the Branch Committee that decided to recommend Rule 24,...[she] asked...why he didn't advise her to take out a Rule 8." Downey remained silent, which was surely not on grounds of the branch motion but it said a lot about his recent claim that people could have a dialogue with him.⁶⁹

It was later in the day that Bis Weaver and I received news of the REC meeting from our contact on the REC⁷⁰ and the next day, the regional secretary's letter to NATFHE's general secretary, Dawson, arrived. The general secretary was reminded "of the continuing problems...in the aftermath of Bis Weaver's complaint against David Gates, and the investigation...conducted by Alan Day." Following the line pumped out by the Bournville chair, the regional secretary, wrote of liaison, regional and national officers receiving letters

and copies of letters and he adopted the branch's allegations by stating "the dispute is effectively preventing the Branch from functioning."

Despite the motion also being about my 'allegations', no copy of the motion was sent to me. * Yet I was included as an integral part of the motion. By including me attention was directed away from the main issues involving Gates, Day and racism.

The letter raised a number of points. The REC's apparent knowledge of correspondence going to national officers suggested that either Ms Whitbread or Baker – national officers, had been in touch with West Midlands regional officers; or Triesman had communicated it to the REC; or any of those three had passed it on to one or both of the West Midlands NEC members – Ms Welch and Ms Ashcroft.

The questions were continuing to pile up as events unfolded. Who were these regional officers against whom she was supposed to have made allegations? No regional officers were in the frame: all that any officer was asked to do was to explain their involvement in the procedures. This also applied to branch officers, except for Gates, as no allegations were made to the union against anyone prior to the branch motion being passed as they, too, were merely asked for information or mentioned in a factual statement. However, this seemed to fit in with the REC objective of seeking an investigation covering officers and one official as 'subjects' without any specific reference to Gates. This had the effect of masking the case against Gates, who was now merely one of the 'pack', just as Triesman tried to do in January 1986. Nor had I made any allegations against West Midlands regional officers or national officers; nor against the regional official. My allegations were against Gates and Cave as branch officers.

In spite of the genuine intentions by some REC members to resolve issues that had plagued the region for some time, serious doubts arose about the intention behind this motion. It appeared to have been introduced not to satisfy Bis Weaver's right to a fair hearing but to halt the procession of letters coming from her pen. The REC's motion had not overturned the Bournville motion, it had: (a) extended the ban on Bis Weaver's, and my, correspondence to cover not only the Bournville Branch Committee but to the whole of the West Midlands region, thereby, sanctioning the refusal of NATFHE officers to make themselves accountability for their actions; and (b) taken on board the motion submitted to the branch committee to have "a national enquiry into the situation" albeit a much wider 'situation' than

* Those receiving copies included, Triesman; Day; Gates; Ms Welch as an NEC member plus Ms Ashcroft - the other regional representative on the NEC; Stretton; Doughty as BLC Secretary; and the Regional Chair

hitherto.

The people initially against an inquiry for a variety of reasons, including their own involvement and/or aware of head office's determination not to conduct any worthwhile investigation, could depend on NATFHE head office to either refuse an enquiry or delay it until it withered away. Did nobody on the REC know Gates was leaving the college in July and would probably seek to be left alone to do his studies without the hindrance of attending an enquiry? Given that Gates was concealed among 'officers' in the motion, perhaps, someone else might emerge as having grievances against Bis Weaver, as Day had sought to introduce during his 'enquiry'.

The REC's motion provided a golden opportunity for NATFHE head office to effectively close down all avenues to her, should she agree to the enquiry, and head office could sit on it indefinitely. Officers on the REC would be able to recognise that possibility, as Bis Weaver did, but would head office see it that way. Further reservations about the motives behind the motion were fanned by the revelation that between the passing of the Bournville motion and its presentation to the REC, the WMARC had met without her or me being notified.⁷¹

Following receipt of the details of the motion, Bis Weaver had a hectic weekend beginning with a phone call to the regional secretary to register dissatisfaction that "her case had been discussed without any notice given to" her. She asked if REC members had considered that she might have something to say on the matter; or why there was no one at the meeting to speak on her behalf. The answer received was the usual NATFHE reference to the constitution, that is, there are "no mechanisms in the procedures to allow for what [she was] asking..." - conveniently avoiding any mention of the word 'representation'. Yet another example of the lack of natural justice in NATFHE's procedures where false allegations could be paraded before a NATFHE committee but the victim was given no place in those procedures. The Bournville branch's discriminatory action against her in April was replicated by the REC.

The regional secretary had placed the Bournville motion on the REC's agenda as an item submitted by the branch, which meant the branch executive misled the REC. He was informed, if he had not noticed, there was nothing in the statement proposing the motion should be submitted to the REC – it was to be sent to Head Office. She asked if it was "an automatic procedure that once a motion [was] passed by the Branch that it goes to the region." The secretary answered in the negative – he had "assumed that it was a Branch decision to send [it] to the Region." I then took over and described the events as they

occurred in branch committee and branch meetings. With this done, she took over and put a few points to the secretary.

First, she criticised the REC's reaction to the Day-Gates pre-enquiry discussion, described by its defenders as not jeopardising the integrity of the procedures because the discussion was informal. As if informality made any difference to the likelihood of bias entering the procedures when one of those parties to the discussion (Day) assumed the role of investigator of a complaint made against the other party (Gates) once that discussion was over.

She then compared the informal with the formal approaches. "The formal structure allows...access from the rank and file [and] provides mechanisms which can be clearly defined and checked and scrutinised...[therefore] if formality was observed it would provide...information...enabl[ing her] to see that justice [was] done." Whereas, the informal structure is "the 'old boy network'...inaccessible to those outside the elite group of people who rub elbows or drink together or whatever they do in informal relationships." This is disadvantageous to "rank and file members and especially Black people, who are not yet part of the 'elite'...[and] have no way of countering the influence of 'informal' relations. It is a serious miscarriage of justice" when REC members "argue that the informal discussion...[can] be disregarded [as she] would have liked to put [her side of the] argument... [as otherwise] who ensures [her] trade union rights are protected." She was touching on the way 'business' had been conducted almost from day one of her complaint.

Second, she refuted the claim that allegations were made against regional officers and she made a reference to Ms Welch, who had been contacted specifically to account for her intervention in the procedures. The regional secretary had apparently asked Ms Welch about her offer but said he could do nothing if she decided not to give an answer. Upon hearing this, she gave him a message to pass on to her. He was asked to tell Ms Welch that Bis Weaver "voted for her on her platform of accountability but her refusal to answer simple questions...[had] led [her – Bis Weaver] to believe that her accountability may be to other trade unionists, to White women and not to Black people." The Secretary did not share this view of Ms Welch but Bis Weaver's assessment was not affected by his opinion because if Ms Welch stood for "an accountable union" she would explain why "she refuses to be accountable to a rank and file Black member?" The only other option for not being able to get a whimper out of Ms Welch was that she was reluctant to divulge what she knew.

Third, she recognised that "there [were] some people whose goodwill enabled them to question the inaccuracies, misrepresentations and accusations made against" her. However,

“reliance on the presence of people [in meetings] who are progressive and act with good will to see through such a statement...is not the way to safeguard the rights of trade unionists. There must be a mechanism which ensures that an individual’s trade union rights are not railroaded in the way it was done at Bournville branch and attempted at region.” The regional secretary, sounding like a well-seasoned bureaucrat, explained that rule change was “a slow and laborious procedure” unlike the REC’s motion which was for “an *ad hoc* investigation team.”⁷² However, would the REC’s motion have made it any speedier?

After this conversation, she phoned Mackney to make the same points and he turned out to be a good listener but that was about all. She considered asking if a national enquiry might ‘split the left’ but not knowing in which direction Mackney may eventually decide to go and, being short on allies at the time, she decided to keep schtum. Perhaps, Mackney might now be prepared to act more positively to ensure a fair and impartial enquiry – the type of enquiry he considered necessary when writing to her on the 5th July 1985.⁷³ The next day, she spoke to Doughty, who provided information on the liaison committee meeting.⁷⁴

During this hectic weekend, Bis Weaver’s interests came to unexpected fruition as a result of the *kernel*s’ endeavours. Out of the blue a new actor, or one who made a cameo appearance in June 1985, re-entered the scene to influence how the script would be acted out on a non-NATFHE stage. The new actor was cast into his role by the ill-thought out scheme concocted by the *kernel*s and whoever might be advising them on how to bring Bis Weaver to heel. When taking the imprudent step of removing her rights they either overlooked or dismissed the possibility of the chair’s statement finding its way into the hands of people outside the union, even though several non-NATFHE members received copies at the 29th April branch meeting. In fact, it found its way to Black and ethnic minority people, many of whom knew Bis Weaver, and they in turn circulated it through the network of Black groups operating in and around Birmingham; finding its way to Phil Murphy, the Black Labour councillor and CRE officer. Phil Murphy had first approached Mackney in June 1985 causing Mackney’s five-day hectic burst of activity to keep the complaint in the union under the stewardship of the locally recognised hatchet-man - the regional official.

Upon receipt of the statement, Murphy, as did a number of Black recipients over the coming weeks, phoned Bis Weaver to find out what was going on. Murphy was surprised to find the issue still outstanding because he claimed to have received information in November 1985 “that the complaint had been dealt with and it was sorted.” The events of the previous six months and of the union’s failure, nationally and locally, to take any action to support her were described to him. Phil Murphy was none too pleased at being misinformed by his

NATFHE ‘contact’ nor was he happy with her for not letting him know what had gone on. She told him of her agreement to keep it in the union and had tried to do that. Murphy described the issue as “too important to keep it in the union” and he wanted “information on it right away” as he intended to “bring it up in the Race Relations and Equal Opportunities Committee [Birmingham City Council] and get it minuted for action.”⁷⁵ The Bournville motion had chipped a hole in the wall built by NATFHE Head Office to enclose Bis Weaver. Murphy’s phone call, besides easing the weight of fifteen months of stress from her shoulders, opened the door to a new phase, which turned out in fact to be two new phases.

We decided not to leave Triesman out of the *kernel*s latest scurry of activity but Phil Murphy’s interest and intentions were not for Triesman’s eyes yet. In point 1 of a missive sent to Triesman, bringing together the contents of previous letters, she gave those contents a new twist to meet changing circumstances. Triesman’s comments in his January letter telling her that “local activists had differences with [her]” were linked to “Branch Officers...[being] present...when [she] was abused, harassed...[yet] did not...offer her any...support.” It appeared that Triesman might have known something in January about the attitude of certain officers towards her when giving the impression he had only recently become involved. Bearing this in mind and as “No ‘local activists’...were part of [her] complaint”, she asked “Should they have been included.”⁷⁶ She drew attention to “Recent events [that] seem to confirm [his] original insight because some of the Branch officers have undoubtedly acted in a manner prejudicial to [her] interests.”

