

Chapter XII

The NATFHE Barking Dogs Bite Deep

(a) NATFHE Patrols the North-West Frontier

Bis Weaver welcomed in the New Year none too optimistically as to the work situation but surely this was the nadir of her troubles; things were bound to improve. However, the bottom of the pit that NATFHE and the Birmingham Labour group leadership had been digging for some time had still to be reached.

The Labour leadership had shown its determination not to allow the contents of the LEA's report to see the light of day. A decision to be welcomed no doubt with open arms by others, such as NATFHE head office, local NATFHE officers and the Bournville 'trio'. Bis Weaver would face a continuous onslaught from NATFHE as the union sought to quell unrest from her and the Black version of the North of Watford *bar-bars* as NATFHE launched its own version of the 'civilising mission.'

Information from a city council informant early in the New Year provided little doubt that it would need a top-rate magician to prise the LEA's report out of the deeply gnarled grip of the city council. According to this contact, the LEA report was still receiving careful scrutiny from the city solicitor. Later information would identify the cause for this evaluation on the vicarious liability of the employing college and city council; and the misapplication of the statutory grievance procedures, which undoubtedly had its origins in the discussion between NATFHE's regional official and a city employee's relations officer.

The LEA had also been in touch with Triesman and he was due to meet with LEA officers in February.¹ Whatever deal was contemplated to protect the Birmingham Labour city council and NATFHE, the withholding of the report would almost certainly be part of it. Both of these bodies were skewering anti-racist action for the benefit of the leadership of these institutions – two sections of the labour movement's 'anti-racism' commitment in action. With a principal witness running for cover (Ms Deeson) and a highly significant document as good as shredded, NATFHE appeared to hold the trump cards and looked home and dry in the Tribunal stakes. Despite its advantages, in the run-up to the Tribunal, there was to be no let-up in the pressure applied to Bis Weaver by NATFHE at branch and regional level. They played on the gullibility and other traits in the membership; and on the vulnerability of one of the few Black women in NATFHE's ranks. The Broad Left Coalition

and fellow travellers in the REC, in alliance with *kernel*s and their acolytes in the Bournville branch pulled out all the stops to make life as difficult as possible for Bis Weaver.

NATFHE's grossly distorted and misleading stance in its submissions was supplemented by the branch committee's use of the *Beider affair*, and other schemes in the process of being launched to bring additional pressure on her. These activities were to keep Bis Weaver on her mettle over the next five months and ever-ready to launch a counter-attack even though the impact of these sorties was insufficient to curb NATFHE's *warrior hordes*. With another sword having been brandished by NATFHE we returned to the quill – not that we thought it would have any profound effect on the attitudes of the *kernel*s or their allies in the Broad Left Coalition. Nonetheless, it would show to all interested parties that Bis Weaver did not intend to crumble under any onslaught devised by these 'anti-racist' crusaders.

We reverted to a 'paper bombardment' format but not on the scale of early 1986. This time around the purpose was to expose the inconsistencies in what NATFHE officers professed to do to oppose racism; while we broadcast to an ever wider audience outside of NATFHE what actually passed for 'anti-racism' in NATFHE. If we had allowed these issues to lie dormant until the main issues were settled they would evaporate into thin air never to be heard of again just as the union had hoped would happen with Day's 'report' and Triesman's deceptively-framed *Kangaroo Court*. * NATFHE's 'brave' Khyber Rifles on the West Midlands Frontier were about to strike and if Bis Weaver remained inactive in the face of these confrontations it would send out the wrong signals. Another difference was that in 1986 the union had a virtually free run against Bis Weaver, whereas, in the coming months, Black activists in NATFHE and the Birmingham Labour Party rallied behind her. From then on, the hypocritical cant flowing from the 'White NATFHE Left' in Birmingham was clearly identifiable as were the underhanded tactics the 'Left' employed to browbeat a Black member. Our correspondence produced an even larger file of NATFHE irregularities at head office that NATFHE could use as part of a training manual on 'How not to treat members of the rank and file' or as a 'Directory on unprincipled practices in NATFHE Branches'. **

The branch executive, for the fourth time, was asked when it intended "to honour its obligations" and restore her rights or did "the Branch Executive not consider that the rights of a Black woman are part of its obligations to members."² Bis Weaver then turned towards the women's group, which was not saddled with the conditions of the branch motion, and asked

* To see what Triesman really had in store with the 'investigation' offered in January 1986 – see Triesman's comments at the Industrial Tribunal hearing. (See Chap XIII Sect c)

** Such a 'Directory' might have assisted Sharokni between 1994 and 2000.

to take action on that motion. The motion applied only to letters for the branch committee, therefore, non-Branch committee members were not tied to it and could read correspondence sent to them and act upon it. However, Bis Weaver was aware of the women's group's disinclination to take on the *kernel*s and their fellow travellers. To cater for its own particular brand of feminism, a motion would have to be directed against all women for them to act, not against any individual woman – Gil Butcher's treatment by the group was evidence of that.

Two other features illustrating the detriment imposed on Bis Weaver involved the range of restrictions covered by the motion; and Triesman's control over the branch's actions in matters concerning Bis Weaver. This had been illustrated when I tendered my resignation from the branch committee in October, which could only be accepted by the branch committee with the approval of a head office official.³ Another restriction was about to be shown when Bis Weaver nominated me for the vacant position of branch delegate to the regional council. In the letter of nomination, Bis Weaver, tongue-in-cheek, "appreciated that the correspondence...must be sent to Head Office," so she asked the branch secretary when she contacted head office to ask "if they will allow her [the branch secretary] to tell [Bis Weaver] the date that [the branch secretary] contacted Head Office, the name of the person to whom [she] spoke..., the decision made and which person...made the decision?" Bis Weaver also drew attention to the April motion, which had denied to her, a Black member, "the automatic and democratic right to nominate a candidate...to a NATFHE position" as this right "has to be authorised by a member of NATFHE Head Office's unelected bureaucracy." This restriction was "imposing on [her] a condition which excludes [her] from full and equal participation in NATFHE's democratic procedures and is contrary to [her] rights of participation in the electoral processes of a trade union."⁴ Copies of the letter went to the regional and liaison secretaries and to Dawson to let them see what they were turning their backs on – although this would be unlikely to have any interest for them.

This correspondence was in part a consequence of the *Beider affair* to show the inconsistent behaviour of NATFHE in pulling out the stops in favour of a member of an ethnic minority, who was performing a service for the *kernel*s in another of its spurious acts. This was yet another of those unprincipled acts that the *kernel*s and their allies throughout the region had inflicted on Bis Weaver for close on eighteen months.

The *Beider affair* prompted a letter to head office. This was not a letter explaining the Beider allegations to be totally unfounded because quite frankly Bis Weaver did not care what Dawson, or his nominee, Triesman, thought. This was an opportunity to put the *Beider affair* into context by parading a whole range of 'dirty tricks' carried out in Bournville

College; in NATFHE committees; and in Day's 'enquiry and report'.⁵ The letter was a condensed version of incidents that would be able to fly off the Weaver printing press should that be required in the future.

Ms Welch was another officer appearing to fit comfortably into the Pirsig adaptation. Was there anything else we could raise with Ms Welch that she would refuse to answer? Information provided by Mackney about his discussion with Day, possibly with Ms Welch present in June 1985; and Mackney's own discussion with her as a NEC member in September 1985, provided a basis for a different set of questions to the ones repeatedly ignored by Ms Welch.

Additional questions to get them on the record were:

1. Is Mr Evans correct when he says the information provided by Mr P Mackney...explains the questions...asked...about your involvement in the procedures...
2. Were you present when A Day and D Gates discussed the complaint..."
3. Did you discuss, either formally or informally,...[the] complaint at any time between the 10th June 1985 and the 14th July; * with
 - (a) D Gates
 - (b) Any other member of Bournville Branch, other than Mr S Nedjat...
4. Mr P Mackney said that you were informed of the situation as the West Midlands Region NEC member, possibly in September 1985. The information that M P Mackney had of the situation at that time would include the conversations he had with Bournville branch officers on the 11th and 18th June; a letter I sent to Mr P Mackney, dated the 3rd July, which concerned the issue of race and the involvement of other branch officers...; and his reply of the 5th July 1985. As you were informed of the situation as A NEC member could you tell me if you informed the NEC of the situation?⁶

We had the same expectation of these questions meeting the same fate as previous ones asked of this purportedly accountable regional/national officer. Needless to say Ms Welch did not deviate from her norm and kept schtum.

My contribution lighted on Cave, who was concerned about his image and how that image was affected by comments circulating around Birmingham,⁷ which had been brought to my attention following the Beider enquiry. Cave's 'tarnished image' was not my concern but how he applied his 'anti-racism' practice was a matter of concern and how the restrictions imposed by the motion prevented me from pursuing Cave's particular actions through the union's structures and procedures.

The thirteen-word liaison secretary was also contacted with a request for the liaison committee "to honour NATFHE's obligations under [its] Rules...[to protect]...the rights of

* The date that Ms Welch offer to carry out an enquiry into the complaint was put to Bis Weaver

trade unionists pursuing progressive and legitimate anti-racist objectives...[as] it appears... there is one rule for one set of members and another rule for others.” I suggested in the absence of formal action, the secretary used his informal ‘custom and practice’ approach of January to June 1986 of phoning me at home to provide information.⁸ A few days later, he phoned under the impression I had something to tell him although my intention was merely to put on record his previous method of operating when it suited his purpose of disclosing information against Gates and the *kernels*. When I asked him to reply in writing to my letter he revealed he was “under strict instruction from Head Office not to put anything in writing.”⁹ We had suspected that head office was running things in the West Midlands and this was additional confirmation of that being so. I wrote back immediately to him quoting his comment and expressing concern that my requests for the protection of my rights “should bring such a suppressive response from Head Office.” I was also concerned that, “When an unelected Head Office official can instruct a democratically elected lay officer not to respond in writing to the concerns of a fully paid up...member, it suggests that neither the Rules...nor the rights of ordinary members are of any consequence.”¹⁰

A letter in the same vein went to the branch committee calling on it “to demonstrate its support for...anti-racists...[and] for a full investigation to be conducted by people whose impartiality cannot be questioned...” In the event of the committee failing to act, it “would reduce NATFHE’s anti-racism policies to meaningless rhetoric.” I also wanted to know how my correspondence about Cave’s irresponsible behaviour was in any way connected to a formal complaint submitted to NATFHE by another member.¹¹

The WMARC secretary was also a recipient of a letter on this topic with a request to place on the committee’s agenda an item for protecting the right of anti-racists to distribute anti-racism material in colleges and to bring this issue to the attention of the Anti-racism National Panel at its next meeting.¹² Copies of this letter went to the regional and branch secretaries so that their respective committees would know what was going on.

(b) The Reluctant Witness and the Hidden Hand

A significant issue had been left in abeyance until after the *Beider Affair* enquiry and its immediate aftermath but now was the time for the Deeson withdrawal from the scene to be followed up. The *Beider affair* brought to Bis Weaver’s attention the fact that Beider was given the opportunity to present his case to the branch committee, whereas she was never offered that as an option. Bis Weaver raised this disparity with Ms Deeson while putting out

feelers to see if she would disclose the real reasons for withdrawing her agreement to act as a witness. Any disclosure of influence exerted upon her, or an inducement offered to her, for not appearing as a witness for Bis Weaver would create considerable legal complications for whoever was responsible. Bis Weaver began a short-lived but revealing correspondence with the Bournville ex-chair.

Bis Weaver asked “why [she] was not invited to present [her] case to the full Branch Committee, as is the normal procedure for case work. The consequence..., as [Ms Deeson] can see, is that [she] now [has] to rely solely on one person’s memory for confirmation of the... formal discussion between [Ms Deeson], as Chairperson, and [herself], as complainant...” She then posed a number of carefully drafted questions that were essentially statements of facts since the answers were already known. The purpose in asking them was to let her know that there was no need for her to rely on her memory as documentary evidence existed. All that was required was for her to attest that the documents were written by her.

Bis Weaver asked:

Were the details of the notes that you took at our meeting not written up to be passed on to the person or body that was going to hear my complaint? Would the questionnaire that you gave to [Gates] not provide details of the nature of my complaint and the motivations I believed were behind the treatment I had received?

Surely there must be some written details of a complaint with such important consequences in terms of equal opportunities, bearing in mind the complainant was a Black woman.

In Ms Deeson’s 5th December letter to Bis Weaver, she made no reference to having contacted head office or that her decision not to attend the Tribunal hearing was arrived at after speaking to a union official. Bis Weaver therefore, rounded off by expressing the hope that Ms Deeson would

not find it necessary to contact Head Office again before providing...this information, since on good faith I accepted the recommendation of the Branch Committee to have A Day as the investigator and Rule 24 as the appropriate rule for dealing with my complaint, communicated to me by yourself as the Chairperson of the Branch.”¹³

Ms Deeson reacted by seeking out an independent legal adviser, who advised her that she did not have to reply to Bis Weaver’s comments (questions). Having started in a cautious vein, she, nonetheless, agreed to provide answers because, as she put it, “we have been friends for a long time” and relied on Bis to “not misuse what [she wrote] or make unwarranted deductions from it.” In the remainder of the letter, she gave an account of the discussions she had with Bis Weaver, which was different from what actually went on

between them and contrary to the written evidence taken at the time (June 1985). Ms Deeson issued a caveat that she “may be mistaken in anything...at this distance in time.” As she

understood it, there was no formal discussion between myself as outgoing Chairperson of NATFHE and yourself as complainant, so far as I recollect...Therefore, there was no formal record of this meeting, as I remember. (Ms Deeson’s emphasis)

Ms Deeson was also sure that if Bis Weaver had

asked to present [her] case to the full Branch Committee...this would have been raised and discussed, and I would think you would have been given the reasons at the time [and] Why this was turned down. It may well be that such reasons were not put down in writing. I cannot...remember if this was discussed and...what reasons put for or against.

This last point was not put to the branch committee; the committee was informed, on the 18th June 1985, that a complaint had been made against Gates by Bis Weaver; and a recommendation to refer it to the regional official was approved. Bis Weaver was never offered the opportunity to address the branch committee. As to the first point, why would Ms Deeson want to give the impression that no formal discussion had taken place? This seemed to follow the official NATFHE line that everything concerning the complaint was informal.

Ms Deeson also doubted that Bis Weaver was “correct about discussing [her] feelings [racism and sexism] about the case...on the 10 June as [she – Ms Deeson] only had a record of meeting [Bis] on 11 June 1985.” (Ms Deeson’s emphasis) Ms Deeson found the paragraph containing the questions difficult to understand but thought Bis Weaver was “implying [she – Ms Deeson] gave Dave Gates a questionnaire,” which she “did not remember.” While claiming an inability to recall these matters clearly, she admitted to having a record of their meeting to discuss the complaint albeit on the 11th June.

Ms Deeson also managed to dig from the depths of her memory several recollections of comments allegedly made by Bis Weaver. She claimed remembering that Bis Weaver said she “would be happy to settle for a simple apology from Dave”, but Ms Deeson added, “events seem to have implied that this was not the case.” Reiterating the frailty of memory, Ms Deeson recalled that Bis Weaver gave the “impression it was not a serious matter. Nor did [Bis] imply that [her] old friend, Dave Gates, was racist.”

Having put forward a version that Bis Weaver would know did not match with the facts, Ms Deeson wanted Bis Weaver to sincerely take all that she was saying “in good faith, and subject to the vagaries of [her] memory at such a distance.” If Bis Weaver wished to ask further questions, Ms Deeson wanted to know the reasons as to why she wanted the answers and to what purpose the answers would be used. In conclusion, Ms Deeson let her know that

“the continued repetition of questions [was] very wearing” and she would prefer to be treated as Bis would “wish to be treated by colleagues and friends.”¹⁴

This letter characterised the dramatic turn-around in Ms Deeson’s behaviour after initially agreeing to appear as a witness and then phoning head office. She was able to recall points from “such a long time ago” that could be contradicted by the evidence, including the date of the initial meeting, but was unable to recollect points substantiated by the same documentation. For someone with a frail memory Ms Deeson recollected a considerable amount, although the points she recalled were detrimental to Bis Weaver’s case.

Ms Deeson allegedly recalled that racism and sexism [Bis Weaver’s feelings] were not mentioned; that Bis Weaver did not consider it serious but events had shown this not to be the case; that no formal discussion took place; and Gates was as an “old friend” of Bis’ – all of her recollections gave the impression of having been lifted from NATFHE’s submissions. She seemed to be writing for a different audience since it was obvious that Bis Weaver would know this account was seriously flawed. Was she on a fishing expedition to find out what information Bis Weaver might already have as it was well known in NATFHE circles that Bis Weaver recorded everything? * Where did Ms Deeson’s independent legal adviser reside? Was it someone at head office or someone in Bournville College with a law degree? Was Ms Deeson the inspiration of this letter or merely acting as the scribe?

Bis Weaver responded immediately and she made it clear at the outset that she was still writing to Ms Deeson in her capacity as the 1985 branch chair. She linked three issues together: (i) Ms Deeson’s contact with head office; (ii) Ms Deeson’s approach to management on a union issue; and (iii) Ms Deeson’s request for her to provide an explanation of the intended use of the information. She wrote that Ms Deeson need not have sought legal advice as she could have approached Bis for an explanation of her intentions. What Bis Weaver wanted was “information about the procedures [used]...and other related matters, which...[she] was entitled to...[because] unlike union officers [she has] no informal access to information.” Any information gathered by Bis Weaver would be used “in the pursuit of justice. It is as simple as that.”

Bis Weaver then consigned Ms Deeson’s barely remembered ‘evidence’ to a metaphoric incinerator but not before addressing it. She stated she was under the impression that the meeting on the 10th June was formal in accordance with rules and conventions,

* Bis Weaver did not take direct notes of the meeting on the 10th June 1985 as she used the seven page document produced for management dated the 4th June 1985

involving Ms Deeson, as branch chair, and Bis Weaver, as the complainant, because she would not have discussed a formally submitted complaint with Ms Deeson in a private capacity. She let Ms Deeson know there was a considerable amount of information available of that meeting – the seven page document from which the Chair had taken notes; Ms Deeson’s written notes with the terms ‘Racism and Sexism’ included; that Bis Weaver wanted a Tribunal with a woman and a Black person on it; and a questionnaire given by Ms Deeson to Gates, which included questions about his behaviour and racism.

Bis Weaver pointed out that when this formal meeting took place, she was an experienced professional, who had made a complaint of abuse and harassment and sent copies to the general secretary and the regional secretary. She had also informed Ms Deeson of what she “believed were the motivations behind that behaviour.” Yet Ms Deeson was now claiming that Bis “gave the impression that it was not a serious matter.” Bis Weaver dismissed Ms Deeson’s simplistic account as “the key to understanding why [she] had not received the justice” she had sought. The point was made that it should have been “obvious from the way [she] pursued the matter that [she] thought it was a serious matter and...still do.” She referred to Mackney, who had confirmed to several NATFHE officials and officers that he thought it a serious matter and had “conveyed this view to A Day on the 15th June 1985, three days before Mr P Mackney informed [Ms Deeson] that A Day would be in touch with Branch officers to discuss the matter.”

Bis Weaver paid little heed to Ms Deeson’s claim of friendship with her because as far as she was concerned their relationship was as colleagues and Ms Deeson’s mistaken impression of their ‘friendship’ would explain why Ms Deeson referred to the accused as “your (Bis Weaver’s) old friend.” Unlike the chair, she “had not had an association with [Gates] at different levels of the union” as her contact with Gates was as a colleague in the college and as a union member. There had never been any friendship.

Bis Weaver let it be known that she also found “the continued repetition of questions wearing and [had] done so since October 1985 at considerable cost to [her] health.” Ms Deeson was reminded that she was well aware of the effects on Bis’ health and the cause because Ms Deeson had commented on it, by saying to her, “if [the] case in the union was affecting [her] health why didn’t [she] give it up.” This comment was made when Ms Deeson witnessed her hobbling around Bournville College with a walking stick in the Summer term of 1986. On the other personal point, Bis Weaver explained that she did “try to treat others as [she] wish[ed] to be treated,...as professionals, unfortunately, it has become increasingly obvious over the past two years, that others choose not to treat [her] as a professional or in a

professional manner.” With Ms Deeson’s points put to the sword, she thanked her for the letter to “a Black woman in struggle against blatant and obvious injustice’ and apologised for the length of the letter but she thought “written records are essential when dealing with issues of [this] kind.”¹⁵ All this hogwash from Ms Deeson and all Bis Weaver wanted was for Ms Deeson to tell it as it was.

Bis Weaver had responded in this vein because Ms Deeson’s letter, apparently written under legal advice, contained a typical NATFHE ploy in turning the evidence on its head. Ms Deeson was transformed from a passive witness of facts to a pro-active purveyor of unsubstantiated claims – in fact, they could be shown to be erroneous by Ms Deeson’s own handwritten notes. In order to defend herself, Bis Weaver had been put in the position of appearing forceful, which should not have come as a surprise to NATFHE feminists, as this was one of the consequences consistent with the findings of the Birmingham women’s group’s survey of how women react to harassment.

Bis Weaver’s rejoinder certainly struck home, bringing in its wake a response offering nothing in terms of the complaint and surrounding issues. Ms Deeson, or her legal adviser, adopted a legal approach and passed off her recent letter as

written to you solely on a personal level. Therefore, nothing that I have written to you is for use by you in any situation formal or without my express, particular written agreement. I would also like to make it clear that I forbid you to quote anything which I may ever have said to you without my written permission. If you wish to quote anything that you think I may have said to you in any official position then I ask for two weeks notification of this in writing. Obviously, I will take legal advice should you wish to quote anything you think I have said.

Generously, Ms Deeson was “glad [Bis’] back now seems to be better.”¹⁶ She obviously did not see the ironic implication of that last remark – a back that had a number of knives plunged into it over the past two years!

These orders and demands for obedience provided food for thought on where Ms Deeson, or more likely her adviser, believed we were all living – some kind of NATFHE paradise for officials and officers. Trying to hide behind the designation of ‘personal’ meant nothing because there was nothing personal about the recent correspondence as Bis Weaver made it clear her letters to Ms Deeson were written to an officer of the union at the time the complaint was submitted. The earlier documentation was also compiled in an official capacity as recognised in this letter.

Ms Deeson had earlier denied any formal/official meeting with Bis Weaver but now referred to possible comments made by or to Ms Deeson in an "official position". She was

undoubtedly worried about something and getting some pretty poor legal advice into the bargain. The ex-chair's legally-couched prohibitions about Bis Weaver using evidence from discussions or documents relating to the complaint against Gates meant nothing since how could anyone outside of the Industrial Tribunal and legal apparatus prevent Bis Weaver from presenting evidence relevant to her case. We had been unable to get Ms Deeson to explain her *volte-face* but this exchange of correspondence had rendered null and void any 'evidence' NATFHE might want Ms Deeson to present at the Tribunal on its behalf.

The attempt to deny Bis Weaver the use of any documentation appeared to cover the early stages of the complaint when information was provided and then ignored by the investigator, Day. The legal advice given to Ms Deeson seemed for the purpose of providing her with a defence. The thought occurred to us, given the information received, that Ms Deeson may have been told she was a party to the whole process and any findings against NATFHE would also rebound on her. But as mentioned above, Ms Deeson had acted appropriately when involved in the procedures and was completely in the clear.

Ms Deeson, in 1985, had taken steps to raise the issue of racism with Gates; had responded to questions on procedures when on study leave; had agreed to appear as a witness when asked to do so in October 1986; yet after speaking to NATFHE head office she decided to remain *Freire-neutral*; and when the reason she gave for changing her mind was questioned by Bis Weaver, she reacted in an extremely hostile manner. Whoever it was that caused this change of attitude, and this change did not occur until after her conversation with a head office official, had played on the vulnerability of a well-meaning person prepared to do the right thing. A further demonstration of how the powerful can induce a member to abandon principle or to avoid facing unpleasant consequences, even though the consequences were non-existent. It was a reminder that even those with a desire to do the right thing can be pressurised beyond even *Freire-neutrality*. The Deeson episode was not an encouraging sign for any victims, whether in a college, a union or society at large when they come up against the power-brokers.

(c) NATFHE's Stokers Keep Head Office's Engine Running

In the midst of this exchange two pieces of news came our way concerning: (i) the efforts NATFHE was putting in to extract the maximum from the *Beider affair*; and (ii) what the REC meant at its November meeting when agreeing to investigate the WMARC. The first news bulletin revealed the Bournville branch's intention to hold a convention-style rally in

support of Beider masqueraded as a branch meeting; the second was a McCarthyite-style investigation in the best traditions of the US senator, who had emerged as a would-be role-model for NATFHE officials and local officers. Both of these exercises in NATFHE-style Machiavellian intrigue eventually took place on the 21st January 1987.