Without mentioning recent development involving Murphy, the ground was laid to show where the branch committee’s actions were likely to lead. This did not require great deductive powers on our part as we already knew where it had led and where it was going. She speculated that “some Branch Committee members are determined to attract the attention of the CRE bearing in mind that a CRE Officer...as early as the 13th June 1985” had shown an interest in her complaint. In point 2, she introduced Mackney’s discussions with Phil Murphy, a Birmingham city councillor and CRE Officer, about her case and Mackney’s comment to Day, when telling him of Murphy’s interest, that [her] complaint “was not ‘an end of summer-term tiff.’” On those grounds, Day should have been expected “to follow the CRE’s Code of Practice for Trade Unions... (part 3.3.6) ‘to ensure that in cases where members of particular racial groups believe that they are suffering racial discrimination, whether by the employer or the union itself, serious attention is paid to the reasons for this belief and any discrimination is stopped.’”

Triesman with his preference for facts rather than explore motives was provided with several facts, in a compact form, that pointed to a potential *Whitewash* of the original complaint. These facts were:

- (a) [a] Birmingham City Councillor and CRE Officer was aware of the treatment [she] was receiving and had expressed an interest and A Day knew of this;
- (b) D Gates and A Day discussed the complaint on the 15th June 1985, ([She understood] that D Gates asked him for advice) and A Day agreed to investigate [her] complaint...without [her] being told that he had...discussed the complaint with D Gates beforehand;
- (c) the complaints [she] made against D Gates were not covered in the 'Report';
- (d) there were considerable distortions, inadequacies and omissions in the 'Report';
- (e) the 'Report' neglects any contribution [she] made and the information presented in the 'Report' was based on uncorroborated third party 'information';
- (f) damaging remarks were made about [her] professional competence and professional integrity;
- (g) important information offered by another woman with strong links to the Black community, who [it was understood] was herself suffering from similar treatment in the College, was completely ignored by A Day;
- (h) the 'Report' was even amended to include a statement which would give the erroneous impression that [her] complaint was unfounded;
- (i) a Branch Officer at Bournville College who is a very close friend of D Gates was solely responsible for selecting the 'witnesses' who spoke to A Day;
- (j) A Day recommended that D Gates and [herself] signed a joint statement indicating that the differences had been resolved and the statement should be made available to any other body that had expressed an interest in the outcome.

At the end of this list she asked if the 'other body' expressing an interest (point j) was the person mentioned in point (a) namely Phil Murphy – the circle of a potential *Whitewash* was clearly rounded out for Triesman to ponder over. One of the purposes behind Day's *Whitewash* 'Report' and the production of a joint statement seemed to be for Phil Murphy to be informed, should he follow up his concerns over the matter and check-up to see if it had been investigated and a solution arrived at. Murphy claimed this was what happened in November 1985 when he was given a cock-and-bull story.

Point 3 dealt with the Triesman letter of the 2nd April 1986, in which he remarked that her "letters containing 'what might be allegations about Mr Day,...were not sent to [Day] since it was thought important not to compromise any rights which [she had] in making a complaint about an official by not discussing the detail with the official." She pointed out that Day had not followed the same procedure with her complaint because after being informed by head office and Mackney about her complaint against Gates, Day "discussed that complaint with D Gates and then agreed to occupy a quasi-judicial role!"

She again asked to be provided with "the complete procedures for taking a complaint out against a full-time official, as requested in previous letters," so that she did not "find herself in the same position as...last year when [she] went into the procedures against D Gates

without knowing what [she] was letting [herself] in for.” If Triesman could not provide them, then she could always write to the ASTMS – the union of NATFHE’s full-time officials. She also dealt with Triesman’s denial (18th April 1986) of there being any precedent for complaints against officials by referring to a “complaint...registered in April 1985 against a full-time official by... a Black person in the West Midlands region. This was another nail in the coffin of anyone who recommended or acquiesced in recommending Day to conduct the ‘enquiry’ into her complaint.

In point 4, she said that bearing in mind “the discrepancies in the ‘Report’ and other irregular activities around the investigation and [Triesman’s] indirect acknowledgement of [her] rights being compromised by A Day and D Gates discussing the complaint, (Point 3 above) the reasonable person might consider that [she] had a right to expect the ‘report’ to be withdrawn and for NATFHE to make a public acknowledgement of its withdrawal...in the *NATFHE Journal*....” * However, Bis Weaver would “expect the ‘Report’ to be used as evidence in any complaint against A Day should” she choose to complain. But, considering that “NATFHE Head Office has consistently refused to provide...information or been painstakingly slow when actually providing information”, she thought “this will be another laborious task ahead of [her].”

She asked Triesman, point 5, to answer the twenty outstanding questions from her letter of the 31st March 1986 and she numbered them. She expressed a lack of confidence in the way NATFHE would deal with those questions due to head office’s “unusual way of answering” questions and cited the question of when NATFHE head office first knew of her complaint. Officialdom’s evasive way of answering that question gave the impression that “Head Office did not know of [her] complaint until 25th November 1985” but as was pointed out on the 9th April 1986, “Head Office knew in early June 1985.” Bis Weaver added that “if NATFHE Head Office has such difficulty in answering such a simple question, how much confidence can a member have in NATFHE’s procedures for dealing with the grievances [she has].”

Her missive was ended with the “hope that NATFHE will provide [her] with the assistance necessary...to ensure that the processing of [her] grievances is not discriminatory.”⁷⁷ If she had expected assistance, which she knew there was no chance of

* As mentioned earlier, in February 2000, Mackney as general secretary of NATFHE issued an apology to Farokh Shahrokni for the treatment he received at the hands of NATFHE.⁷⁸ It had taken a long time for NATFHE officers-cum-officials, who spoke often of their opposition to racism, to learn anything about racism or do anything constructive to try to eliminate it

getting, it would have been a forlorn hope as NATFHE officialdom and its lay officer allies continued to ignore the strong signals sent out of what they would shortly have to face.

The *kernels*, by seeking to use local committees against her, had opened avenues for her to reveal a few home truths not only for the record but also as a source of new information for the membership of these committees. Bis Weaver decided to write to the regional secretary to put down the contents of their telephone conversation with additional points on the chair's statements that put those points within a realistic context. To provide a comprehensive account she attached two appendices to the letter. *

The covering letter addressed points raised in the REC's motion and its accompanying letter. The claim that allegations were made against the integrity of branch or regional officers was brushed aside as having no substance. Up until now only Gates' integrity had been challenged, although others were suspected of being involved in the nefarious activities surrounding the complaint but these suspicions were kept to ourselves. The REC, by being misled to include me alongside Bis Weaver, confused my exposé of both Gates and Cave on different issues as being associated with her grievances. The way the motion was put together had given a false impression of the real issues.

Bis Weaver clarified that no allegations were made against branch or regional Officers, other than a complaint against Gates. She had merely made requests for information and "if others consider" that she is suggesting that "anyone has been acting without integrity then that is their interpretation." She was reserving judgement on that until she received answers to those requests or gave up trying as silence was itself a form of explanation. Ms Welch was used as an illustration of this approach. She pointed out that three times Ms Welch had been asked to explain "why she offered to intervene to investigate [her] complaint...[but] without any response." Ms Welch was "an NEC member elected on a platform of accountability [but] will not make herself accountable to a Black woman member on an issue of such importance to [her] and [to] Black women in general."

Another point of contention was not being "given an opportunity to address...the claims made" against her as well as not having "the right of representation," which was a "denial of rights...[to] one of the...Black members to whom NATFHE has pledged would be assured of equal treatment." Concern was also expressed about "the Region's decision to re-direct all [her] correspondence" to head office "without...[her having had] the opportunity to

* One REC member when speaking to one of Bis Weaver's allies, some months later, referred to the amount of detail included in the letters⁷⁹

address... [the claims made] in the misleading and damaging statement” submitted by the branch Chair.

The first appendix covered a number of issues in considerable detail, concerning:

- (i) the statement entering the public domain by being given to “people outside of Bournville who are not members of NATFHE” but allowed to attend the 29th April branch meeting
- (ii) “the statement agreed at the Branch Committee...was not the one...distributed at the Branch meeting”
- (iii) the failure “to inform [her] that a statement detrimental to [her] interests was to be given out at a Branch meeting”
- (iv) the refusal of a right of reply was attributed to lack of time yet the time consumed in the challenge to the ruling, consisting of three contributions, was longer than the reply would have taken
- (v) the branch secretary, who spoke against the challenge, immediately afterwards, proposed a motion in support of Black people’s rights in South Africa, whom she [Bis Weaver] wholeheartedly supported “in their struggle to achieve their rights.” *
- (vi) the “highly selective and misleading...information provided to the Regional Executive”
- (vii) the chair’s failure to explain the real reasons for her [Bis Weaver’s] refusal to accept Day’s ‘report’
- (viii) the chair’s claim that “at a rough estimate 50 letters have been received by the Secretary” when from the distribution of Day’s ‘report’ (25th November) until the 28th April 1986 only seventeen letters, of which seven were reminders when the originals went unanswered, were sent to the branch secretary, executive or committee, plus one to Downey;
- (ix) the chair chose not to disclose that her [Bis Weaver’s] correspondence to liaison, region and head office went to people to whom [Day’s] ‘Report’ was sent and as such [she had] a right to address
- (x) the linking together of Bis Weaver’s and Gordon Weaver’s letters was untenable as they covered different issues and the branch committee’s eight to three vote did not create a link between them
- (xi) the chair’s disclosure of confidential information was contrasted with false allegations made against her of breaching the confidentiality of Day’s ‘report’** with its misleading presentation
- (xii) she rejected the chair’s misleading account of her request to extend the remit of Triesman’s January ‘offer’ and the executive’s claim “that the statement serves to protect (a) the interests of the branch and (b) [the] branch committee to pursue its legitimate aims/objectives. An alternative version of what legitimate aims and objectives should be in the branch’s interests was offered, such as the: (a) “right of Black people – men and women, and women in general, to work without abuse and harassment...”; (b) “members’ right to have Branch Committee members accountable for their actions...”; [and] (c) “right of members to representation when their trade union rights and right to natural justice and any other rights are being withdrawn.”

Finally, “the tone of the statement, the unfounded allegations.., the denial of [her] rights of representation might lead the reasonable person to consider that because a Black

* This point was raised to illustrate the hypocrisy of the branch executive and the Branch in denying a Black woman her rights in the branch while claiming to support Black rights overseas

** Bis Weaver could have gone on further about ‘confidentiality’ by reminding the regional secretary that he supplied a copy of Day’s ‘report’ to a member of the Women’s Panel - not on the authorised list of recipients, who went on to meet Bis Weaver in January 1986 to discuss her complaint

person made a complaint against a white union official (officer) [she] was being victimised...” by the Bournville branch under section 11 (3) of the Race Relations Act.⁸⁰

The opportunity was not lost when providing detailed information on the above points to include the reasons for the correspondence sent to Downey and Cave. This was done to acquaint a wider audience with the Machiavellian intrigues being played out in a garrison of the Broad Left Coalition in the West Midlands.

In a second appendix, the seventeen letters sent to the branch committee were listed with the reasons for sending them.