(i) Keeping the Home Fires Burning

The next thrust in the *Beider Affair* came courtesy of a branch committee motion to be put before the branch for approval on the 14th January 1987, which read:

This Branch ratifies the Branch Committee's decision to support and take up the case of Harris (sic) Beider, a visiting lecturer who has been unfairly dismissed by College Management.
Further this Branch agrees that NATFHE members will boycott the six hours Business Studies Access teaching Harris Beider was originally offered until the case is resolved.¹⁷

This was a *kernel*-inspired motion promoted as protecting an ethnic minority member's job despite its previous record of acquiescing in Gates' attempt to oust Bis Weaver from her post. The few days' notice gave the *kernels* time for another round of lobbying but before Bis Weaver could respond to the *kernels*' latest initiative the meeting was cancelled. However, this did not mean the *Beider affair* had been dropped; all it meant was a postponement until the 21st January. Although not intended, it gave Bis Weaver an opportunity to bring a few home truths to the branch committee, assuming the branch secretary shared the contents of the letter with other committee members as she seemed prone to do; and for Bis Weaver to get more on the record.

Bis Weaver put in writing that "As the Branch Committee seems keen to demonstrate its commitment to the rights of ethnic minorities, would it show its commitment to a long standing [Branch] member...by taking action against those responsible for making," or reporting "unfounded and defamatory allegations against [her]...to Senior Management without informing [her] of their intention to do so," naming Cave and Hartland as the perpetrators. She thought

It might appear, to the reasonable person, that the protection of the interests of Black people, in Bournville Branch, is dependent on partisan interests in the Branch Committee, many of whom demonstrated their 'commitment' to Black people by recommending the removal of certain trade union rights from, at the time, the only Black member of the Branch...

We are witnessing yet another blatant example of the double standards operating in the Branch Executive and Branch Committee when it comes to the rights of Black people...

She asked for an investigation of those committee members “who have yet again violated [her] rights.” In conclusion, she pointed out that the branch committee “cannot hide forever behind the [April] motion,” or to be sure that the motion “will remain ‘locked away’ within Bournville Branch in the hope that the issue would disappear.”¹⁸ She knew this letter would not stop the rabid steamroller that represented NATFHE’s brothers and sisters from rolling over whoever stood in its way.

The special branch meeting – Special Branch being an appropriate name for the *kernels* activities, met on the 21st and by the time the Beider motion reached the branch the issue had been virtually settled. The LEA, city employment officers and officers of the NATFHE liaison committee were due to meet on the 22nd to put the final touches to a deal, so all the furore of a branch meeting organised as a ‘rally of the faithful anti-racists’ was unnecessary whatever spin was put on it by branch officers; its purpose was undoubtedly to put pressure on Bis Weaver and isolate her even further in the college - more grist to NATFHE’s mill.

The message that Birmingham NATFHE was sending to the LEA was not specifically about Beider but what NATFHE could achieve if the LEA took positive action against the Bournville ‘trio’. Simultaneously, NATFHE released the union’s ‘barking and biting dogs’ on Bis Weaver, as one of the Bournville *kernels*, had threatened fourteen months before. To use Ms Deeson’s words, it was a bit ‘wearing’ but for Bis Weaver this was true to form and she was becoming resilient to it. This was a condition Black people in the UK were well used to as they were often forced to go through this ‘process’. Constant practice did not make the burden any lighter, something the *IPDists* and their fellow travellers seemed totally unaware of understanding. The pressure on Black people in colleges was rife at all levels and was disregarded by NATFHE officers and officials to such an extent that dismissiveness was the expected normative response from these bureaucrats. It was of little use looking to the ‘anti-racists’ in NATFHE’s bureaucratic apparatus for support for the victim because, likely as not, they were in the front row casting stones when perceiving their own interests were under threat.

When the meeting arrived, nothing would be gained by Bis Weaver attending because past performance had shown that the *kernels* and their acolytes would fuel the furnaces of character assassination to consume her while parading themselves as defenders of a member of an ethnic minority. In the light of this, we decided that I would attend the meeting, not to participate but to record everything said and by whom. We had built up comprehensive documentation on her case and our intention was to continue on this track – it might come in

useful one day to expose the way racism operated in the workplace and the lengths so-called anti-racists were prepared to go in trying to cover up their actions.

The meeting opened with the motion being proposed by the branch secretary, who a few weeks before had come to the conclusion the union's treatment of Bis Weaver was racist. She provided a suitably sanitised version of Beider's 'appointment'; of how he was interviewed, signed a contract, made visits to the college, talked to staff and was then dismissed for inexperience. The proposer spoke of Beider "as a Black person, [who] has a lot to offer...and the college should encourage employing him." College Management's argument was refuted but not a word was mentioned of the grounds upon which management judged its actions or how this 'inexperience' manifested itself. Did the secretary not link management's action to the unsubstantiated claims Beider made against another member of staff – the staff member responsible for implementing the city's and the college's equal opportunities policy? The secretary should also have noticed the gross inconsistencies in Beider's 'evidence' as she acted as his representative at the internal hearing.

Revoking Beider's contract, * was described as unfair dismissal, contravening the city's and the college's equal opportunities policies, and "could have implications for the security of all part-time members of staff..." As a result the union called for the prospective teaching to be boycotted. In marked contrast to what had been demonstrated by the *kernels* in the branch for a considerable length of time, the branch secretary spoke of Black people having "a lot to offer" the college.

Downey, seconding the motion, portrayed himself as 'a person in the know' by telling the assembly of his attendance at the Beider enquiry "as a friend of individual NATFHE members involved," which was somewhat misleading since Beider was the person involved in the allegations whereas Cave and Hartland were merely messenger boys claiming to be interested parties even though neither of them, according to Beider's evidence, had been referred to by Bis Weaver. ** Downey claimed that Beider was dismissed for displaying "a certain naivety and lack of sensitivity" and he threw in the spectre of insecurity hovering over

* This assumes that Beider had a contract at the time of the incident, which is debatable. An application for a contract to be signed by the parties was written up by the Bournville 'trios' staunch defender – *Mr Ubiquitous*, but the application form was sent back by the contract issuing department at the end of the working day on the 4th December for it to be authorised by senior management. This came after Cave and Hartland made their allegations to management. Knowing how slowly the wheels of Bournville College revolved it was unlikely for it to have reached anyone senior for a number of days and that would put it way past the beginning of the enquiry, 5th December, the outcome of which led to Beider being refused employment, that is, assuming the application was subsequently signed¹⁹

** Beider had only assumed that Bis Weaver thought Cave and Hartland to be racists

all employees, including senior members, by this type of management action. Feeding off the jaundiced version of Beider's allegations that had saturated most of the college staff by intensive lobbying, Downey referred to Beider as being seen by management to have committed "a major crime in not using his line management structure," giving the impression that Beider's 'crime' was for failing to use the college's structure, and not for his role in making unsubstantiated allegations against another member of staff. Downey then spoke of branch committee members and officers "lean(ing) over backwards to get an agreement for Beider to teach", which should be compared with his actions and those of branch officers on the harassment of Bis Weaver where their bending over was to protect a harasser.

Downey conveniently chose not to disclose that not a single witness was able to substantiate Beider's claims. Nor did Downey reveal, in this most favourable of environments for him – a union meeting, that according to Cave at the internal hearing Downey was also an alleged recipient of similar statements by Bis Weaver and that he did not rally in support of Cave's claim. Nor did any of the assembled gathering of branch members offer themselves up as "members of staff who come up to tell [Cave] what is going on who themselves are sick to death of it..."²⁰ Given the way certain members operated in the branch, if they had anything to offer, even though this branch motion did not cover 'the allegations', it would have been extremely difficult to stop them from making this information available if they had it.

One not so easily influenced member – a Labour councillor in Worcestershire, wanted to know why Beider's action was considered a 'crime'. Downey quickly closed that avenue down, in the best NATFHE tradition, by saying "it is not appropriate to discuss the background. Beider had spoken to the wrong person and should have spoken to other people." Downey had put the damper on any elaboration of Beider's action as that would defeat the *kernels*' prevalent objective of getting members to vote on issues without knowing the real facts of the situation as in April 1986.

Not all branch members swallowed the *kernels* recently discovered commitment to defend ethnic minorities in the college. One member, who had also spoken out at the April 1986 branch meeting, was concerned at being asked to vote "for the second time in a short time [without] being given any facts." He had heard views and details from some people but "if we accept the ruling of not going into the details there must be some way in which members are informed." Cave gave short shrift to that comment on the grounds that "The issue is sensitive. It is about how management treat part-timers." The dissident came back to say that "The Branch Committee...is in a very difficult and invidious position if it asks

[members] to ratify the [Branch Committee's] decision on inadequate information.” However, the committee had no intention of going into detail, as both Downey and Cave had made clear, and that was the end of any ‘discussion.’ Senator Joe McCarthy was alive and kicking in the Bournville branch!

Although attending as a ‘scribe’, I did draw branch members’ attention to letters sent to the branch committee on the *Beider affair* but, due to the April motion, that information is not being disclosed to branch members. I pointed out that I was in an advantageous position in knowing “what the score is on [the Beider] issue and...there are serious ramifications...relevant to the motion.” This contribution had no effect at all as the ramifications and relevance seemed of no interest whatsoever to them.

An SWP member, previously a thorn in the *kernels* side, saw the *Beider affair* in one-dimensional terms – that is, Beider’s dismissal and not the reason behind it. He concurred with the view that Beider was unfairly dismissed as well as accepting that the reasons for the dismissal to be sensitive and could not be discussed. This was a novel position for him to take since evidence putting the reasons for the dismissal was being prevented from being heard. And to think I thought the SWP was unequivocally anti-Stalinist. His unusual position may have something to do with the recent ‘unfair dismissal’ of his SWP comrade, which he went on to describe, and he may have been looking for *kernel* support on this other dismissal. It was unlikely that support for his colleague would be forthcoming since a prime mover behind his comrade’s dismissal was a *kernel*.

When it came to the vote it was carried with thirty-one votes in favour and one not voting, which happened to be me, pursuing a practice I had adopted in all Branch meetings, whatever the issue, since April 1986. This non-voting did not constitute an abstention and on this occasion, I asked for it to be minuted as: “G Weaver did not cast a vote in continued protest at the discriminatory practices of this Branch towards a Black woman member pursuing legitimate objectives in the union.” My comment was duly minuted. * ²¹

* At the branch AGM, on the 4th March, one branch member drew attention to the minutes of the 21st January branch meeting. He asked me if I was referring to the Branch as having discriminatory practices. When I confirmed that I was, he said “It is not satisfactory to have it recorded that the Branch has discriminatory practices. The Branch has a good record towards Black people” and he thought “the Branch Executive should do something about it. I should not be left in the records.” Cave said that “it is a fundamental right to have anything minuted unless it is derogatory or subject to a complaint” but “strongly refute[d] that the Branch or anyone has acted in a discriminatory manner.” The previous speaker went on to say that “It has been a sword in the side of the Branch. It should be dealt with and put aside”, adding, “we need to be constructive, it has become a long drawn out grievance.” My response was that I wished “as much concern had been shown by the original speaker and others in the Branch last year” and left it at that.²² The two staff refuting my comments were two of the four members of staff who had held back the statistical information on equal opportunities (race) required by the college.²³

Branch members had thrown their weight behind a *kernel*-inspired motion, suitably lubricated with the grease of disingenuity, and had voted on a motion not formally explained to them. Beider had become the branch committee's trophy paraded under the guise of a commitment to anti-racism whereas, in reality, he was as a tool used by the *kernels* against a Black woman seeking justice. Where were the protests from all those women members, whom the women's group had excused from responsibility for voting for the April 1986 motion on grounds of not knowing what the motion was about? Was it just gullibility that found them severely imbalanced on the scales of justice? Anti-racism in the Bournville branch was a zero-sum equation; the membership balanced inaction for the maligned and 'undeserving' Bis Weaver with support for the 'deserving' Beider. Or could it be that by supporting Beider, branch members were asserting a fantasy 'anti-racism' that was sufficient for them to 'convince' each other they were all anti-racists.

This meeting was also attended by an observer from another branch; and Cave and Hartland had wondered how events at Bournville College were discussed around Birmingham!

When the minutes were released, anyone reading the references to management's contravention of equal opportunities policy alongside the motion and was unaware of events over the previous two years, could be excused if they concluded Bournville was a very progressive anti-racist branch. How far from the truth was it possible to get – a reminder to always read the small print.

It was a wise move for Bis Weaver not to have witnessed branch committee members strutting around the podium spreading either their malevolence or displaying faint-heartedness disguised as loyalty to a new colleague from an ethnic minority. The branch officers and committee members successfully stage-managed this charade; the smear-machine of innuendo was operating on all cylinders and they were priming it for all it was worth. I sat there thinking how easy the terms, 'contravening equal opportunities', and 'as a Black person...has a lot to offer' fell from the tongues of these 'enlightened' ones, the 'true interpreters' of all the problems loaded upon the shoulders of Black people. The other side of the coin was a clear illustration of when the thin veneer of rhetorical anti-racism was removed it exposed an extremely crude reality – a reminder of Peter O'Toole in the film "The Ruling Class". But note, this was the way the flag of 'a long history in the anti-racism movement' was waved in Bournville College and what it was interpreted as at head office.

A not unexpected feature of this parody of justice was the sight of so many people, who had known Bis Weaver for years and who knew little or nothing of Beider, rallying to

this stranger's cause. Another example of her increasing isolation in the college and, in effect, she had been 'sent to Coventry,' although not all members participated in this unofficial boycott. Nonetheless, the *kernels* had, to a great extent, accomplished their aims of April 1986 – to make this Black person even more invisible. Bis Weaver's refusal to bow her head to the 'all-conquering heroes' in Bournville branch had re-awakened the Kraken inside NATFHE.

(ii) Spreading the Flames Around

NATFHE West Midlands REC was about to 'up' the pressure level on her even further with a scheme to repel marauders infiltrating the WMARC. Later, on the same day, the REC demonstrated its own brand of 'McCarthyism' - directed not only at Bis Weaver but also at two of her supporters, Krishna Shukla and me. This scheme had its origins in October 1986, confirmed in November 1986 and the way it was to be carried out determined in early January 1987.

Ten days earlier, on the 11th January, Julie Frew phoned Krishna Shukla to let him know an investigation was being carried out by her and Tony Henry into the running of the WMARC as the REC was "not happy" with the way things were in that Committee. Forty-six days had elapsed since the decision on the investigation and eighty-one days from the first suggestion for such an investigation and it was only now that the Secretary of the WMARC was informed. So much for respecting the position held by this member of an ethnic minority!

Krishna said his immediate response was to say the WMARC "is doing the work it should be and [the REC was] only concerned because real issues affecting Black people are being taken up." Ms Frew, apparently, disagreed because the WMARC's responsibility was to discuss policy and principle while issues of harassment should be taken up by the Black Lecturer's Group (BLG). She added that Bis Weaver's case was being investigated and should not be dealt with by the committee. Another criticism was that "outsiders are going to the meetings and proper procedures are not being followed." An additional piece of information revealed to Krishna Shukla was the chair's resignation - fifty-two days after writing out her resignation, and Krishna wanted to know why he was not told this earlier. He was not satisfied with Ms Frew's approach and wanted to know why he was not contacted in writing and, as he had no intention of discussing his contribution over the phone, he curtailed the conversation.²⁴

Ms Frew was mistaken about the Weaver case because it was not discussed or dealt with by the Committee; it was mentioned once in the context of NATFHE's inadequate policies and procedures but not discussed; and the Weaver 'issue' was not being dealt with by the union as it was a Governors/LEA enquiry that was now complete. The responsibilities Ms Frew was now attaching to the BLG was new as this had never been proposed and its constitution had yet to be approved by the regional council. The BLG did not have direct access to the regional council or the REC and all of its decisions had to go through the Broad Left dominated WMARC, which was in a position to sift everything proposed by the BLG for 'suitability'. Furthermore, according to Ms Frew, the WMARC would not be able to deal with any case-work put to it from the BLG – a NATFHE way of how to deal with actual cases of racism. It did seem that White members were either unwilling or incapable of dealing with racial harassment cases.

The only 'outsider', as defined by Ms Frew, was one Asian member, who, even by NATFHE's selective criterion, was able to attend meetings as an observer – in fact, he was co-opted on to the committee in accordance with the rules. His presence increased the number of ethnic minority members to three and even this complement of Black members, with a more positive direction for the anti-racism struggle, seemed to be putting shivers up the REC members' spines. In this regional fiefdom, the peasants were threatening to burn down the REC's ricks of phoney anti-racism.

It was all too apparent that the REC was gunning for the WMARC and it had deliberately kept information, including the decision to investigate the committee, from its secretary, a known supporter of Bis Weaver. It was only to be expected that the REC/BLC was disturbed by developments in the WMARC as the committee was developing a life of its own unhindered by the paternalists appointed to its ranks, who for the most part never turned up.

Ms Frew, displaying the traits typical of a NATFHE investigator, had already shown her unsuitability for the brief assigned to her by her partisanship on the performance of the committee, introducing into the procedures a serious likelihood of bias. Her brief was to collect information to submit to the REC, which she was unable to do because as a WMARC member she may have been responsible for any deficiencies the REC considered the committee might have. She should have disqualified herself from taking on the role of investigator but not doing so came as no surprise as this seemed to be how things were done in NATFHE at all levels.

The next day, Krishna Shukla contacted me about his conversation with Ms Frew and, after relating its content, thought of resigning as secretary, which might be what the Broad Left-dominated REC had in mind among other things.²⁵ Black members appeared to be only acceptable to the REC if they were compliant and, when not conforming, ousting them from union posts seemed to be away of operating. Krishna decided against resigning, choosing to write to the regional secretary with a copy to every member of the WMARC putting his conversation with Ms Frew on the record.

Our turn for the Frew phone call came on the 19th January. She asked for a few minutes and when asked if it was “to do with the union,” She initially said “yes” but when asked to put whatever she wanted in writing, added “it’s not to do with the union in that sense” - a response making no sense because it was either to do with the union or it was not. She was told that anything to do with the union should be put in writing as we were not “prepared to discuss anything at all over the phone.” Ms Frew had a problem with this suggestion due to not knowing our address, however, it was a problem soon solved by giving the address to her.²⁶ Ms Frew then posted a letter to ‘Gordon and Bis Weaver’ on the 20th January, received by us on the 22nd, but, unknown to us, she reported the conclusions of her enquiry to the REC on the evening of the 21st January.

The REC meeting was attended by seventeen, including the regional official - nine of whom, to varying degrees, were opposed to Bis Weaver. Krishna Shukla, along with Tony Henry and four others, were unable to attend. The minutes recorded that “A written report into the difficulties in the working of the anti-racist committee, produced by J Frew at the request of the REC was accepted.” The two investigators had turned out to be just a single partisan investigator. * The letter from the regional secretary to Krishna Shukla, requesting a report on the WMARC and drawing his attention to the rules providing for only one meeting per term, was noted by the committee. What was not mentioned nor noted was that Evans’ letter to Krishna dated the 20th November, was not sent out until the 26th November making it impossible for Krishna to conform with the request.

Among the items on the agenda one stood out in all its glory. The Committee agreed to sponsor jointly with the National Union of Teachers, if feasible, a speaker from the ‘Campaign Against Berufsverbot’ to speak at the next regional council. ** The REC was

* The report will be dealt with in Section (d) below

** *Berufsverbot* (the Anti-Radical Decree (*Radikalenerlass*)) was introduced in West Germany on 28th January 1972 to prevent people with radical views, such as Communists, from working in the civil service or in other public sector occupations such as teaching

arranging for a speaker from this German organisation to address the delegates while initiating its own *Schwarz Berufsverbot*. *²⁷

The following day, the Bournville women's group met yet again to discuss the Weaver rights issue but, after the previous day's branch meeting, Bis Weaver had no expectation of group members rising to the occasion and her doubts were confirmed by the attendance numbering only six, excused by the chair as a result of the previous day's special branch meeting. The poor turn-out did show where the other women's priorities happened to be – there was a considerable difference between sticking their hands up in favour of a branch committee motion and sticking their necks out to challenge and overturn a branch committee motion. Maybe the women's group operated a rationing system and the allocation for ethnic minorities had been used up the day before!

Bis Weaver, yet again, described the ramifications of the April motion covering the points described in her letters to the branch committee. The chair asked her what she wanted and received the fairly obvious response to get her rights back. This response served only to raise another problem because the group did not know why the April motion against her was passed. Bis Weaver commented on the fact that the women, having voted on this motion without knowing the details, were now reluctant to act in her favour no matter how much information was supplied. None of the 'feminists' could possibly claim not to know what the issues were about although that did not jar them into action.

The chair offered an interesting motive for the April motion, namely, it was to enable the branch committee to ask head office to deal with her case. Bis Weaver provided a synopsis of head office's involvement in her case since January 1986, three and a half months before the motion was passed. Furthermore, as her grievance went to the Governors on the 25th June 1986, her correspondence had nothing to do with any complaint in the union. She could see nothing but excuses for their inaction and she accused the group of giving "no consideration to the kind of pressure [she had] been suffering."

All of this appeared to be having little effect except on Gil Butchere, the only woman in the college openly supporting her. Gil Butchere found Bis Weaver's recollection of events too distressing as it reminded her of her own suffering and she put it: "I cannot see Bis suffer

* In June 1985, Day and Gates discussed Bis Weaver's complaint at a regional council meeting prior to Day assuming responsibility for investigating the complaint, which turned out to be a *Whitewash* enquiry. While this discussion took place a speaker from the Anti-apartheid Movement was waiting to address the council delegates. Eighteen months later, three members of WMARC are being condemned for their radical anti-racist activities while arrangements are being made for a speaker to condemn prohibitions on radical views. History as farce!

in this way anymore” and left the meeting. The reaction of the chair to Bis Weaver’s suffering was to say that nothing could be done until after the Industrial Tribunal hearing, which had nothing to do with the motion, as had been explained to the meeting. To whom had the chair been listening to come up with this excuse?

That was the last straw for Bis Weaver and she made it clear this was the last time she would have any dialogue with them and left it up to them to reflect on why she was denied the rights that each and every one of them had. The chair, as if to put butter on a parsnip or more appropriately on a toadstool, ‘reminded’ Bis Weaver the Tribunal was to take place in early February, “only a couple of weeks away.” Bis Weaver asked how the chair knew the date of the hearing and received the reply that the branch secretary “told her it will be on the 3rd February.” This showed how closely involved were head office officials in what was going on in the branch. Perhaps, all these ‘coincidences’ occurring around the times of the Industrial Tribunal hearings and the attacks on Bis Weaver in different arenas in the West Midlands were not coincidences after all.

Bis Weaver saw no further point in carrying on. The meeting served the only purpose it could possibly have and as it began to break up, she left. This was the parting of the ways and ended her involvement in the branch’s women’s group as the women were too busy ‘trumpeting’ their anti-racism’ around the college by wholeheartedly supporting Beider to find the time or the inclination to support her. On this occasion Bis Weaver sent the women’s group to ‘Coventry.’²⁸

In the afternoon she went literally in the direction of Coventry. As a result of her expertise in the field of equal opportunities being recognised widely, she had been invited to give a series of lectures on equal opportunities at the University of Warwick in Coventry. She had conducted the first lecture and looked forward to delivering the rest in an atmosphere unlike the pressure cooker that represented Bournville College.

The organisers of the series of lectures had asked to meet her because after the first lecture some students had tried to organise a meeting to complain about her but the majority of students were appalled at the behaviour of this minority and distanced themselves from their actions. Signs had been put up calling for students to boycott her lectures but the attempt to disrupt the lectures fizzled out. Bis Weaver explained to the organisers the background of her case against NATFHE and recent events at Bournville concerning Beider. Beider was a research student in the Faculty that commissioned the lectures and had an axe to grind despite his problem resulting from his own behaviour. The departmental lecturers, knowing the students involved in the ‘campaign’, drew a connection between the events at Bournville

college and those at the University of Warwick. Not wanting to spend the next few weeks fighting on another front, she asked to be released from the remainder of her contract and it was reluctantly agreed. Ironically Bis Weaver was being ‘sent from Coventry’ too! Could this be another of those coincidences that continually occurred when NATFHE was involved?²⁹ She thought not!