After sending it to the regional secretary with a request to him to bring it to the attention of the members of the REC, we thought it unlikely, given the codicil to the motion, that it would be circulated. Therefore, it was decided to send a copy of this letter to every member of the REC and a selection of comments from the letter went to the Bournville branch committee.⁸¹

I also sent a letter to the regional secretary as I was unsure why my disdain over Gates’ and Cave’s actions had “been linked to Bis Weaver’s grievances.” Background details were provided of the Gates/Cave issues, reproduced from letters sent out and from notes taken at the respective branch committee and branch meetings. A few subsidiary points were also included: (a) the number of letters sent by me to the branch committee up until the 28th April was eight; * and (b) no allegations were made against regional officers or the regional official. I rounded off by asking if a copy of the REC’s motion would be sent to me as Bis Weaver and I paid “two separate membership subscriptions.”⁸²

When these latest letters went out any remaining trust in NATFHE possibly acting fairly and impartially had irrevocably vanished and by the time they were received by the regional secretary, REC members and Triesman, the situation was about to take a dramatic turn - a consequence the *kernel*s had overlooked while laying down the foundations for this new turn in events.

All roads leading to NATFHE’s Rome had become impassable; the debris strewn over them from the demolished pillars of NATFHE’s anti-racism policy made them impossible to traverse. The NATFHE juggernaut bringing this destruction had embarked on a journey that looked intent on forcing her out of the union and once on the outside, Gates, Day and NATFHE could ignore her. Any alternative route through which she sought redress – the one Triesman seemed to be pointing out to her in April 1986 - the local authority, had looked to

* These were mostly about branch rules

be a difficult one for her. However, the *kernels*' tactics during May went beyond any strategy head office might have approved and propelled Gates, together with two of his major collaborators along a path towards the Bournville governors and to a local authority grievance procedure. At the same time NATFHE Head Office was to tread an alternative path to an Industrial Tribunal hearing where its racist and sexist discriminatory policies were exposed in a public arena. This path was paved by the *kernels* when they produced the branch motion and statement and hawked it around the region for support.

(d) The Roosting Season is about to Arrive

Bis Weaver had ceased to expect anything from NATFHE for some time – a whistleblowing exercise seemed the only option. The only source of support was the BLCARC and that was a committee exercising little influence at liaison committee – it was part of NATFHE's token commitment to anti-racism even though its membership went far beyond NATFHE's limited aims. The REC's motion replacing the Bournville one had not really been devised to stimulate any anti-racist action from head office and would be unlikely to do so, considering Hamilton House had been trying to box Bis Weaver in since its occupants formally arrived formally on the scene in January 1986. Nonetheless, there was a certain amount of satisfaction at the thought of the motion ruffling a few feathers among NATFHE's officials. Despite Dawson responding quickly to the motion; telling the regional secretary that it would be carefully and urgently considered,⁸³ Day had little to fear. The general secretary was unlikely to approve anything exposing Day's conduct or the role played by regional officers any more than it already had. *

Bis Weaver continued to let the letters flow from the pen – a combined effort. I wrote a draft the letters and she made any necessary amendments. I kicked off with a letter of my own to the branch committee covering branch rules and in doing so turned the issue of my correspondence back on to the executive. I listed the letters sent to branch officers up until the 28th April and added that “the letters can hardly...have caused the administrative machinery to malfunction.” I quoted from the branch chair's statement, which was “While

* What was probably never taken into consideration was that his (Dawson's) and the union's, authority was limited to NATFHE and he would not be able to save Day, or the union, from complete exposure. By the time Dawson rendered his decision on the motion, the issue was about to go far beyond NATFHE's jurisdiction and into a domain where union intransigence held no sway and NATFHE officials were legally obliged to answer questions put to them. Day would face a gruelling interrogation by the chair of an Industrial Tribunal hearing thirteen months later

traditionally the branch has been well organised, there are at present many important issues which are not pursued” and I questioned this assessment. In my search I had discovered that none of the rule changes were “ratified by the Region since November 1982, including additions to the Branch Committee of a Minutes Secretary, Women’s Rep, Vice Chairperson, Ex-Chair,” and two extra departmental representatives. Therefore, “the Branch was operating with a Branch Committee last June which...may have been unconstitutional [and] the Branch may not have been as well organised as claimed.” The June date was used as a reference point because when the decision was taken to place Bis Weaver’s complaint in Day’s hands, the branch committee was operating unconstitutionally. I pressed home the point that after I drew attention to these failings, the rule changes were submitted to the region in March 1986 and ratified, consequently, “my correspondence may well have benefited the Branch.”⁸⁴

We had already taken the branch motion down the road of ridicule. In a letter from me to Bis Weaver on the 10th May, I referred to the motion as stating “all future correspondence...will be sent to Head Office and *not discussed* at Branch Committee; it doesn’t say it cannot be answered by Branch Committee members.” But notwithstanding this, I expressed the view that the motion “may be a violation of [her] trade union rights, so feel free to ask...any questions and if I have the information I will provide...it.”⁸⁵ It seemed to me that as the motion breached her trade union rights then it was incumbent on committee members to disregard the conditions imposed on her.

Bis Weaver asked if I would “put a motion in writing through the Branch Committee regarding the [29th April] decision” and “what steps [she] can take when non-NATFHE people outside the college contact [her] asking for information about...the statement.”⁸⁶ In this pat-a-cake routine that mocked the branch executive, the only suggestion I could make as the situation was an unfamiliar one, ** was to “submit a motion to the Branch via Head Office” because having “no access to the Branch Committee” any letter “will be directed to Head Office.”⁸⁷

Tweaking the whiskers of the *kernels* and adding a touch of satire to the situation, Bis Weaver took advantage of the ramifications arising from the branch executive’s actions to turn the motion back on the executive. As secretary of the BLCARC, she was responsible for distributing minutes of committee meetings, via the Bournville branch secretary, who had the responsibility of sending them to delegates from the other colleges. She used the motion to

* Both letters were copied to the branch chair on behalf of the branch committee and to Triesman

** The reason for the motions lack of familiarity was that the branch committee had never taken this action before

show how it impeded the union's procedures in an activity supposedly at the forefront of NATFHE policy objectives. The branch secretary was still off work so a line was dropped to the branch chair informing her the minutes were available but as branch officers were required to forward all her correspondence to head office and as the officers could not possibly know what the correspondence contained when receiving it, she had taken it upon herself to send the minutes direct to head office.⁸⁸ Not sure that Triesman would follow the branch's motion and read the letter, she wrote to Triesman informing him of the procedures for distributing BLCARC minutes and reminded him that all her correspondence had to go to head office for action. Therefore, the enclosed BLCARC minutes were sent for him to advise the branch whether or not the correspondence could be dealt with. She asked for "a decision quickly as the next [BLCARC] meeting [was] on the 21st May." The letter was concluded with 'Yours in Satyagraha'⁸⁹ - a link to Gandhi's philosophy of action * and a hint to Triesman of what she had been trying to achieve for months. Bis Weaver had adopted and adapted, albeit in a rudimentary form, the practical approach used by Gandhi to block structures that enforce unjust laws, in this case motions, to make them unworkable.

The next day, it was the branch committee's turn to be reminded she had yet to receive a copy of the branch statement and, hopefully, to add to the *kernels*' discomfort, she broke the news that the statement had been "seen by non-NATFHE people outside the college." She tweaked the whiskers a bit more by asking "what action will be taken by the Branch Committee to ensure these people...are notified that this document contained unfounded allegations against [her]." She pointed out that written communication was the only means to try to contact the branch committee because oral representation had been denied to her on the 29th April as it was on the 14th May 1986.⁹⁰ But, of course, the committee could do nothing to remedy this situation, even if it was inclined to do so, until Triesman approved it and he was unlikely to do that.

We were poking fun at the *kernels* and Triesman as well, although there was very little to smile at, but the main point was to show that motion had wider ramifications than merely not answering a few questions. It prevented any action on my part against Cave and Gates as they could hide behind the motion and get away scot-free. The branch committee was also alerted to my possible breach of the motion to see what it would do about it. But what could they do as they would not know about it unless they breached the motion itself by

* Gandhi described satyagraha as "a weapon of the strong, it admits of no violence under any circumstance whatsoever; and it ever insists upon truth"⁹¹

reading the correspondence. This was looking like a page out of Joseph Heller.⁹²

Correspondence as a specific issue was raised with Triesman – not her letters to the Branch but Day’s prejudicial comment to the acting Bournville branch chair, Shuk Nedjat, about Bis Weaver’s correspondence made two weeks before Day’s meeting with her. The restrictions placed on the branch committee by Day concerning her correspondence was consistent with his general approach; with the one adopted in the branch statement; and, of course, with Triesman’s letter to the liaison secretary telling that committee to keep off the issue. She informed Triesman that from the time of submitting her complaint on the 10th June until the distribution of Day’s ‘interim Report’ on the 30th October 1985, she sent only five letters to officers or officials in NATFHE, consisting of: copies of the complaint to the general secretary and the regional secretary (11th June 1985) advising them of the complaint; a letter to Paul Mackney, (3 July 1985) on an important issue related to the complaint, under the impression he was still the regional chair, which was sent to him before Day informed her of his intention to deal with the complaint; and two letters to Day - one to supply dates when she would be available to meet him (4 July 1985) and the other on the 14th July 1985, to ask “if he had handed over the complaint to P Welch.” This could hardly be considered “an extensive correspondence” yet, on what was a reasonable query, Day made the comment that “Ms Weaver seems to think that Penny Welch has replaced me and...Ms Weaver expresses surprise at this, it does look to me as though she is prone to write to a number of different people, including our own General Secretary, about matters which affect her.” Day also intended telling Bis Weaver “that once an issue has been referred to an official, the member is expected to deal only with that official and not communicate with any third party without prior approval.”⁹³

She did not think the few letters “written indicated a proneness to write letters” nor did she understand “why A Day considers [her] advising the General Secretary of [her] complaint, a matter [to] arouse special comment to the Branch Chairperson.” She also asked “is it usual for Regional Officials to write of the proneness...to write letters numbering 5 in all...including 2 to him?” In her view, Day’s “adherence to procedures would be most reassuring...if only A Day had...[revealed] that prior to agreeing to act as investigator he had already discussed and possibly given advice to D Gates regarding [her] complaint...”⁹⁴ The point of drawing attention to this was to show, if Triesman had missed it, that Day, before and during his investigation, exhibited a hostile and unreasonable view of Bis Weaver’s actions and to let Triesman know the branch motion had not caused the issues to go away.

Bis Weaver gave the *kernel*s whiskers another tweak by asking Triesman for advice on how to deal with people who are not members of NATFHE making enquiries about the contents of the branch statement since “some of the information referred to matters...not to be discussed publicly.” Triesman was also requested to advise the branch of her wish to submit the following motion:

This Branch withdraws the motion passed on the 29th April 1986 and thereby restores the right of all members to have access to information that concerns them. This Branch calls on all Branch Committee members to make themselves accountable to all members.⁹⁵

She never received an answer from either Triesman or the branch chair, such was the state of NATFHE accountability!