After another hectic day in the ‘hot house’ at Bournville College and a trip to Coventry, a letter from Ms Frew was awaiting our return from work asking for our views on the workings of the WMARC. Her letter was dated the 19th January, but the envelope was date stamped 8 pm on the 20th, which meant it was unlikely to reach its destination until the 22nd January at the earliest. We posted out replies by return of post. However, our speed in delivering our ‘evidence’ was of no consequence because Ms Frew had already presented her report to the REC on the 21st. When Ms Frew’s letter was posted, there was little chance of it reaching us in time. Just as Evans letter to Krishna Shukla requesting a report on the WMARC, Ms Frew’s letter arrived a day too late, although that was something else that we did not know.

In the letter, Ms Frew explained that the REC on the 26th November had expressed concern about the WMARC “due to the lack of reports to the Executive...and also the resignation of the chair partly on the grounds of harassment.” * As a result, the REC “felt that an inquiry should be made into the activities of the Committee over the past year” by two volunteer regional officers, Julie Frew and Tony Henry. ** Ms Frew wrote that

In the light of the above I have been talking, in a fairly informal way, to people who have attended Committee meetings about what the activities of the Committee have been and whether in their view the Committee has been operating effectively, and I would welcome your contributions.³⁰

From the way the letter was couched “I have been...” and I would welcome...,” it seemed fairly obvious that her co-investigator would take little, if any, part in the enquiry and any report would be solely the work of Ms Frew. We also noticed how she used the word ‘harassment’ as an established fact – no thought of ‘alleged’ harassment or interpersonal

* This attempt to link the proposed investigation with Ms Pattinson’s resignation (20th November) was a red-herring as the initial proposal for an investigation was at the 22nd October meeting to be discussed on 26th November. Ms Pattinson’s resignation gave an appearance of being contrived so as to submit it just prior to the November discussion. Or was this another NATFHE-style coincidence?

** Tony Henry, the co-investigator, was a member of senior management at Garretts Green College in Birmingham. A volunteer of his calibre undoubtedly added to the legitimacy of the inquiry but he appeared to take no part in the enquiry and the report was submitted solely under the name of ‘Julie Frew’

dispute - the favoured term of Broad Left 'feminists'.

We knew little of the background to this enquiry. However, with the *Beider Affair* still running; with Gates and Ms Pattinson occupying the posts of chair and vice chair of the region; and with several REC members lined up against Bis Weaver for one reason or another, it was obvious something extra was being cooked up. The reason behind the enquiry appeared to be to put extra pressure on her. Any report emanating from this type of enquiry could be expected to be a version satisfying the interests of the partisan Broad Left Coalition crew running the REC, just as Day's 'report' had accommodated to Gates' interests.

Whatever the 'enquiry' came up with was not of any real significance to Bis Weaver. What could the penny-ante brigade constituting the REC/BLC do to her? What options were available to them? Remove her trade union rights? Smear her with false allegations? Abuse her - foul mouthed or otherwise? Intimidate her? Harass her? Collude or lobby against her? They could take their pick; it had all been done before by NATFHE hacks and was becoming old hat. These 'intellectuals' were running out of ideas.

By now, after months of facing the 'wrath of the all-conquering heroes', she had hardened and would not buckle under to any of their ill-thought out and unprincipled intrigues. The REC, like its liege-lords at Hamilton House, was using tactics that could not work on her but they seemed not to know that. Nonetheless, she had plenty on her plate and time expended on setting the record straight could best be used elsewhere in preparation for the Industrial Tribunal, although this latest incident might provide additional copy if the Weaver v NATFHE case was ever written up.

We sent in separate contributions to Ms Frew without any expectation of them having an effect on the end result and we were right in our forecast because the *Frew report*, unknown to us, had already been presented to the REC and in all probability had been written up before Ms Frew sent out the letter requesting our views.

Despite Ms Frew's reference to informality, Bis Weaver, as always, sent in a formal reply – a lesson learned from her contact with NATFHE officialdom, when a proposed formal enquiry became an informal enquiry but somehow resulted in a formal final 'report'. With this in mind, Bis Weaver asked for information on "the relevant rules or standing orders" applying to the proposed enquiry. (pt 2) As with everything in NATFHE ad hoc procedures seemed to rule the roost.

The REC's decision to cover a twelve month period of the WMARC's operations handed her the opportunity to put on the record the way the 'old regime' running the WMARC had adhered to the line dictated by head office in the early part of 1986, which the

liaison committee secretary, also a member of the REC, more recently confirmed was still operating, that is, not to involve themselves in the Weaver case. ‘Not to involve themselves’ in *NATFHEese* meant not to provide information to her or answer any of her correspondence!

Her observations stretched back to the beginning of the period under investigation and to her first attendance at a meeting, on the 19th February 1986, as an observer, under the stewardship of the previous secretary. (3) She related her experiences when, after seeking advice from the regional secretary about making a complaint against the regional official, she was told it had to be made through a NATFHE committee or sub-committee and brought before the REC. (5-6) After receiving this information, she asked the WMARC secretary to put this proposal forward as a motion at the next WMARC meeting. Just prior to that meeting, the WMARC secretary informed her that the meeting had been cancelled and a new date would be arranged. A rearranged meeting did go ahead on the 7th May without her being informed and no minutes were ever distributed so she had no knowledge if her motion was raised. (7-9) She stated that if the REC’s intention was to enquire into “the confusion of the meetings of April/May 1986...that would appear...to be a worthwhile exercise.” (12)

She then referred to the meetings since September, under Krishna Shukla’s stewardship, and “the greater input...from Black members and a more positive approach made to the issue of racism,” which she thought was “to be expected since the people who are informed about racism...are obviously those who are the victims...” She suggested the REC “should listen carefully to what Black members on the Committee are saying to ensure that the Executive does not act in a paternalistic colonial manner, which is the usual response of Executive bodies to these types of sub-Committees.” (13-15)

The enquiry was then turned on its head when she directed the REC in Krishna Shukla’s direction if it wanted to know “about the recent work of the Committee,” as “an approach to [her], supposedly ‘informally’, might be easily construed, at best, as undermining the Secretary...and even, perhaps, as soliciting undue criticisms” of him. She expressed every confidence in Krishna Shukla in representing the WMARC to the REC “just as the Regional Executive had of previous secretaries.” (16)

An outstanding issue was raised showing that the REC’s own performance in those areas for which it was responsible was below par. The REC, the body overseeing the activities of branches, “might address [itself] to the removal of certain trade union rights from [her],” and pointed out that “two principal officers of the Regional Executive actually voted...to recommend the removal of those rights.” (17)

In conclusion, alluding to Frew's reasons for the chair's resignation, she drew attention to Ms Frew making no mention of the resignation of another officer – Bis Weaver as Treasurer, “nor the reasons why a member of a racial minority took this course of action in a Committee purportedly set up to promote and defend the interests of Black people.” Perhaps, Ms Frew's failure to do that was because “the Regional Executive saw some significant distinction between the person who was Chair and the one who was Treasurer.”(18)³¹

My contribution also addressed Ms Frew's letter in a formal way because the decision to set up “an enquiry was taken at a formal Regional Executive meeting, at which minutes and records would be taken.” (1) I, too, directed Ms Frew to the WMARC Secretary, “who will, I am sure,...advise [her] of the Committee's work and effectiveness.” (2) Not to let the criticism of the secretary implied in Ms Frew's letter go unchallenged, I confirmed that in my opinion the secretary had “effectively organised the...Committee in its efforts to tackle racism and to ensure that NATFHE becomes an instrument capable of implementing its stated policies.” (3) I also thought that this approach “asking for information...might well be interpreted...as undermining the role of the Committee's Black Secretary...[and] might raise questions about the possible motivations behind the enquiry.” (4-5)

It appeared to me that “the Regional Executive would be better disposed in showing... support for the positive approach of the Committee rather than acting in a manner...to undermine this work and its Secretary, as well as questioning the increasing contribution made by Black people on the Committee.” I asked “if the Regional Executive knew “how to work with Black people? Or is it only able to give directives to Black people?” (6)

The Regional Executive was asked to explain that if it “is concerned about the work of anti-racists...why doesn't it act to restore my rights...taken from me because I asked the Branch Committee to take action against a Branch Officer”, who went to management to criticise an anti-racist letter I distributed to NATFHE members. Action to restore my rights “would demonstrate a real commitment to anti-racism” but this was something I doubted would be done because REC members “only concern themselves with pious ‘high principle and policy pronouncements’, which require no action.”(7)³² Ms Frew, on behalf of the REC, had asked for observations on the WMARC, which it did not really want from us, and received instead a critique of the REC. *

* Both letters to Ms Frew were also sent to the regional secretary and the WMARC secretary

A follow up letter went to Ms Frew the next day. It was directed at wider issues than ‘the workings of the Committee’ as she was asked if she intended, working through the secretary of WMARC, to take up the following issues. The first issue addressed the abysmal attendance at WMARC meetings of REC-appointed members, most of whom “have never...attended...thus depriving other members of NATFHE...from fully participating in the Committee?” The second issue concerned the eligibility of Ms Frew to be involved in the investigation – an issue overlooked in our recently despatched contributions. She was “a member of a Committee about which ‘some concern was expressed’”, therefore, the regional executive should “not have put [her] in the invidious position of carrying out an enquiry into the workings of a committee,” of which she was a member and “also responsible for its workings.”

Pointing a finger at REC partisanship with a hint of the jocular to show we were not completely ‘doom and gloom’ merchants, we mentioned our thoughts on sending our contributions to all REC members but on reflection decided against it lest the letters came back in unstamped envelopes. As a final point, it was thought that a more suitable approach for the REC to have taken would have been to ask “the Black Lecturer’s Group to undertake a detailed investigation of [the WMARC], and some of its members, and, perhaps, the Regional Executive itself.”³³ This was the beginning of a counter-attack on the underhanded and unprincipled activities of REC/BLC members, some of whom were showing an entirely different face when dealing with Black members of the Birmingham Labour Party.

(d) Senator Joe McCarthy Makes an Appearance in the West Midlands REC *

Krishna received a copy of the *Frew report* and phoned me to say it “was an attack on his credibility” and should he resign. He was advised not to do so and he promised to send me a copy of the report.³⁴ Krishna had committed four cardinal sins in the eyes of the REC/BLC and their advisers. The three previously mentioned: (i) aligning himself with Bis Weaver in her struggle against racism in the union; (ii) declining to advise Gates on how to respond to a charge of racial harassment; (iii) promoting an active role for the WMARC as an anti-racism committee. ** The new sin (iv) was that after being ‘generously’ appointed as West Midland’s delegate to the ARNP, Krishna had ungenerously bitten the hands that were

* “The chorus of many different voices do not make it the truth”³⁵

** See Chapter X Sect (d)

now set to strangle him.

Bis Weaver, Krishna Shukla and I knew the attacks had a three-fold purpose aimed in varying degrees and for varying purposes against all three of us but we agreed to concentrate on the direct attempts to undermine Krishna's position on the committee - another example of how 'Broad Left anti-racists' act against those Black people, and their allies, who refuse to do their bidding and for not acknowledging them as doyens of anti-racism.

We wrote to Krishna Shukla, with copies sent to the regional secretary and to Ms Frew, offering insights into the way the WMARC operated prior to Krishna becoming secretary. We addressed these points to Krishna because not to do so would undermine his role as secretary of the WMARC. The letter also provided an opportunity to put on the record the substance of discussions at WMARC meetings recorded in my notes but not included in the WMARC minutes. We included details of the June and July 1986 meetings noting that these two meetings under the *ancien regime* were held within twenty-one days of each other – a point for the attention of the regional secretary who had 'cautioned' Krishna for holding more than one meeting in the autumn term. We also remarked on the "limitations [placed on] the Committee's work due to the regular, and total, absenteeism of some of [REC-appointed] members," which was a firm indicator of anti-racism being "low down on their list of commitments."

The June 1986 meeting was to elect officers and co-optees and was the best attended meeting during the year. At the meeting, the regional secretary confirmed that observers were able to ask questions but could not nominate candidates or vote. (pt 1) A full description was provided of my opposition to the only nominee for the post of chair and the reasons for speaking against the candidate's suitability for the post. My remarks had received strong and forceful objections from some of the REC-appointees, one of whom, Lovejoy, had attended the Bournville branch meeting as a visiting speaker when the nominee made the statement attacking Bis Weaver, so he knew only too well the grounds of my objection. (5) Details of the shambles surrounding Bis Weaver's and my nominations as co-opted members were also recorded. (2-3)

Prior to the next meeting in July 1986, I was informed I had been eligible to nominate and vote at the June meeting, therefore, I asked for a re-run of the election. The regional Secretary, Evans, opposed this on the grounds that while I was listed as a co-optee in the records it did not mean that I had been co-opted, which quite frankly did not make sense. Nonetheless, the attempt to hold a new election was overruled by the chair, whose election I was challenging. (3-4) The other issue concerned Clarke's response to the regional secretary's

letter but this had only been raised to show that the regional secretary had ignored my requests for a copy of Clarke's letter and it was weeks before he released a copy to Krishna Shukla. (6)

We then turned to the recent past. We were confident, in spite of "Mr Shukla's...credibility, integrity and competence...being questioned, that the inconsistencies in WMARC, prior to September 1986, have now been removed [and]...if the Regional Executive would allow those...prepared to actually engage in anti-racism struggle... and not merely in the Committee rooms, to get on with the work, then NATFHE can only benefit..." This is because "The experience of being victims of racial discrimination, racism and racial harassment makes Black people more able to perceive, and to formulate urgent [and effective] strategies for action...[rather] than the production of pages of pious words and window dressing packages which are not implementable." We located the problem of the WMARC within the regional executive itself and until it "has sorted itself out and decided where its position is in the anti-racism struggle...[only] then...will [it] be in a position to announce publicly NATFHE's role in anti-racism work without fear of being challenged by those inside and outside of NATFHE as seems increasingly to be the case..." *

To let the REC know this was not going to stay within the confines of the West Midlands where the REC/BLC ruled the roost, we asked Krishna to consider raising "the attempts to undermine [him] as Secretary of the WMARC at the next meeting of the ARNP, where we hope it will get more support for [his] efforts than [he] seems to be getting from the Regional Executive."³⁶

Krishna sent a copy of Frew's 'report' to us, which had been presented to the REC on the 21st January - the same day as the 'Beider' special branch meeting - yet another coincidence. How these coincidences arose one after another; sprouting up all over the place - seeds scattered in the wind aimed at producing a harvest of misfortune for Bis Weaver. What is the old saying? Once is accidental; twice is coincidental and thrice is *NATFHEism*.

The report was an amateurish, sub-standard, partisan piece of homework of 358 words, which most lecturers would grade F. It was described by Ms Frew as representing the views of eight people. Another two people were "unwilling to discuss the issue over the

* Krishna revealed that at a conference attended by local authority and union representatives, a REC/BLC member spoke of NATFHE's experience and commitment to anti-racist objectives. Another speaker asked how NATFHE could claim that in view of the situation at Bournville College. The NATFHE spokesperson remained silent for the rest of the conference.³⁷

phone” * and their responses had not been received. This latter point was not surprising since Ms Frew’s letter was still on its way through the post to us when she gave this report back. Ms Frew had selected the eight plus the two ‘non-contributors’ from a list of thirteen people, who attended the WMARC over the past year and had spoken “to those whose attendance had been the most regular.” ** Ms Frew’s selection criteria was found to be wanting because two of those with the highest attendance records had been excluded; one who agreed that NATFHE had let Bis Weaver down; and another who was sympathetic to her situation. Yet one ‘contributor’, who attended only once, was included. Ms Frew paraded a selection of criticisms and one serious allegation against one of the committee’s members that could qualify as Rule 8 material against the so-called erring member.

Ms Frew allotted the opening spot to the WMARC secretary even though Krishna had not made a contribution as he wanted the request in writing. According to Ms Frew, Krishna saw the problem as due to “some members [being] reluctant to confront the real issues” and, when asked to explain those issues, “he referred to the case of Bis Weaver.” Krishna’s version was that he said the REC was only “concerned [about the WMARC] because real issues concerning Black people were being taken up”, whereupon Ms Frew, disagreed with him, and said that “Bis Weaver’s case was being investigated and should not be dealt with.”

Ms Frew raised this issue and she raised another issue with Krishna, which concerned ‘outsiders’ attending committee meetings, after which Krishna curtailed the conversation. For a supposedly ‘impartial investigator’ it was an unusual position to take because her mandate was to find out the views of contributors not agree or disagree with them. Ms Frew failed to mention that Krishna asked for the matter to be put in writing to him and she had failed to do so, therefore, she put forward only a sketchy version of Krishna’s concerns. Perhaps it was as well we did not speak to her over the phone otherwise who knows what might have entered into the report.

All the other unnamed respondents, apparently, expressed “The unanimous feeling...that dealing with individual cases was not a function of the Committee and perhaps there was a need for a separate group to deal with this, eg. a black members support

* In fact it was three who did not contribute, albeit they tried – Bis Weaver, Gordon Weaver and Krishna Shukla plus eight who apparently did

** Although no names were divulged in the ‘report’, we eventually discovered the identities of all those participating

group.” * Did these seven other respondents when asked to comment on the WMARC spontaneously mention that individual cases should not be discussed at committee or were they specifically asked for their views on this item. Did Ms Frew make her own views known to the contributors as she did with Krishna and did this influence the outcome of the interviews? Furthermore, the proposal for the BLG to deal with case work was a recipe for inaction because any motion from the Black Lecturer’s Group required approval from the WMARC and then from the REC, therefore, what chance had the BLG of accomplishing anything when REC appointees boycotted the WMARC, apparently, because the BLG proposed Black officers on anti-racist committees? Welcome to NATFHE’s world of ‘front door’ and ‘kitchen door’ for different types of anti-racists.

Ms Frew referred to an issue allegedly taking up a lot of the committee’s time, which was “that of black only officers [and] most members...expressed frustration at this time wasting.” The WMARC minutes were mentioned as a source of support for this assertion. Why Ms Frew referred to the minutes was difficult to understand unless it was to suggest legitimacy for this point. If the minutes had been consulted, the contents hardly supported the claim of time-wasting. At the June WMARC meeting, the issue was briefly mentioned as an aim when “Bis Weaver spoke of the importance of black officers if the Committee was to have credibility.”³⁸

This was at a meeting during which lengthy discussions took place on seven items, including the very lengthy discussion surrounding the nomination for chair and two of the co-opted members. ** More time was spent on AOB item 9(c) which proposed making additional copies of *NATFHE Against Racism* available to branches than on ‘Black officers’. In July, the WMARC meeting was given a report back on the Black Lecturers’ Group Conference and both Krishna Shukla and Bis Weaver referred to the BLG’s recommendation that “All officers of anti-racist committees should be black, which was accepted by WMARC

* The regional women’s panel – an equivalent committee to WMARC, did take up individual cases of harassment (the Telford case) and was severely critical of the regional official, although Bis Weaver failed to get any support from the panel. Perhaps, the Telford woman’s close friendship with a member of the REC and the women’s panel may have had something to do with it. Bis Weaver’s harasser, despite being on the other side of the divide – i.e. harasser rather than harassed, had, as did the Telford woman, friends and colleagues in the women’s panel and the REC. NATFHE committees had the appearance of private members clubs with a preference for White members

** Apart from minutes and matters arising, the items were: election of officers; NATFHE Against Racism Pack; Racism Awareness Training; Aims and Objective of the Anti-racism Committees; College Policy Statements; and four items under AOB

members, without a dissentient voice, to take effect at the next elections.³⁹ Ms Frew, plus three of the REC/BLC contributors to this enquiry and two Black women, to be mentioned later in the *Frew report*, were all in attendance at that meeting. As this had become WMARC policy in July it was not raised again.

Ms Frew then introduced the issue of harassment. However, this was not the alleged abuse and harassment of the ex-WMARC chair but of two Black women who “felt harassed at meetings by being pressurised into taking jobs (committee posts) they didn’t want.” These were serious allegations by two unnamed members, who were easy to identify because apart from Bis Weaver they were the only two Black women to attend the WMARC. What did NATFHE intend doing about the allegations? Surely harassment against Black women was a serious contravention of NATFHE’s rules. Did these two Black women actually claim they were harassed and if so what evidence did they have? Bis Weaver had proposed one of them for a WMARC post at the June meeting but the nominee did not want to stand and it was not raised again. There was little point in having a reluctant office-holder, who, at the July meeting, turned down Ms Pattinson’s proposal for her to become a co-opted member.⁴⁰ The latter proposal from Ms Pattinson, apparently, did not constitute harassment, whereas the former from Bis Weaver, apparently, did in whoever’s lexicon was being used.

The other Black woman had not attended the ‘election’ meeting; she attended only the July meeting before disappearing altogether. Ms Frew was being extremely mischievous in not referring these ‘allegations’ to Bis Weaver for comment before publishing them. Ms Frew was present when both these Black women attended the WMARC and knew the context within which the one woman was proposed for office. There is no doubt that a victim’s subjective perceptions are extremely important in dealing with complaints of harassment but to perceive harassment there has to be a situation where a prospective victim might interpret the behaviour as harassment. Where in these meetings was there behaviour towards these two Black women members that might be considered as offensive?

These allegations were accepted as fact by Ms Frew unlike the situation when a Black woman was harassed over a lengthy period of time by a White male union officer. Ms Frew, a member of WMARC and the WMWP, did not ask that Black woman, Bis Weaver, for her views. Instead, Bis Weaver’s experiences had been relegated by Ms Frew’s Broad Left and feminist comrades to the puerile ‘interpersonal dispute.’ Furthermore, why was Ms Frew so ready to accept this claim as, apparently, all Black women were reactionary, according to a REC officer at a meeting of the West Midlands women’s panel in January 1986, attended by both Bis Weaver and Julie Frew? White male harassment of a Black female did not seem to

take place in NATFHE but Black female harassment of Black females apparently did. NATFHE certainly turned the world upside down!

Next on the list of concerns was that of “A long standing member [who] stopped attending in September because this argument was rendering the committee ineffective.” This sentence immediately followed on from the allegations of harassment but ‘this argument’ referred to the one about Black officers, which preceded the point on harassment. The identity of this contributor was not disclosed and it was not possible to identify the person at the time because at least three REC/BLC members failed to attend the September meeting when Krishna took over as secretary, but his identity was ‘discovered’ later. The reasons offered up for his non-attendance were spurious as the Black officer’s issue was dealt with satisfactorily in July and he voted in favour of the decision. Ms Frew also referred to the ex-chair feeling “particularly under pressure” noticeably not elaborating on what these pressures were supposed to be.

Ms Frew then wrote of “the behaviour of 2 members..., who had put forward this argument for Black officers” describing it as “‘disruptive’ and...trying to use the committee for their own ends.” The two unnamed members were not difficult to identify – Bis Weaver and her representative, me. By including me as someone putting forward the issue of Black officers, she had erred again. I had not spoken of Black officers although I agreed with the proposal as did every other committee member at the July meeting but I did speak on one occasion of “co-options of Black people from outside the union”, to create new networks of support for Black people in NATFHE. However, as recorded in the minutes, “DE (David Evans) and JF (Julie Frew) argued against it.”⁴¹ Considering that Ms Frew referred to the minutes she should at least have got that right. Perhaps, she thought the definition ‘disruptive behaviour’ was applicable to committee members taking a stand against harassment and the removal of a Black woman’s rights, then, if she did, call us disruptive. But Ms Frew should have asked her contributors to provide evidence of this ‘disruptive behaviour.’ As for the accusation of using the committee for their own ends, maybe a Black woman striving to get an anti-racism committee to pursue the interests of Black people might be considered as pursuing “their own ends”.

Everything that had been thrown up so far from these contributors – apart from being unsubstantiated drivel, covered only the June and July 1986 meetings, which were held before Krishna Shukla became secretary. So how did these contributors arrive at the conclusion, according to Ms Frew, such that the secretary (Krishna Shukla) should be “criticised; [because] calling notices were often late and the committee was generally badly organised?”

After Krishna Shukla became secretary, there were two meetings, one in September and the other in October, and most of the ‘critical’ contributors to the enquiry did not attend these meetings. * The five non-attending contributors had commented on matters that could only have relevance to the stewardship of the previous secretary, as their criticisms had nothing to do with Krishna Shukla. Therefore, how could they possibly accuse Krishna of inefficiency and bad organisation and how could such criticism end up in the report – perhaps someone had a grudge against Krishna and, as usual, the others went along with it. Apart from Bis Weaver, Krishna Shukla and me, everyone else who attended any WMARC meeting came out pristine pure – a host of angels. The enquiry was also supposed to cover the whole of the previous twelve months but the pre-June 1986 period was ignored, although there was evidence of inefficiency and irregularity during that period.