The 21st May turned out to be another hectic day. On that day, the branch committee was presented with a complaint made by Gates against Gil Butchere. Bis Weaver was not the only target for allegations that had no substance from the ‘long history man’. Gil Butchere, who was Bis Weaver’s prime supporter in the branch for several months, was again put in the frame by Gates. Following Gates’ unsuccessful attempt to discredit her in September through to March, which had exposed the women’s group as a ‘paper tigress’, he found time to register another complaint against her. On the 19th May, a couple of days after region and liaison had refused to support Bournville branch’s motion against Bis Weaver, he wrote to the women’s group convenor wanting an item raised at the next women’s group meeting. The item was that “G Butchere, the [Branch’s] Woman’s Rights Officer, had written to [his] immediate line manager [the *Boss*] alleging that [he had] been missing lectures” and she had taken this action without raising the matter with him. As a consequence, senior management asked him about these alleged absences. The upshot of all this was that “a formal complaint has been lodged [by Gates] with the Branch Secretary [because he considered] it is a very serious action, especially given the current climate of victimisation and attacks being suffered by union officers.” He asked the women’s group for advice as to “the language [he could] use to express [his] anger and disgust at the actions of a fellow Branch Committee member, without their (sic) being any suggestion that [his] actions [could] be interpreted as sexist.” * In conclusion, Gates felt “that the Women’s Group should be looking at the harassment being endured by many members of Branch Committee, both female and male.”⁹⁶

The letter Gil Butchere left for the *Boss* was on the 29th April but Gates chose not to do anything about it until the 19th May. Gates, on the ball with the appropriate procedures

* An improvement in his terminology compared to that used to Bis Weaver

that should be followed, that is, the allegation that Gil Butchere failed to raise the matter with him, conveniently overlooked his own failure to let Bis Weaver know of the allegation he made to the Principal barely a month before. He had this overriding propensity to turn everything on its head – he was always the innocent party. His action was also a novelty – a man interposing himself on the women’s group in order to attack one of its members. As one member of the group remarked later, the women’s group “is not a group for males to bring complaints about women. [It is] not a Kangaroo Court to judge other women.”⁹⁷ Unfortunately, the women’s group as a whole failed to follow this line of reasoning either in Gil Butchere’s case or in Bis Weaver’s.

When the branch committee met it made no attempt to establish the validity of Gates’ claim. * After a discussion about certain union members being victimised – a convenient illustration of the victimisers portraying themselves as the victims, the conclusion reached was that Gil Butchere should not have left a message about Gates for the line supervisor. The branch committee delegated a woman committee member (JCS) ** to tell Gil Butchere⁹⁸ her action in leaving such a message was not in accordance with trade union practices as “Gates could have been disciplined.” ***

When confronted Gil Butchere was unimpressed and countered it by asking where had been the woman messenger’s trade union practice when she (Gil Butchere) approached the women’s group for support in a complaint against Gates, reminding the messenger that she had made no attempt to help her.⁹⁹ Gil Butchere denied writing to Gates’ line manager (the *Boss*) about Gates missing lessons and was later backed up by the *Boss*.

The branch committee appeared not to bother with facts when it concerned *kernel*s because Gil Butchere described what really happened in a letter to the committee. Gil, accompanied by a student in urgent need of having her application form sent off to a Polytechnic, went in search of Gates on the 29th April to retrieve it. Unable to find Gates and still with the student, she approached Cave and Hartland at about 1.45 pm **** and was told where Gates was teaching but when she and the student arrived at the classroom Gates was

* I was not informed that a branch committee was to be held on the 21st May

** The branch secretary was now Hartland as the elected incumbent was temporarily away from the college. This changeover had been accomplished without a vote or branch committee approval. This was confirmation of the *kernel*s practice of rewarding a newcomer with a union fruit for wholehearted support and Hartland had certainly earned this reward for his actions over the previous three months. The branch executive was now comprised of all *kernel*s

*** A conclusion arrived at by a committee fully conversant with Cave’s breach of trade union practices but reluctant to do anything about it

**** This was within an hour of the Branch voting to remove Bis Weaver’s rights

absent, having left the class after giving the students a study period. She then left a note on the *Boss's* desk asking her to locate the Polytechnic form. In the evening, Gil Butchere tracked down Ms Pattinson to ask her to pass a message on to Gates telling him why she was looking for him. Not only the *Boss* but the student also offered to write to the branch committee to confirm Gil Butchere's version of events. *

The atmosphere pervading the college was illustrated in Gil's Butchere's penultimate comment in which she was virtually apologising for defending herself from false allegations. She said that "Given the present difficult situation I do not want this letter misinterpreted as an attack on either Dave [Gates] or Norman [Cave]. It is an attempt at clarification."¹⁰⁰

Ambiguity seemed endemic in Bournville branch when Bis Weaver was paid a visit by the new secretary of the Equal Opportunities (Race) Committee, who invited her to speak at an equal opportunity and anti-racism meeting that had been arranged. This was in itself an interesting development because this committee was an instrument to assist the Adviser and seek her advice on matters relating to race, not to advise her what they had organised and how she can 'fit in' with what they had planned.

Bis Weaver was not overly impressed after the fiasco associated with the last Race committee meeting. With a touch of irony she asked "How can [she] talk about fighting for equal opportunities for Black people when [she] cannot even get equal opportunities for [herself]?" and reminded him of the branch motion passed three weeks before. She acknowledged that he voted to postpone the motion and she asked him if he was "going to speak out against the decision...so that [she] can have equal treatment...[but] if [he is] afraid of offending people"...then [his] anti-racism is a sham." She moved the discussion on to the recently appointed second Black full-timer, the new Access coordinator, and of [her] intention "to nominate [the coordinator] for the chair of the Equal Opportunities Committee at the next meeting." The secretary asked if the newcomer "will be capable of chairing it," which prompted her to ask "why is it that when Black people are suggested for a position, the first question that White people ask is if they are capable." She considered the question an insult on two counts. Firstly, as Adviser to the 'Race' Committee and as Race Relations Coordinator, she had spoken to the new tutor and "I am assured...she is the most suitable person." What he was doing was "questioning if a Black person's judgement is acceptable or [as] if [she] has not the sense to consider the matter." Secondly, he had supported the present

* This was the student who figured prominently in Day's 'report' and who would shortly provide information to Bis Weaver about the events of the 19th February 1985, which Day had focussed on and completely misrepresented

chairperson of the committee, a White woman, “whose knowledge of equal opportunities is nil and whose understanding of the race issue is such that she...confus[ed] positive action with racist discrimination against Whites.” She added “There seems to be an automatic assumption that White people are capable.” When the secretary defended the chair’s performance at the last meeting, it was pointed out to him that the chair “shouted at the Black Adviser ‘to shut up’...” With all the interruptions at the meeting “the only person she told to shut up was a Black person.” Bis Weaver’s understanding of the situation at the last meeting was that “she was chosen [as Chair] because she would...support...a particular group” and the chair repaid this “when she endorsed the ‘good work’ done by the Branch Executive in the Branch meeting” when they took away her rights. The secretary tried to explain that he meant the new Black member had only been at the college for ten days, which prompted Bis Weaver to draw his attention to the fact that the newcomer’s “experience of Blackness is well on forty years.” She then compared his record of being employed in the college for “only a few weeks before [he] was on the Academic Board.” He corrected her by saying it was six months, whereupon she replied “Lucky you, as I have been here since 1976, and have yet to gain the so-called ‘radical’ support to be elected on to [the] Academic Board or Governors.” She reaffirmed her intention of nominating the newcomer and went on to say, “The first lesson for White people to learn is that Black people know what is best for them and...do not need White folk to tell [them] what [they] need.” The speaker was responsive to her account and agreed to support the nomination.¹⁰¹ She recognised him as someone who was prepared to listen and agreed to speak at the meeting he had arranged.

In the evening, the BLCARC was due to meet. Prior to that meeting, in a letter to the committee’s anti-racism officer, she explained that “within the space of 15 days, the Branch has denied or disregarded [her] rights as a trade unionist and as a Black member [of NATFHE]”. Given she was the Bournville branch delegate to the BLCARC with responsibility “for representing the Branch and its policy on anti-racism on the sub-committee,” she could not see, “as [her] rights to representation were effectively denied [to her] within the Branch..., how [she would be] able to represent the Branch’s policy towards Black people and [to] anti-racism.” She did “not intend to be the Branch’s token Black sitting on representative bodies” while the union’s facilities and services, available to members were withdrawn.” She thought this would be rank hypocrisy and a betrayal of genuine anti-racists, who look to delegates...to further the cause of Black people and anti-racism in this country.” She tendered her resignation with immediate effect.¹⁰²

When the committee convened, she delivered the minutes as Triesman would not have had the time to authorise the branch to send them out even if he was disposed to perform the task of being the branch's messenger. The delegates then got down to business and it was decided to take action on a recent video on education, *In Search of Excellence* - Birmingham City Council's intended promotional tool to effect change in the city's further educational institutions, to be sent to college employees. The video was criticised on equal opportunities and anti-racism grounds as it ignored completely any positive role models of Black people or women. Furthermore, its emphasis was less on education and more on productivity, greater profitability and return on investment. The committee decided to make representations to the City Council not to circulate the video because of its negative hidden message.

Under the agenda item *Bournville College*, Bis Weaver announced her resignation on the grounds cited in her letter to the anti-racism officer, which was circulated to the meeting. She gave a brief résumé of the reasons for her resignation, including the branch executive's actions in submitting the branch motion to both the REC and liaison committee.

During the previous discussion when the committee decided to make representations on the video, one delegate spoke to inform the sub-committee of the liaison committee's executive report of 15th. May 1986, Item 11.5, delivered at the disruptive meeting involving the Bournville contingent. The liaison committee's deliberations on the role of the sub-committee stated:

The liaison committee anti-racism sub-committee continues to meet. While we get the minutes we do not get regular reports for liaison committee. This committee was set up to advise liaison committee on policy and not as a free standing policy making body in its own right. If the sub-committee wishes to change its terms of reference it must come back to full liaison committee to seek approval for any changes.

He also intervened in the Bournville item and tried to put a block on discussing this by referring to the liaison's chair and secretary's ruling that "it couldn't be discussed because it was in the hands of Head Office." This delegate, who had attended one previous meeting, worked at the same college as the liaison committee secretary and it appeared Bis Weaver was not the only one with 'eyes and ears' on the various committees.

The other delegates listened politely but this caveat went unheeded – the majority of delegates did not see anti-racism action as subordinate to executive order or any form of bureaucratic *dictat* and Bis Weaver continued with her presentation. One delegate called for support for her "as she must be under considerable pressure and stress" and for the reinstatement of her rights. He spoke of the difficulties "for Black and ethnic minority people to bring complaints because they are investigated by the majority [White] people." Another

spoke of the seriousness of the issue and “officers need to be made accountable and answer valid questions.” Several delegates spoke of “external bodies who...provide assistance” but thought “NATFHE avenues should be exhausted before others were explored.” Another newcomer, very experienced in anti-racism issues, expressed concern that Bis Weaver’s difficulties had been going on for 15 months. The liaison’s ‘eyes and ears’ reiterated that the liaison committee would not discuss the issue. The speaker was right but his contribution came more as a defence for liaison’s decision rather than seeing bureaucratic decision-making as a structural impediment needing to be challenged.

The other delegates were of a different calibre and would not be distracted by the bureaucrats hanging together rather than hanging separately. One delegate proposed co-opting Bis Weaver to the committee as a means of showing support. She agreed and the proposal was passed.