The contributors did acknowledge that some good ideas had been discussed, such as “feedback from Black members on *NATFHE Against Racism* and training of committee members in anti-racism but these ideas had never been brought to fruition because the committee was constantly bogged down in irrelevant arguments.” Considering the attendance of the contributors was so sparse during Krishna’s stewardship they would not directly know what was discussed unless they took the trouble to read the minutes sent to them by this “inefficient and badly organised committee” and, having read them, came to the conclusion the topics were not significant. ** Yet, if they had read them then they would have seen the topics discussed were not “constantly bogged down in irrelevant arguments.” The WMARC had discussed racism; ways of tackling it; and the different types of behaviour racists adopted. Was that not its function? Although Bis Weaver’s cases against the Bournville ‘trio’ and the Industrial Tribunal case against NATFHE were not discussed, *** using real life cases was a more valid basis for developing policies than the previous approach of discussing racism in abstraction from reality. The WMARC’s previous approach merely ‘tilted at windmills’ but did have a practical purpose in that it might sell books. That new ideas had difficulty in being brought to fruition could be attributed to the REC, which had to approve

* Of the eight contributors to the enquiry, who could have attended two meetings in September and October; five members attended none, and three attended only one

** Topics discussed – Aims of Objects of WMARC; NATFHE methods of handling racial discrimination; Rule Changes for the 1987 Conference; Expansion of Black involvement in WMARC and its work; Review of sample documents on anti-racism policy; Support for Black staff in Colleges; Affiliation to the Campaign Against Racism

*** The only reference to a case involving Bis Weaver was when the WMARC was informed of NATFHE’s racially discriminatory policy and that NATFHE was being taken to an Industrial Tribunal by a WMARC member⁴²

everything passed by the WMARC, and the attitude of Broad Left Coalition members on the REC made sure there was little chance of anything new in the field of anti-racism getting approved.

This meagre and easily discounted exercise going under the name of ‘enquiry’ concluded with five headings that were assigned the name of problems within the committee: (a) administration; (b) Chair; (c) Black officers; (d) Is WMARC a support group?; (e) What anti-racist work is the WMARC doing?⁴³

How did these heading/problems fare as substantive issues: (a) administration did not apply because Ms Frew dealt only with June and July 1986 and the contributors had not attended the meetings under the present secretary, other than the meagre attendance stated above; (b) The chair meant very little since all that Ms Frew said was “the Chair felt particularly under pressure”, which many people on the committee also felt - Bis Weaver, Krishna Shukla, Gordon Weaver and the new co-optee; (c) Black officers had been settled unless the REC/BLC was trying to overturn the WMARC’s decision; (d) WMARC functioning as a support group was open to debate but those presently attending the WMARC thought support for victims should be part of its functions; (e) the anti-racism work conducted by the WMARC could clearly be seen if the ‘contributors’ to the enquiry had looked at the minutes or attended meetings.

The REC/BLC appeared to have decided to act against the WMARC before Krishna Shukla’s first meeting as secretary because in the September meeting only one REC/BLC member (Ms Frew) turned up and in October only Gates attended. * Krishna had been in office only a month when steps were taken to investigate the WMARC. This suggested the enquiry was aimed at something other than the so-called deficiencies in the Committee; or its organisation; or the relevance of the topics under discussion. Yet the REC/BLC waited for almost three months before carrying out the enquiry. Why did it delay until January? Whatever its purpose, this light weight addition to NATFHE’s archives would be consigned to the rubbish bin in short order – the only realistic filing space for reports produced by NATFHE in the West Midlands.

We had no doubt that the *Frew enquiry* was really aimed at Bis Weaver, especially when waving harassment in the wind, and further confirmation of Bis Weaver being a target for the REC/BLC would be available in two months’ time. Krishna found himself in the

* Another REC/BLC member attended both meetings but she seemed somewhat distanced from most of the REC/BLC ‘band of brothers and sisters’ and was not even asked to contribute to the enquiry

firing line because of being seen as a *Weaverite*; and playing a significant role in tackling racism in the union. This made him a target for elimination by putting pressure on him to resign. I was thrown in for good measure, as with the Bournville April motion, to give the impression this was not an attack on Black members. But as the REC/BLC pursued its ends, the blundering of its mercenaries recreated scenes from *The Crucible*. *

The attacks on Bis Weaver did not mean much to her as this latest venture was a lightweight irritant compared to what she had faced but it was another example of how NATFHE's 'anti-racists' operated in the West Midlands. We recognised that Bis Weaver was the main target for the attacks, but all three of us – Krishna, Bis and I, decided that she should not involve herself directly in this issue. By removing her from the centrepiece of our counter-attack we could give the attacks on Krishna, the only Black REC member and office-holder, greater prominence. It would show that REC/BLC-appointees have little regard for BLG proposals by attacking the Black member presenting those proposals to the WMARC; and that all Black members were liable to attack if they acted against the interests of the REC/BLC even when merely acting as messengers for the BLG. That was 'telling it as it was.'

Whatever went out from our computer would be given wide circulation, locally, regionally and nationally - that was for sure, and an open invitation would be made for anyone to contest the contents of the letters, should they so wish, but, inevitably, no one ever took up the challenge. How could they?

Krishna took up the cudgel in a plain-speaking, hard-hitting letter to the regional secretary asking "What the hell is going on?" and accusing the REC of "hounding Black members and a Black officer of the Executive." Krishna viewed the enquiry as a deliberate attempt to "harass and demoralise" Black members and in doing this the REC "has thrown overboard all the normal conventions, rules, regulations, procedures and even the norms of courtesy and decency." Krishna condemned "the so-called inquiry" where "the inquisition started over the phone." He rhetorically asked when NATFHE, "which seems to take so much pride in the correctness of its procedures," had begun to use this new method and the conclusion Krishna drew was "that anything would do as far as Blacks were concerned." He went on to criticise the use of "unattributed remarks" and the "wild conclusions drawn" by an

* Ms Frew's conformity to the line pushed out by the REC/BLC, guided by the regional chair and vice chair, did not store up any loyalty points for her because in the not too distant future - four months later, Ms Frew was physically assaulted by Gates at NATFHE's Annual Conference during a disagreement. On that occasion, Gates' behaviour was not relegated to the puerile definition of 'interpersonal dispute.' See chapter XII s (j)

investigator “closely involved with the ARC, [who] was hardly in a position to be objective and possibly had her own axe to grind.”

Krishna put on the record where the regional secretary (D Evans) appeared to stand on these issues. The regional secretary had told Krishna that he “agreed with [Ms Frew] that the ARC Chairperson was harassed [but] No details [were] given” by the regional secretary in support of this assessment. Krishna’s disclosure of Evans’ view gave an interesting insight into the way REC/BLC officers rapidly perceived harassment when alleged by one of their own. If only Bis Weaver had been so fortunate to have Ms Frew or Evans on hand at Bournville College to witness the plethora of incidents of abuse, harassment and other forms of intimidation she had faced. But this would have required them to extend their vocabulary considerably to explain Gates’ behaviour.

Evans had also agreed with the recommendation in the *Frew report* that cases such as Bis Weaver’s “should be taken up by Black Lecturers.” To Krishna, this boiled down to “whites will support whites regardless of their actions [while]...victims of racism should try to find their own solution. This support on a kith-and-kin basis extends to the erstwhile Chairperson of ARC,...[who] was made Chairperson with the support of white members as an affront and insult to the black members, when it was known to everybody that...[she] had been active, as a Branch Officer, in depriving a black member of her ordinary trade union rights.”

Krishna concluded with a request to see the chair’s resignation letter and a copy of Day’s ‘report’ as he intended “to raise this matter at the next meeting of the national panel.” Krishna sent a copy of this letter to the chair of the ARNP, who had still not contacted Bis Weaver as he promised to do in April 1986; and to the BLG.⁴⁴ Krishna had certainly put it in strong terms to the REC/BLC. Head office officials were unlikely to be enamoured of yet another foul-up in the West Midlands REC, where a Black member of the ARNP, in his absence but in the presence of Day, had come under attack in a NATFHE committee for pursuing an anti-racist line in support of a Black woman union member.

After examining the *Frew Report*, I produced my observations and despatched them to Krishna Shukla to circulate to the regional secretary; Ms Frew and Henry, the ‘compilers’ of the ‘report’; Baker of the ARNP; and the secretary of the BLG. They could see for themselves what a shoddy piece of work Ms Frew had dressed up as a *bona fide* report, accepted in its entirety (all 380 words) by an equally shoddy REC. The ‘report’ was referred to as the work of Ms Frew and Henry, although it did not look as if Henry had taken any part in the enquiry or in writing up the ‘report.’ Our expectation was that Henry would dissociate

himself from this ‘McCarthy-style’ investigation. It was not known if he ever did but there was a definite attempt to bury the ‘report’ although one or two REC/BLC members appeared not keen on its internment as they were pursuing personal agendas.

The first observation on the Frew-Henry enquiry was that the audience were treated to only Krishna Shukla’s period of office, which appeared to have the objective of undermining his performance as WMARC secretary. If the enquiry had been conducted in accordance with its stated brief “then something would have been said about the confusion and inefficiency associated with the previous secretary. [Therefore,] it is apparent that the intention and motivation behind...this inquiry was to vilify [Krishna].” My own assessment was of Krishna being “competent in the performance of two roles on the Committee, Secretary and Chair,...[and] an outspoken advocate of Black people playing a leading part in the anti-racism struggle. It was equally obvious [he had] been singled out for ‘special treatment’...because of these attributes which challenge the prevailing paternalistic attitudes of those on the Regional Executive.”

The conduct of the inquiry was described as following “in the worse traditions of McCarthyism...[as] The so-called ‘progressive’ anti-racist elements on the Regional Executive...stoop[ed] to character assassination by...reported telephone conversations with unnamed people – no names, no content of conversations only anonymous allegations.” The outcome was undoubtedly “pre-determined and only views not favourable to [Krishna] would be included.”

I explained that my own refusal to discuss the issues over the phone led to Ms Frew sending out a written request, which did not reach me until after the report was presented to the REC. Therefore, a contribution favourable to the WMARC secretary was excluded from the enquiry. This was the view of someone “in a better position than any of [the contributors] to know because I have attended every meeting.” The only conclusion that could be arrived at was that “Ms Frew and Mr Henry had no intention of including my contribution.”

I expressed surprise that “Mr Henry, who holds a senior position in the City of Birmingham Education Authority, an authority trying to implement an equal opportunities policy, was a party to such an obvious and blatant attempt to discredit the Black Secretary of the Anti-racist Committee” and my hope was that Krishna, “as Secretary of the [WM]ARC,...will be provided with the following information [of]...

- (a) the names of the eight people...contacted to comment on the Committee
- (b) the content of each person’s contribution...
- (c) the specific names of other members of the Committee against whom allegations were made and the names of those making the allegations

(d) ...in what way two members, who spoke on the proposal of Black officers, were 'disruptive'? and who are the Committee members who claim that these two members are using the Committee for their own ends? If Ms Frew and Mr Henry check the minutes they will see that the proposal...was not a proposal made by two people but was...made by the Black Lecturer's Group which was adopted in principle by the Committee as a whole, at the 9th July meeting, attended by Frew, Evans, Lovejoy, " and [Krishna Shukla] from the REC...It seems as if the Black Lecturer's Group cannot get recognition for its proposals, from certain REC Officers even when these officers, themselves, support the proposals in the Committee;

(e) Who are the member(s) who anonymously criticised [Krishna] for so-called inefficiency? [because] This is a serious allegation...[as] the Greater London Council document on racial harassment [has] noted that one of [racisms] forms is the constant challenge to Black people to prove that they can carry out functions to which they have been appointed, assigned or elected *

(f) It is also necessary to establish under which rules or standing orders this inquiry was carried out...[and if] the methods employed...were properly conducted. It is unlikely that this inquiry was carried out properly because it is doubtful if any trade union would allow McCarthyite methods to be employed. The procedures used to discredit [Krishna] may...be a contravention of [his] rights in law...[but if not] the blatant attacks...carried out on the authority of, and approved by, the Regional Executive Committee should warrant a full investigation by impartial members of the union...[as the REC's] approval of the report makes them all collectively responsible for this attempt to discredit [him];

(g) Who is the long-standing member who stopped coming...in September because of the issue of Black officers...[and] the Committee's decision...to elect Black Officers in future. It is a good job that we don't quit the anti-racist movement when we can't have our own way or when officers of Committees comprise exclusively of White post-holders

The penultimate point was of the need for the REC to "be subject to an inquiry, otherwise NATFHE's credibility in the field of anti-racism will become even more tarnished than it already is." As a final point, I regretted I was unable to send a copy of this letter to the contributors to the enquiry but this was not possible because "they are all hiding behind anonymity" ** but when their identities are revealed then they could each have a copy. The REC's puny little 'report' had been turned back on to the sponsors of the enquiry, who had initially seen the enquiry as an advantage to themselves.⁴⁵

The next day, thirteen days after presenting the report to the REC, Ms Frew formally acknowledged Bis Weaver's and my contributions to the enquiry and informed us that the contents would be communicated to the REC.⁴⁶

Krishna Shukla, too, received a communication; this one from the regional secretary in answer to Krishna's criticisms of the REC's action. He was sorry; not for the REC-

* This was one of the forms of racial harassment that Bis Weaver had to face at Bournville College. The REC/BLC, who had been given full facts of the Weaver case, seemed unable to learn from anything

** Ms Frew had kept five of the members under the cloak of anonymity. Three others were identifiable – the secretary of the committee – an Asian, who had not made a contribution; and two black members who allegedly felt harassed, as they were the only other Black members attending those meetings besides Bis Weaver

sponsored enquiry but sorry because Krishna had felt “it was an attack on [him] because that certainly wasn’t the intention, and did not figure at all in the subsequent discussion at REC.”* The regional secretary may have been right to a certain extent because the prime target was Bis Weaver but Krishna and I, for supporting her, were not to be overlooked in this partisan enquiry. Apparently, Evans claimed that the only criticism of Krishna was for “sending out calling notices late” while, conveniently, ignoring the fact that in the report it was claimed that “the committee was generally badly organised.”