The committee also agreed to write to the Bournville branch to “express dissatisfaction that a duly elected representative to the Committee has been prevented from fulfilling her functions by an action of the Branch.” The next meeting was arranged for the 3rd July and by then the issues affecting Bis Weaver had gone well beyond NATFHE’s jurisdiction.¹⁰³

A WMARC propaganda leaflet proclaiming the support available from the WMARC was distributed at the meeting. The WMARC circular, April 1986, promoted NATFHE’s Anti-racism Pack, with its précis of good practice. NATFHE’s policy, as seen by WMARC, was “a most important development in combating racism within Further Education.” The committee recognised the policy did “not directly challenge racist views but sets out to eliminate discriminatory behaviour that comes from such views,” which was rather like administering a pain killer while the causes of the pain were left to flourish. Racial “discrimination...is the concern of all levels of NATFHE, [however], “ONLY the ordinary Branch members can oppose discrimination in the Colleges,” which moved the policy away from the Whitbread analysis of ‘activists’ having the pre-eminent role’ in developing and implementing NATFHE’s policies. Branch officers were expected to draw attention to the role ‘ordinary’ members were to play through departmental meetings.

The list of ‘good practices’ included: (a) “All members should accept their individual as well as their collective responsibility for opposing racism”; (b) “No member should express racist views, exhibit racial intolerance, or racist behaviour or practice, or connive in any form of racial discrimination in the course of their work or trade union activity”; (c) “A member, who...becomes aware of evidence of racism or discriminatory behaviour, should bring the matter to the attention of a Branch Officer;” (d) “Any member who feels themselves to be a

victim of racism or racial discrimination should bring the matter to the attention of a Branch Officer;” (e) “A member who feels that no action has been taken...within a reasonable...time should report [it] to the Branch...[or] the Secretary of the Liaison Committee.”¹⁰⁴

The circular included names of three speakers prepared to address Branch meetings – Sue Pattinson, the Bournville branch chair; Bob Carter, the secretary to the WMARC; and Alan Jones, the signatory of the circular. The first named had been responsible for producing a statement containing unfounded allegations against a Black member seeking justice after complaining of harassment; the second had turned a blind eye to a Black member’s request for assistance; the third was at that time unknown to us.

Where had Bis Weaver and I been residing since February 1985 as these services and facilities were nowhere in sight during that period and certainly were not available at Bournville branch. In April 1986, when these guidelines on ‘good practice’ were sent out, she was about to be victimised by the branch for seeking information from branch officers on matters covered by the guidelines. As a guide to action, they were certainly non-starters at Bournville branch and, so it would appear, at any level of NATFHE in the West Midlands. This flag-waving humbug rankled as it was in stark contrast to the off-handed and dismissive way in which the committee had cold-shouldered requests for assistance from an ethnic minority member.

The next day, Bis Weaver wrote to Triesman to ask him “to inform the Branch as soon as possible” of her decision to resign from the BLCARC because “until it hears from Head Office it cannot act on [her] decision to resign.”¹⁰⁵ She did not wait for Triesman’s impression of *Hermes* but put pen to paper upon completion of her note to him. She let the branch committee know of her resignation and quoted from her letter to the anti-racism officer in which she had written of her refusal to be a “token Black” and referred to the “rank hypocrisy and betrayal of genuine anti-racists” if she remained a delegate of the Bournville branch. She recognised that a problem was posed for the branch because “until D Triesman has taken action...[she] will still technically be the delegate...even though [she] resigned.” She suggested they wrote to Triesman “to expedite matters to enable the Branch to elect another delegate with rights of representation within the Branch to represent the Branch’s anti-racism policy.” Recognising that the branch was in a cleft stick, she asked “who will be prepared to represent Branch policy on anti-racism and the promotion of Black people’s interests...as a replacement for the Black delegate who resigned because her rights within the Branch were withdrawn from her.”¹⁰⁶

There had also been an anti-racism meeting arranged in the college, this time by the union branch, which was to take place in the business studies department. One glaring feature of this initiative was the failure of the organisers to invite the college Adviser on anti-racism and secretary of NATFHE liaison's anti-racism committee, to make a contribution. The person invited to lead the discussion was the branch chair.

By the courtesy of another set of 'eyes and ears', which she had in a number of places, she heard of the meeting. Our arrival at the meeting was met by a few surprised faces. This was, perhaps, another first for the Bournville branch when a branch anti-racist delegate and Race Adviser had to gate-crash an anti-racism meeting in order to make a contribution. *

The chair spoke on the origins of NATFHE's anti-racism pack; on the CRE's investigation of racism on a youth training scheme; on encouraging discussion of anti-racism; on developing curriculum; on monitoring racist treatment; on setting up anti-racism procedures. The presentation was all embracing: create an atmosphere of tolerance; guard against racist material; encourage more Black teachers and how to achieve this; explore activities in multi-cultural education and improve anti-racist elements; and establish a college body to deal with racist practices.

All this was very impressive and commendable but serious unresolved issues in the college and branch told a different story. Less than a month before, the branch executive supported by the branch had violated most of these aims; had tried to turn the 'Race' Committee into a channel to satisfy personal ambition; and engaged in what could only be described as racially discriminatory practices. This was a classic case of illusion over reality. The branch executive, through these kinds of meetings, was attempting to side-line Bis Weaver in the college apparatus by seeking to control equal opportunities via a link-up between the branch and the 'Race' committee now that the *kernels* had the impression that the 'Race' committee was under the control of a *kernel*/union loyalist link.

Cave was invited to elaborate on how the branch could work with the 'Race' committee order to establish these aims through a branch-college link up but before he spoke, I suggested the adviser to the 'Race' committee should be asked to give advice on these issues.

* There was an interesting preliminary to the meeting. Just before the meeting began, one of the *kernels*' fellow travellers, an 'excess' delegate at the liaison committee meeting when the branch motion was presented for support, declared that people could smoke during the meeting held in a college workroom. This was not to the liking of some of those in attendance and the point was made that the branch had passed a motion banning smoking in workrooms. Her response was "that doesn't apply in this room." It seemed that there was a free market in motions – Milton Friedman was alive and kicking in the college; very appropriate for a business studies department

This was supported by a SWP branch committee member.

Bis Weaver addressed “the implications...of appointing more Black staff [and the] effects [that would have] on Union rules, staff development and part-timers.” One implication was that “Black people will be applying for and being recruited to positions that White staff will also want.” At present “Insiders have an edge over outsiders which means that Black people will have difficulty in obtaining positions if changes are not made in recruiting practices [and] This applies to all jobs...”

Cave favoured “advertisements for all appointments in ethnic minority papers [as] Bournville cannot operate a ringed fence”; “balanc[ing] the need for Black people” while “secur[ing] the rights of part-timers.” As most part-timers were White securing their rights in obtaining full-time posts would not change recruitment policies and virtually restrict Black newcomers to part-time posts. This offered Black candidates, in the short term, only part-time appointment; and in the medium term full-time appointment only at the lowest rung as internal candidates would continue to have a distinct advantage for higher grades. Notwithstanding this limitation, the incongruence of what was being said did not appear to register with the audience. The speaker was advocating securing the rights of part-timers when a full-time Black member, sitting listening, had her job dismembered, albeit temporarily, several months ago, by a show of hands from a group of college staff of which he was one; and her rights in the union removed by a similar show of hands at the instigation of the branch executive of which he was a member.

Hartland spoke of the necessity to educate those who view employing Black people as a threat. His advice was that “We who understand anti-racism have this role [and] There is a strong need to develop awareness and tackle people. Management must have a commitment to Equal Opportunities, Race.” This, too, would have been commendable if his own educational awareness of the race issue went beyond his recent adventures in the ‘Race’ committee and, along with Cave, supporting Gates when false allegations against Bis Weaver were recently made to management.

Bis Weaver again took the floor to explain that racist situations were everyday experiences and it was necessary “to determine [those] activities that can be defined as racist.” In essence this was what staff training was about and the difficulty was in how to deal with entrenched attitudes. She informed them of the city council’s city-wide training schemes, which might not be considered acceptable to some staff as they “feel as if they are being attacked [as] Anti-racism is more than discussion statements. Real change in present

practices [must be made as] racism is entrenched in the British way of life. To get to the core is difficult [as] it is painful to be subject to self-examination.”

She provided some statistical information on Birmingham with a population that included 17% African-Caribbean and Asian but in Bournville College with a student intake of 54% Black students there had been only one Black teacher, herself, * and she had been specifically employed to teach Black students. She also provided the figures for other colleges in the city.

Touching on her own experience at the hands of people in this meeting, she described what Black people faced when employed; such as not being acknowledged, as she herself was not. As adviser to the college and the NATFHE delegate to the BLCARC, she “was not even invited to speak here.” She spoke of the need for “White people [to] make a conscious effort to recognise the roles performed by Black people [and] when that happens then [Black people] will stop being ‘militant’ and ‘aggressive.’”

She asked “why don’t people recognise [her] responsibilities and not undermine [her] role; and give Black people representation instead of taking it away from them.” She added, “When you [the group] are not prepared to do it then we have to act.”

Voices spoke of encouraging more Black people to apply for positions; of putting pressure on management; and that NATFHE representatives must be involved.

A considerable distinction existed between the contribution of the invited speaker, the branch chair; and the uninvited gate-crasher, Bis Weaver, showing the difference between NATFHE illusion and everyday reality. To the chair, NATFHE’s policy was to raise individual awareness and dismantle racist procedures, adding “it is no use saying NATFHE can do nothing.” To Bis Weaver, NATFHE policy on anti-racism was a misconception. NATFHE is in urgent need of restructuring...[with] a strong commitment to anti-racism.” She was “not saying that nothing had been done. But there must be a strong commitment to anti-racism and to demonstrate it.” It was “no use saying to management to clean up its house when NATFHE’s house needs cleaning up...NATFHE needs an effective mechanism to deal with racism.”¹⁰⁷

Bis Weaver had taken the opportunity, albeit to a limited audience, of having a right of reply to the reprehensible behaviour of the ‘anti-racist’ *kernels*. The posturing of the *kernels* was reaffirmed the very next day when Bis Weaver discovered the reason for being called to the Principal’s office on the 25th April, and who was behind it, having been tipped

* This had recently doubled to two

off by a member of staff at this 'anti-racism' meeting shortly after it ended.

It had been a busy few hours and the day was still not finished. In the evening, the liaison secretary, fully acquainted with the previous evening's BLCARC meeting, which could only have come from the plant as the minutes had not yet been written up, phoned her. He told her that it was not possible for her to resign from the committee as a delegate because, "as far as [he] knew [the BLCARC] [was] an open committee and [she was] not attending in any representative capacity." This conformed to the usual pattern in NATFHE, once the bureaucrats had woken up to the fact that anti-racism committees were not going to play the role of understudy, they ceased to have the same standing as other committees. He referred to 11.5 of the liaison secretary's report of the 15th May 1986. However, on the 13th January, the BLCARC decided, and Gates and the Bournville contingent were at that meeting, to request branches to nominate one delegate to the committee plus co-option.¹⁰⁸ Bis Weaver was due for nomination to the branch committee on the strength of this decision but it was aborted due to the removal of her rights.

The decision was made four months ago and the minutes had been sent to the liaison committee and now the secretary is saying 'no can do'. NATFHE's usual custom and practice, which seems to apply to so many different situations, ceases to be followed when it interferes with the interests of officers and officials.

The liaison secretary also mentioned the Bournville branch motion and gave it an interesting interpretation. He said it "did not include correspondence about reports and information about meetings" and added he was "sure that there would be no objection by the Branch Committee if [she] reported on the meeting." Bis Weaver found his comment to be grossly unacceptable – it was analogous to saying stay by the kitchen door but go inside the house occasionally when there is work to be done. The motion said "no correspondence and that's exactly how [she] interprets it" – literal interpretation, and she made it clear she was no token Black. She pointed out that he misunderstood the situation at Bournville: a motion was passed in her absence; she was then refused a list of branch members to send out a rejoinder; told of no correspondence to members of the branch committee; and, subsequently, denied the right of reply at the next branch meeting. When she told him she sent the minutes of the meeting to Triesman to approve distribution, he saw the funny side of it. However, he was thrown off guard when she told him she wanted to go to NATFHE's Annual Conference due to commence in two days' time. He must have realised she would use observer status to lobby delegates about her situation and his response was to say it was not possible "to go as a

visitor because they throw people out.”¹⁰⁹ If that was true NATFHE was even more of a closed shop than we thought.

The first thing next day, Bis Weaver phoned Triesman, who was out, but she left a message to say she wanted to go to the conference and shortly afterwards, a call came from Triesman’s secretary, saying instructions would be left at reception to allow us into the Conference.¹¹⁰

Another demanding week was almost over and with the thought of a trip to Brighton on the morrow, she decided to tidy up another outstanding issue. She knew someone had intended to register a complaint against her that led her to the Principal’s waiting room at the end of April. The tip-off of Gates’ involvement, after the previous day’s anti-racism meeting in the business studies department, confirmed what she had suspected; and the nature of the complaint, which she had not expected.

What happened was that Gates, Cave and Hartland went to see their line supervisor – the *Boss*. The purpose of this visit was to complain of being given no opportunity to see the HMIs during the March inspection. The *Boss*, claiming not to have been told of the HMIs’ visit either, together with the ‘trinity of aggrieved *kernels*’ went to see the head of the business studies department, who advised them to bring a formal complaint but the *Boss* chose not to do so. Afterwards, Gates went to the Principal to trot out the same story of their dissatisfaction over the HMIs visit. Senior Management met Gates and “he claimed to be speaking on behalf of the whole...Division.” Upon hearing this, the Principal “referred the matter to the Head of Department.”¹¹¹ Following on from this, Bis Weaver was given an advanced beckoning to turn up at the Principal’s office at 4 pm for an undisclosed purpose, which she found out at 4.30 pm was to be told of a complaint made against her. The complaint did not materialise because the *Boss*, “the person entitled to speak on behalf of the whole Division, did not wish to pursue the matter.”¹¹² Bis Weaver remained unaware of the complainants or the nature of the complaint until the whistle was blown on the 22nd May.

When the divisional head decided not to pursue the allegations, Gates went beyond the division in order to bring Bis Weaver’s alleged inefficiencies or her deliberate attempt to exclude them to the attention of senior management. If the divisional head had been misguided enough to pursue the complaint on the strength of Gates’, Cave’s and Hartland’s allegations, those allegations would have rebounded on her and shown the saga for what it was - trumped up malice. The divisional head would have the ‘red face’, especially as information later released by Bis Weaver, after she found out, would have shown the *Boss* to have acquiesced in the claim of not being informed of the HMIs visit.

The three had given little thought to the allegations because: (i) one HMI went to Gates' class at 10.50 am on the 4th March and spoke to Gates and four students; * (ii) Hartland sent Bis Weaver a memo a couple of days before the inspection to say he would be out of the college when the HMIs came;¹¹³ and (iii) Cave did not even teach on the Access course any more so there was no need to inform him of the visit or for him to see the HMIs.¹¹⁴

The action of the 'trio' had all the hallmarks of a smear - make the allegation but do nothing in the open where the allegations could be challenged and discredited, just leave it hanging in the air and, hey presto, guilt by innuendo. ** It certainly gave a novel slant to Day's comment in his 'report' that when allegations were to be made against fellow tutors, "the first person to be informed is the one against whom the complaint is directed." Some Orwellian pigs were certainly more equal than others.

When Bis Weaver received an inkling of what had transpired, she decided to get to the bottom of this and phoned the *Boss*. The *Boss*' response was that no complaint was made, which when translated meant no formal complaint only serious allegations that had been left in the air. She disclosed the sequence of events involving that Gates, Cave and Hartland, and that they "felt they were not given an opportunity to see the HMIs." During her explanation, the *Boss* revealed that she told the three that she – *the Boss*, had not been informed of the visit either, and therefore, had been in no position to organise anything. They went to the head of department and his response was to ask if they wanted to bring a formal complaint but they decided not to. The *Boss* must have forgotten to whom she was talking because her claim of not knowing of the HMIs visit was spurious.

Bis Weaver picked up on this and quoted from a memo sent to the *Boss* dated the 17th December 1985 advising her of the visit of the HMIs.¹¹⁵ She then shared with the *Boss* the relevant details of the inspector's visit to Gates' class; Hartland's memo of unavailability;¹¹⁶ and of Cave not teaching on the course.¹¹⁷

This input from the *Boss* of not being able to do anything about the visit was a complete *red herring* because the Access course was run by Bis Weaver and it was her responsibility to organise the HMIs visit; the *Boss* had no role to play. The December letter

* Bis Weaver kept detailed records of the HMIs' visit

** This tactic was prevalent in NATFHE in the West Midlands and at NATFHE head office, at least as far as Bis Weaver's rights were concerned as shown by NATFHE's submission to the Industrial Tribunal in October 1986; by the actions of the *kernel*s in Bournville between December 1986 and March 1987; by the WMREC between January and March 1987; and by Triesman from September 1987 until August 1988

sent to the *Boss* was out of courtesy since it involved two members of staff for whom she was line manager. The *Boss* would also know, as was pointed out, that inspectors were supplied with tutors' timetables and it was the inspectors who decided which members of staff and students they chose to speak to. Bis Weaver had no control over that nor did anybody in the college.

The *Boss* expressed surprise at the information she was provided with and came up with what can only be described as an untenable claim of the complaint not being about Bis Weaver but (i) "about the gutlessness of senior management"; (ii) of herself having "a lot of trouble with Gates"; and (iii) "not want[ing] to pursue it anymore."

It was difficult to assess how the *Boss* arrived at this conclusion unless she was playing a tune for all participants – a form of neutralism, because in what way could a complaint about Bis Weaver's handling of the HMIs visit be interpreted as involving management's gutlessness. Management had shown considerable gutlessness in not tackling Gates but it was ludicrous to think the three knights of the *kernel* brigade went off to management to complain about Bis Weaver because they were dissatisfied with management. The *Boss* had witnessed close up three incidents involving Gates' behaviour towards Bis Weaver so it might not come as a surprise that she was reticent about taking on Gates. Bis Weaver made it clear that the *Boss*' decision to abort the complaint had no bearing on what was required and that she intended taking the issue up with management.¹¹⁸

Cave and Hartland, over the past few months, had become firmly involved with Gates in his attempts to discredit her but what motive did they have for following in Gates footsteps. Neither of them had any conceivable reason for acting against Bis Weaver. Nonetheless, it showed the extent these two 'anti-racists' would go to help Gates in his determination to discredit a Black woman, who until recently was Bournville's only Black woman member of the academic staff.

The night before our trip to the South Coast, Bis Weaver became so ill the trip had to be called off and the Conference had to do without our presence. Bournville's regional chair elect and his coterie would be there gaining the ear of Triesman, as if they needed to do anything more than they had already done to get Triesman's support. However imbalanced the situation seemed to be, Bis Weaver was about to come back from 'beyond the pale' and the people to thank were Gates, Ms Pattinson, the Bournville *kernels* and their advisers and collaborators.

(e) A Bizarre Egg was Hatched in the Cuckoo's Nest?

At the time when Gates was sending his anti-racism *curriculum vitae* to Triesman and the *kernel*s were unfolding their scheme of alienating Bis Weaver from some of the benefits of union membership with the branch's April motion, Gates, and two others, had been involved in a serious attempt to discredit her in the wake of the HMIs visit, although they waited several weeks after the visit to implement this conspiracy.

Over the next three weeks, the Principal would speak to three people and correspond with one person on a matter relating to Bis Weaver's difficulties within the college. On the 1st May, two days after Bis Weaver's rights were removed, Gates received an invitation from the Principal to attend an interview on the 6th May to have the opportunity to answer a complaint made against him. Gates failed to turn up; instead he attended a NATFHE Conference on Access and Quality; the same conference that Bis Weaver had led a seminar group.

This absence led to the appearance of the first visitor, Cave, on the 8th May, acting on Gates' behalf. Cave wanted "to know the nature of the complaint against D Gates." Management, "not inclined to describe the complaint in the absence of D Gates,... told N Cave...the meeting was informal to see if the matter could be resolved without the need to go to a formal disciplinary hearing." Eventually, "after some discussion,...N Cave [was told]...the complainant alleged that D Gates 'had sought to interfere in the selection process for a post with which he [had] no direct connection' [and]...for which [he] 'had no direct line responsibility.'" Cave assured management that "D Gates would be at the meeting the following day."¹¹⁹

This was the bare bones of the complaint. The formal complaint was made on Mayday by a student/governor, although he had approached management in February about the complaint. The student, who served on the interview panel for the post of Equal Opportunities (Race) Coordinator in October 1985, claimed that Gates, who as a governor knew the student was on the panel, said to him that Mrs Weaver was not "a good candidate for the post." He further claimed that Gates asked if he "could have a look at the application forms." The student was of the view that "Mr Gates [h]as something against Bis Weaver..."¹²⁰ The allegation made by the student-governor against Gates was so serious that the Principal had no option but to follow it up although it had taken almost three months to do so and it brought NATFHE's regional official into the proceedings. This was an issue to remain unknown to Bis Weaver for several weeks.

The Principal's second visitor turned up for the meeting on the 9th May accompanied by Cave. Gates entered this meeting with a background, stretching from February 1985 through October 1985 up until the present time of considerable hostility and enmity towards Bis Weaver.

At the meeting, Cave's opening comment was that "as a trade union officer, D Gates would be entitled to be represented by a full-time official at any future formal disciplinary hearing." Cave then explained "they would listen to the complaint, take five minutes out to discuss it and then return to say how they wished to proceed." With the terms of the hearing laid out, Cave wanted to know the identity of the complainant but the Principal declined to provide that information at that stage.

The Principal then outlined the complaint but without disclosing the identity of the complainant. Gates asked "how he could comment on the complaint if he did not know who...made it." The Principal's response was that he "could say it was not true." Cave defended Gates' right not to comment "because the record of this meeting, even though informal, would be made available at any future stage of the process." Gates, through Cave, was informed that the meeting was "for D Gates to hear the complaint and to comment on it if he wished [and] if no comment was to be made then the meeting had served its purpose...[as it] was not an inquisition into the background details." Cave thought it difficult for Gates "to comment because it was a long time ago and might have arisen from an innocuous remark." Gates and Cave decided to take time out to discuss the matter.

Ten minutes later, they returned for Gates to declare "that the alleged event was a long time ago and he would need more details...to recall the context [as] Many people ask questions of him, as a staff governor, about appointments...[but] he would never make a slur against a member of staff in those circumstances." This response might have had serious doubts cast upon it if management had access to the information in Bis Weaver's possession, sufficient to demolish the false allegations made to the Principal by Gates, barely two weeks before, over the HMIs visit.

Gates asked if "the Principal was saying it was wrong to have such discussions" and the Principal agreed "that staff governors...should seek the views of staff..."* Gates was informed that "the allegation was specific [in] that [he] had said that a person on the shortlist

* A somewhat dubious proposition since it was opening up the interview process to the attitudes of people not involved in the process itself and (i) subjecting internal candidates to the preferences or prejudices of existing staff; and (ii) placing external candidates at a disadvantage if they did not meet with the criteria considered acceptable to these interlopers, who had no knowledge of how the candidates might conduct themselves at the interview

was unsuitable for the post.” Gates apparently did not ask whom it was he allegedly thought unsuitable, only who had made the complaint and went on to say that “he was suspicious of people who brought forward complaints after such a long time and who could remember accurately what was said after six months.” If many people asked Gates questions about appointing staff and, as interviews for posts take place frequently, how did he conclude the complaint concerned an appointment six months before? - the time of the interview for the Equal Opportunities Adviser’s post. Cave, too, had earlier referred to the complaint being “a long time ago.”

As for the length of time between the alleged incident and submitting the complaint, the student had approached management in February – three and a half months after the alleged incident; then provided a written statement of complaint in March 1986;¹²¹ and it had taken this long for management to follow it up. Gates did not seem to dwell on the length of time between the HMIs’ visit and when he made allegations about Bis Weaver – seven weeks. Why did he delay for so long?

The Principal disclosed that was only part of the allegation; as it also included Gates asking “to see the [candidates] application forms, which would not be proper.” Gates denied asking “to see things that [he was] not entitled to see.” The Principal said Gates “had now done what was asked for, which was to comment on the allegation; [and] his comment had been to deny it.” Gates was not satisfied “because he had not heard the detailed background of the complaint [and] he would not make a slur against a member of staff,...[or] not ask to see the application forms...[and] that character assassination may be behind the allegation.” Gates was really pushing the ‘integrity’ line in front of people who had witnessed his performance in the college for over fifteen months. The Principal asked if Gates’ statement “was a categorical denial of both parts of the allegation” and Gates confirmed that was so.

Cave re-entered the discussion with a comment that “taking remarks out of context may make things difficult”; and Gates agreed. The implication of Cave’s remark, backed by Gates, was that some remarks might have been made, yet neither the complainant nor the post had been identified. Therefore, it is difficult to see how the alleged remarks were taken out of context. Furthermore, what kind of context would it have to be to leave a recipient of those remarks with the impression of a person’s unsuitability for a post and being asked to see candidates’ application forms?

The Principal closed the meeting to take further advice and would report back as soon as possible.¹²² After the meeting management decided to call in the student-governor for an interview, which took place on the 16th May. In the meantime, Gates contacted the regional

official, Day, who was quick off the mark and within three days, by the 12th May, a letter was on its way to the Principal of Bournville College. The contents were not disclosed to anyone outside the inner circle of management/governors and, later, the LEA, but the contents caused the Principal some concern.

The third visitor was about to make his appearance before senior management. Two days after the Bournville motion had been paraded before the regional executive and liaison committees; and Bis Weaver had been refused a right of reply, the Principal interviewed the complainant.

The interview opened with the Principal trying to pinpoint the date of the alleged incident, which was identified as occurring between the time the student received the candidates' application forms - a few days before the interviews took place, and the date of the actual interviews, 23rd October 1985. With that decided upon, the student was asked why he waited so long to put it in writing. He explained the delay as a combination of not knowing the procedures; not knowing if a student could complain about lecturers; and not having the confidence to do so.

The student described the circumstances of the alleged incident. Gates, apparently, approached him in one of the college corridors and after a few general remarks about NATFHE, Gates brought Bis Weaver into the conversation and said that "he did not think [she] was a good candidate for the job." When the student asked why Gates thought that, Gates declined to add to that and went on to ask "to see the [candidates'] application forms." Apparently, Gates "knew somebody...in NATFHE Headquarters...to check through the forms." The student "refused...[as] the application forms were confidential."

Management asked the student if "David Gates...[may] have been making general remarks about the interview process and [the student] misunderstood what he was saying or [was he] absolutely clear that what he [Gates] was saying was meant to influence [him]." The student thought it was the latter because Gates "wanted the names of the other candidates...and their application forms..." He confirmed that Gates gave the impression "he wanted to check up on the names and details of the applicants with NATFHE Headquarters." He was also asked if Gates' remark might be either concern on Gates' part "in getting the right person in the post...[or] that he [was] antagonistic personally to [Bis Weaver]." The student thought Gates disliked Bis Weaver.

The student, when asked, confirmed everything he said to be the truth, after which the Principal made it clear that the allegations were very serious and he might have to give evidence at any subsequent enquiry, which would mean involving the chair of governors. He

was also informed should he fail to “arrive at the hearing or changed [his] account, the whole situation would be reversed [rebound] upon [himself].” His reply was to say “I shall be there.” The student was asked not to discuss the allegations with anyone as she intended to seek advice from the chair of governors and she would get back to him.¹²³

The same day as the third visit, the Principal answered the letter sent by Day. Day’s intention was to ‘advise the Principal of the consequences of dealing “in issues which may lead to attempts to discipline one of its [NATFHE’s] senior representatives.”¹²⁴ In her reply, the Principal “emphasized that no question of ‘discipline’ has arisen...as the meeting between [management and Gates] was informal” and was arranged because she had received “a written complaint about Mr Gates...[and her] next step was to ensure that Mr Gates had an opportunity to comment on the contents of the complaint.” The Principal quoted a “fundamental rule of natural justice [for] a person about whom a complaint has been made [to] be given full opportunity to be heard.” She summed up her position in the final sentence, which was “to remain neutral in any complaint until both parties...have been heard”¹²⁵ – the concept of natural justice must have gone right over Day’s head.

The chair of Governors, and two other governors, advised the Principal “not to proceed to any further enquiry primarily because of the time lag between October 1985 and March 1986.”¹²⁶ The Principal’s decision not to pursue the issue further was probably the only one possible because in the absence of corroborative evidence it was the student-governor’s word against Gates. However, with all the other incidents ranging from February 1985 until 1986, the reasonable person might have looked at it differently based on the balance of probability but Gates’ prospective exit from the college offered a way out of the whole situation.

Whether or not Day reported this latest development to head office officials to keep them up to date with events is not known. However, it is unlikely for head office officials not to be informed of what one of its ‘star’ lay officers was up to. However, given the invisibility of Bis Weaver, perhaps officials might not be able to figure out who the alleged victim was in an alleged attempt to suborn one of the governors.

Realists and conspiracy theorists might find common ground in considering that it was a very convenient coincidence for Downey, a staff governor; a NATFHE representative; a close ally of Gates in the union; with a deep-seated antagonism towards Bis Weaver, to make the unusual proposal in the governors meeting to make the Equal Opportunities Adviser’s post a governor-appointed one. This was then followed by an alleged attempt, according to a student/governor sitting on the interview panel, to suborn him into opposing

one of the candidates – none other than Bis Weaver. In NATFHE all things were possible and nothing involving NATFHE could come as a surprise anymore!

(f) A Long History in Anti-racism – NATFHE Criteria

Triesman later revealed that during April 1986 he came to the conclusion that Gates was not a racist basing his ‘judgement’ on a letter from Gates. * Overcoming his lack of competence in race issues, Triesman had come to a decision based on NATFHE’s unique way of dealing with complaints of racism. He did not disclose if the letter had been solicited by head office or if it was spontaneously generated by Gates himself. Gates wrote of being: (i) an anti-apartheid activist since the age of fourteen, recently as chair of the Anti-apartheid Movement in Birmingham; (ii) “expressing his hostility to racism;” and (iii) spending “his time working in the College fostering anti-racism courses.”¹²⁷ Of these three claims, there is nothing to suggest the first one was anything other than accurate; the second was open for debate; but the third was not true.

To what extent did the second claim stand up to scrutiny? Did Gates’ behaviour to Bis Weaver in the period of three months prior to submitting her complaint represent an expression “of his hostility to racism?” Was calling her a “fucking liar”; telling her “to take her fucking finger out” in a room full of White colleagues; and trying to browbeat her on a number of occasions, evidence not of hostility to racism but hostility to a Black member of staff. This claim can be left to the reasonable person to decide.

The third claim had been Bis Weaver’s area of responsibility at Bournville College and had been so since 1980 when appointed Access course director. This included developing courses specifically designed for ethnic minority students based on her expertise in this area – the reason she was appointed to that post. Gates had begun to participate in this area of education only a few months before he tried to oust her from her job; and there was no evidence of his ‘fostering anti-racism courses’. **

For some time, the college was *en route* to developing an equal opportunities policy and monitoring its progress in line with city council policy, although this was initially limited tutors to provide the necessary information to coordinators of all three areas of equal

* Triesman disclosed this letter at an Industrial Tribunal hearing in June 1987

** The Bournville NATFHE branch, strong on rhetoric, did not have anyone or any member dealing with race equality although most union branches in Birmingham had someone overseeing this area of activity. The Bournville branch committee had conveniently excluded Bis Weaver from performing this task

opportunities – gender, race and disability. The purpose was to compile data in accordance with city council policy. In Bis Weaver’s case it was to be made available to the HMIs when they came to the college in March to inspect the Access courses. However, information from several people, including Gates, Cave and Hartland was not submitted to Bis Weaver by the time the HMIs visited the college. Far from Gates and his two companions contributing to anti-racism in the college, as Triesman was to claim, they were not only hindering Bis Weaver in the performance of her duties, they were also obstructing the wider strategy of combating racial discrimination in the college. Attributing their failure to an oversight on their part was not a feasible defence because as late as July 1986, the ‘threesome’ plus another business studies lecturer had still not complied with the directive as they had not submitted the information. * They were told by senior management that their inaction was “in contravention of an instruction from management” and “impeding the implementation of Equal Opportunities agreements.” Eventually, they complied with the directive.¹²⁸ This did not seem much of a recommendation for any of them having a ‘long history’. **

As for Triesman, he had unquestioningly accepted Gates’ self-serving, self-exonerating offerings. Triesman may be excused, to a certain extent, for his gullibility bearing in mind his self-admitted lack of competence in the area of racism but surely any reasonable person given the information on the number of episodes involving Gates would question his claim of being an anti-racist. When Gates despatched the letter to Triesman, he had already shown his ‘long history’ as an anti-racist in a number of bizarre ways.

* The fourth member of the group was relying on the Bournville branch taking up a complaint against Day – a forlorn hope considering the interests of Gates and Day were irrevocably entwined over the Weaver case. The member accused Day, who had represented him in a dispute when he was at another college, of threatening to walk out of the hearing if he did not follow exactly what Day said. Head office had subsequently told him it would not act in his case if he did not have Day representing him¹²⁹

** NATFHE also claimed that Cave and Hartland “are passionate and committed anti-racists” when it made its submission to the Office of Industrial Tribunals in October 1986¹³⁰

¹ Levi P, [1987] Truce, Abacus, London, p396

² GW to BSec 1 May 1986 File L 54

³ BW to BCttee Mbrs 10 Mar 1986 File B 33

⁴ Notes BCttee Mtg 28 Apr 1986 File Q 5 - 7

⁵ Mins Br Mtg 29 Apr 1986 File Q 13

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- ⁶ HS to DTr 6 May 1986 File C 42
- ⁷ Statement, BCh 28 Apr 1986 NATFHE IT Bundle 35
- ⁸ Mill J S in Chomsky N [1989] Necessary Illusions: Thought Control in Democratic Societies, Pluto, London, p132
- ⁹ Notes Br Mtg 29 Apr 1986 File Q 9 – 12;
- ¹⁰ NATFHE Br Agenda 29 Apr 1986 File Q 8; GW to BSec/BCtte 14 May 1986 File C 55
- ¹¹ SP to DE 29 April 1986 File C 33
- ¹² T/p conv BW & DE 17 May 1986 File Z 5 - 6
- ¹³ The Lecturer Feb 2000
- ¹⁴ GW to DE 17 May 1986 File L 56 - 57
- ¹⁵ GW to DTr 16 Apr 1986 Rec'd Del V 401817 File L 39 - 40
- ¹⁶ DTr to GW 28 Apr 1986 NATFHE IT Bundle 159/160
- ¹⁷ Deman v AUT [2003] ECWA Civ 239 s16
- ¹⁸ BW to BSec/BCtte 28 Apr 1986 File C 31
- ¹⁹ BW to BSec/BCtte 29 Apr 1986 BW IT Bundle 64
- ²⁰ T/p conv BW & DTr 30 Apr 1986 File Y 2
- ²¹ DTr to BW 18 Feb 1986 BW IT Bundle 42
- ²² T/p conv BW & HS 30 Apr 1986 File Q 14 - 15
- ²³ GW to BSec /BEx 30 Apr 1986 Copy to DTr File L 52
- ²⁴ BW to BEx 30 Apr 1986 File C 36
- ²⁵ BW/GW to BSec/BCtte 30 Apr 1986 File C 35
- ²⁶ BW/GW to BSec/BCtte 2 May 1986 File C 37
- ²⁷ BW to BSec/BCtte 4 May 1986 File C 38
- ²⁸ Ibid
- ²⁹ BW to BSec/BEx 30 Apr 1986 File C 34
- ³⁰ BW to BrMbrs 5 May 1986 File C 40 - 41
- ³¹ Conv BW & DL 9 May 1986 File Q 16
- ³² HS to DTr 6 May 1986 File C 42
- ³³ BW to BCtte 7 May 1986 File C 44
- ³⁴ BW to RDty 5 May 1986 File C 39
- ³⁵ T/p conv BW & HS 12 Jun 1986 File Q 46 - 49
- ³⁶ BW to RDwy 7 May 1986 File C 43
- ³⁷ BW to SN 9 May 1986 Rec Del J632261 File C 45
- ³⁸ BW to BCh 10 May 1986 File C 48 - 49
- ³⁹ Mins & Notes BrMtg 14 May 1986 File Q 17 - 19; BW to BSec 29 Jun 1986 File D 35
- ⁴⁰ Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa report [March 1999] MacMillan.
- ⁴¹ BW to BSec/BCtte undated (14 May 1986) File C 56
- ⁴² Conv BW & IB 14 May 1986 File Q 20
- ⁴³ Conv GW & IB 15 May 1986 File Q 20
- ⁴⁴ Conv GW & Vic 19 May 1986 File Q 20
- ⁴⁵ SO to BW 19 May 1986 File C 68
- ⁴⁶ BW to NW 11 May 1986 File C 50
- ⁴⁷ THES 14 Dec 1979
- ⁴⁸ NJ Dec 1985
- ⁴⁹ BW to PW 12 May 1986 Rec Del No J632262 File C 51
- ⁵⁰ BW to DB 13 May 1986 File C 52
- ⁵¹ LJ (N) to BW 14 May 1986 File C 54
- ⁵² Triesman D & Munnery J (The TU Act) NJ May/June 1985
- ⁵³ Times 18 Mar 1968
- ⁵⁴ THES 15 Sep 2000
- ⁵⁵ PMT to GH 1 Oct 1986 File N 20 - 24
- ⁵⁶ [1] Reed and (2) Bull Information Systems Ltd v Stedman [1999] IRLR 299
- ⁵⁷ Carter, R, [2000] Realism and Racism, Routledge, London, p 1
- ⁵⁸ T/p conv KS & BW/GW 11 May 1986 File Y 2 - 3
- ⁵⁹ BW to DTr 14 May 1986 BW IT Bundle 65
- ⁶⁰ BW to DTr 15 May 1986 File C 58
- ⁶¹ HS to DTr 14 May 1986 File C 57
- ⁶² KS & BW/GW Mtg 16 May 1986 File Q 22
- ⁶³ DE to PD 16 May 1986 BW IT Bundle 66

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- ⁶⁴ Day's Report p2 s2(iv)
⁶⁵ RDty to BW 10 Apr 1986 NATFHE IT Bundle 144
⁶⁶ Conv BH & GW 22 May 1986 File Q 29
⁶⁷ T/p conv RDty to BW 18 May 1986 File Z 7
⁶⁸ Conv SD & BW/GW 27 Jun 1986 File Y 4
⁶⁹ Conv RDwy, BW & GW 16 May 1986 File Q 22
⁷⁰ KS & BW/GW Mtg 16 May 1987 File Q 22
⁷¹ T/p conv KS & BW/GW 11 May 1986 File Y 2 - 3
⁷² T/p conv BW & DE 17 May 1986 File Z 5 - 6
⁷³ T/p conv BW & PMc 17 May 1986
⁷⁴ T/p conv BW & RDty 18 May 1986 File Z 7
⁷⁵ T/p conv BW & PMy 17 May 1986 File Y 3
⁷⁶ DTr to BW 13 Jan 1986 BW IT Bundle 32; BW to DTr 16 Feb 1986 BW IT Bundle 40
⁷⁷ BW to DTr 17 May 1986 Rec'd Del V 401882 BW IT Bundle 67
⁷⁸ The Lecturer Feb 2000
⁷⁹ BL/MB & NB, relayed to BW & GW 27 Jan 1987 File Y 10
⁸⁰ BW to DE 17 May 1986 File C 59 - 65
⁸¹ BW to BSec/BCtte 18 May 1986 File C 66
⁸² GW to DE 17 May 1986 File L 56 - 57
⁸³ PD to DE 20 May 1986 File C 71
⁸⁴ GW to BSec/BCtte 19 May 1986 File L 58
⁸⁵ GW to BW 10 May 1986 File L 55
⁸⁶ BW to GW 21 May 1986 File L 59
⁸⁷ GW to BW 21 May 1986 File L 60
⁸⁸ BW to BCh/BCtte 19 May 1986 File C 67
⁸⁹ BW to DTr 19 May 1986 Rec'd Del H856786 File C69
⁹⁰ BW to BCh/BCtte 20 May 1986 File C 72
⁹¹ Gandhi M K [1958 – 82] The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Govt of India, New Delhi, vol 19 p356
⁹² Heller J [1964] Catch 22, Corgi, London
⁹³ AD to SN 13 Aug 1985 File A 19
⁹⁴ BW to DTr 20 May 1986 Rec'd Del V 401885 File C 73
⁹⁵ BW to DTr 21 May 1986 Rec'd Del J 632018 File C 74
⁹⁶ DG to AW 19 May 1986 File C 70
⁹⁷ B/VWG Mtg 19 Jun 1986 File Z 39 - 40
⁹⁸ Conv GB & GW 23 May 1986 File Q 21
⁹⁹ Ibid
¹⁰⁰ GB to BCtte 7 Jul 1986 File Z 9
¹⁰¹ Conv BW to PWt 21 May 1986 File Q 23 - 24
¹⁰² BW to SD (ARO) 21 May 1986 File C 75
¹⁰³ Mins BLCARC 21 May 1986 File T 25 - 29
¹⁰⁴ WMARC circular, April 1986 File M 3 - 4
¹⁰⁵ BW to DTr 22 May 1986 Rec'd Del V411226 File C 76
¹⁰⁶ BW to BCh/BCtte 22 May 1986 File C 77
¹⁰⁷ Notes Bus St Mtg 22 May 1986 File Q 26 - 28
¹⁰⁸ Mins BLCARC 13 Jan 1986 File T 4 - 8
¹⁰⁹ T/p conv, BW & RDty 22 May 1986 File Y 3
¹¹⁰ HO to BW 23 May 1986 File Y 3
¹¹¹ PMT to GH 1 Oct 1986 File N 23; T/p conv BW & JP 23 May 1986 File V 25 - 26
¹¹² PMT to GH 1 Oct 1986 File N 23
¹¹³ BH to BW undated (2 Mar 1986) File W 19
¹¹⁴ Mins CTm Mtg 14 Nov 1985
¹¹⁵ Memos BW to JP, DG & BH 17 Dec 1985 – see t/p conv BW & JP 23 May 1986 File V 25 - 26
¹¹⁶ BH to BW undated (2 Mar 1986) File W 19
¹¹⁷ Mins CTm Mtg 14 Nov 1985
¹¹⁸ T /p conv BW & JP 23 May 1986 File V 25 - 26
¹¹⁹ Notes of Mtg 8 May 1986 in B/V Mgt to GH 2 Feb 1987 File W 31
¹²⁰ S/G to Mgt undated (1 May 1986) File Z 4
¹²¹ Mgt Mtg with S/G 16 May 1986 [A copy of this document is in the author's possession]

¹²² Notes Mgt Mtg with DG 9 May 1986 in memo B/V Mgt to LEA undated [A copy of this document is in the author's possession]

¹²³ Verbatim Notes, and other notes, of meetings between Mgt and DG; and Mgt and S/G 9 & 16 May 1986 [A copy of these documents is in the author's possession] PMT to AD 16 May 1986 File W 20; and S/G to B/V Mgt undated (1 May 1986) File Z 4; BW/GW to PMT 4 Feb 1988 Letter A, para 4 File O 26

¹²⁴ Quoted in PMT to AD 16 May 1986 File W 20

¹²⁵ PMT to AD 16 May 1986 File W 20

¹²⁶ PMT to GH 1 Oct 1986 File N 20 - 24; B/V Mgt to the LEA undated [A copy of this document is in the author's possession]

¹²⁷ DTr, IT Report, p10 pt 5(i)(i)

¹²⁸ Mgt to DG, NC, BH & Another, 9 Jul 1986 File D 50; Memo B/V Mgt to LEA 2 Feb 1987 File W 31

¹²⁹ Br Ctte Mtg 21 Apr 1986 File Q 3 - 4

¹³⁰ NATFHE's Response to the CRE Questionnaire, 15 Oct 1986, p2 Item 4(g), BW IT Bundle 90