Evans also tried to temper the criticism by revealing the same “criticism could be (and has been) addressed to the secretaries of all Regional Standing Committees by [Evans, himself] in the past.” He was not saying the criticism was unjustified only that other secretaries had been similarly criticised and it seemed he was trying to deflect the obvious attempt to undermine Krishna by generalising the criticism to all regional sub-committees. He was writing as if Krishna was incapable of understanding that the report made severe criticisms of his role as WMARC secretary.

The regional secretary’s impression was “that most parts of NATFHE operate on the basis of a well-intentioned but rather disorganised amateurism.” He went even further to exonerate the REC by claiming that “If there is anything which could be perceived as ‘throwing overboard all the normal conventions, rules, regulations, procedures and norms of common courtesy and decency’ in the conduct of the REC, or the way in which the Report was produced, then I am certain that it is not very different from the way in which most Regional business is conducted.” ** This just about summed up the REC in the West Midlands; and the regional secretary was parading it as a normative code of practice. However, ‘amateurism’ was no reason for the unjustifiable actions of the REC.

The regional secretary was also sorry “that several of these things were discussed and decided when [Krishna was] not present at REC – but if we waited for all REC members to be present before anything was debated we would wait a long time.” In the event of a member wanting “a particular item on the agenda dealt with at a particular time, (for example,...to leave early) then a request to bring that item up the Agenda would be quite in order and unlikely to be opposed.” No doubt this was true but it was difficult to ask for an item to be brought forward when it was not listed on the agenda but sneaked in under AOB.

* According to the minutes, no discussion took place as the record states that the report was ‘accepted’. There was no need for a discussion, the report said it all! What the Broad Left Coalition wanted was provided for them

** If this was the case, why specifically investigate the WMARC?

At the end of the letter, he appeared to distance himself from the decision to set up the REC inquiry by mentioning he was not at the November meeting either. But, notwithstanding this, he still contributed to the enquiry * even though he had not attended any meeting under Krishna's stewardship; and had accepted the report as representative of the way the committee performed. He enclosed a copy of the chair's resignation letter; the minutes for the 22nd October 1986 meeting but not those of the 26th November, which had yet to be written up and which he described, in an aside, as "again, simply through inefficiency on our part" – an attempt to minimise similar criticism against Krishna.

As for a copy of Day's report, he would speak to Day about it. Why he applied a restrictive policy to the secretary of the WMARC when asked to release Day's 'report' was not explained. He had previously adopted a different policy when, within days of Day's 'report' being released and distributed to local officers in November 1985, he had supplied a copy to a member, ** not even an officer, of the West Midlands women's panel even though this was acting against the instructions of the regional official – one rule for a White member of the women's panel and another for the Black secretary of the WMARC.

In conclusion, he referred to a draft motion he was preparing on the future role of the WMARC and would send Krishna a copy for comment.⁴⁷ No doubt the BLG might have something to say about why it was not given the responsibility for, or even a say in, drawing up what turned out to be a new constitution for a committee set up to secure the interests of Black members.

The regional secretary had taken 104 days to get the October minutes to Krishna; and seventy days after the November meeting the minutes were still not available. He was extremely inefficient and disorganised or the minutes were deliberately held back so as not to alert Krishna to what was being prepared before the enquiry took place. Overall, it was an extremely supercilious and patronising letter and while using the word 'sorry' on a couple of occasions there was nothing in his letter that suggested he was sorry about anything. The letter reeked of the bureaucratic evasiveness of which his liege lords at Hamilton House were masters. In just over a month's time, Evans would show how the REC really worked and it had absolutely nothing to do with 'disorganised amateurism.'

It was a few days before I received a copy of Evans' letter from Krishna and could address his points. In the meantime, some movement had been taking place on a front that had

* We found out later Evans was a contributor

** The member granted this privilege was the partner of Bob Carter, WMARC Secretary and ARNP member at the time

been dormant, on the surface, for some time – the LEA front.

(e) Four Legs Good; Two Legs Better When Flashing Ersatz Red

In the midst of dealing with McCarthyite witch-hunters, Bis Weaver learned from Tony Rust that the encounter with NATFHE's *Salemites in Chief* at the Industrial Tribunal had been rearranged for the end of March. A counter-exorcist-in-chief was required and Tony Rust advised her to engage a barrister to present her case because of its significance.⁴⁸ Tony also suggested that she should try to obtain the LEA's report. Knowing of Knowles' intervention in trying to fix the LEA's findings with the *blue pencil* of censorship, we held little hope of securing its release but, on leaving Tony Rust's office, we made our way along Corporation Street to the LEA's office in Margaret Street. Geoff Hall was not in but another LEA officer came to see her and disclosed that the report had 'come down from above' – the city solicitor's office, with suggestions for changes. This confirmed information received from her contact about the city solicitor scrutinising the report and the publication in the local press of Knowles' directive to vet reports. She was also told that before Geoff Hall could release the report, he had to meet with two people, which we presumed included Triesman – as already mentioned by her contact.⁴⁹ A couple of days later, after a delay of three months, the LEA invited her to see Geoff Hall.⁵⁰

On the 3rd February, Bis Weaver, accompanied by me, turned up at Margaret Street for what turned out to be a meeting with Geoff Hall and two others – a member of the LEA's enquiry trio and an administration officer but no Ron Jones.

After the usual pleasantries, Geoff Hall began the meeting with an unusual statement. He referred to a notional bottom line below which no one would be able to negotiate. This was followed up by another revelation that seemed to lack any credibility - Geoff Hall claimed that Gates, Cave and Hartland had a grievance for not having had the chance to address the charges against them. But how could this be? This was the question Bis Weaver asked, when it was clear that all three had the opportunity to address the grievances at the LEA's hearing. She could have added that the chance had also been available in the pre-hearing statements Geoff Hall had invited from all the parties. Geoff Hall let that question hang in the air and went off in a different direction to ask if she agreed harassment was professional misconduct. This 'watered-down' assessment of the behaviour was met with her a response that it was more likely to have the description of gross professional misconduct.

Hall then commented on institutional racism at the college, which seemed a way of re-directing the outcome of the complaint to a sanitized indirect version of racism. She met this apparent ploy by referring to the city council's own definition to describe what happened to her as direct racial harassment. The impression coming across was of Geoff Hall reading from a prompt sheet specially prepared for him but repeating it without any conviction for what he was saying. The pressure we were told that had been exerted on him from NATFHE and local politicians was noticeable in his manner, which differed considerably from that displayed at the grievance hearing – the confidence that exuded at that hearing had evaporated.

The relevance of Hall's undisclosed 'negotiating' marker (bottom line) became apparent as he seemed to be 'sussing' out how she saw the situation in contemplation of a deal between the LEA and the union but he was not getting the desired responses to get the college and the LEA off the hook. After despatching Geoff Hall's comments into the long grass, she became concerned when he disclosed that Gates would not want the governors to know he called her a fucking liar and that Gates would be walking on glass when he returned to Bournville College. After what had happened in the eight months since submitting the grievance, this revelation brought with it the prospects of what might be in store for her should Gates return to the college, with or without glass under his feet. She asked Geoff Hall if he could guarantee there would be no recurrence of what had happened before as there were numerous ways of getting at her as shown by recent events at Bournville College. Geoff Hall, no doubt uncomfortable in pushing the Labour leadership's and NATFHE's interests, asked what more could he have done - after all Beider had been sacked, although we knew this had been diluted when the city council was confronted by NATFHE. She agreed that the LEA had acted swiftly on that issue but reminded Geoff Hall that no action was taken against Cave and Hartland, who had taken the allegations to management and they had the most to gain if the allegations had stuck. Geoff Hall appeared to be trying to negotiate Gates back into the college by diluting racial harassment into some kind of professional misconduct, a la Knowles and the City Solicitor, while reassuring her that Gates would no longer be a threat to her.

One of the LEA officers, who was in day-to-day contact with local NATFHE officers, suggested they (those present at this meeting) should look on the 'bright side' as Gates, Cave and Hartland might change their ways and behave differently in the future but he did not pursue that line when it was passed over as a non-starter by everyone else. Did a victim have to rely on the generosity of the harassers in order to work without harassment?

A reason for Geoff Hall's back-peddling from the positive position taken at the hearing and in his October letter was revealed. He disclosed having difficulties because of Gates' position as a union officer - the underlining factor that had pervaded her problems from the beginning. However, she made it clear, as far as she was concerned, Gates' union position cut no ice because her grievance was against Gates as a member of staff and not in any position connected with the union. This was a prime example of how union officers and officials hide behind their positions in the union to try to get away with anything.

Geoff Hall then divulged how local union officers and national officials had put him under pressure,⁵¹ which he acknowledged placed her at a disadvantage and, in a 'light-hearted' aside, spoke of NATFHE's dilemma stemming from its failure to recognise it had come up against its own 'Woodward and Bernstein'. * I reminded the group that the Republican Party had learned the lessons of *Watergate* by burning the tapes during the *Irangate* hearings. Using this metaphor, I related it to Gates, who had a score to settle and may also have learnt from his experiences, so the next time he might use others to deal with her. That would be on the LEA's head for exposing her to this treatment yet again.

NATFHE's bottom line was no action against the 'trio' as shown by NATFHE's constant pressure on Geoff Hall; and his reference to 'negotiations' was enough to declare to Bis Weaver not to expect anything to be done about Gates or the other two. It also seemed apparent that the LEA's report would be stripped of any reference to race - racial harassment replaced with the all-embracing professional misconduct label submerged in a generalised definition of institutionalised racism – extremely convenient for Gates, Cave and Hartland; and for NATFHE; and Birmingham city council, whose officers would not have to report the findings to the CRE.

What was also revealing was the news that details of the grievance had not been disclosed to the Bournville board of governors as required under the grievance procedures. ** The chair of governors had exceeded his authority by unilaterally handing the grievance over to the LEA without disclosing its contents to the governors. The proceedings were beginning to take on the features of a NATFHE-style enquiry but, of course, this should come as no surprise bearing in mind that trade union officials in NATFHE and ex-union officials in the Labour-controlled council had supped together with a short spoon from Bournville Branch's

* The investigative journalists who had exposed the Watergate affair

** This failure of the chair of governors to disclose the contents of the grievance had been revealed by Geoff Hall when he said "Gates would not want the Governors to know he called her a 'fucking liar'"

trough. There was no doubt in our minds that a deal with NATFHE was on the cards and the report, even censored, would never see the light of day, although Day of NATFHE had probably seen it, according to our contact in the city council.

This just about wrapped up the meeting, other than the inability of Geoff Hall to give any assurance of when the LEA's report would be released, and to inform her that he was to meet Day and Triesman in the afternoon. When we rose to leave, Geoff Hall appeared ill at ease.⁵² The meeting had carried no specific designation, such as 'feed-back' or 'report-back' and, at its end, we were no wiser as to its exact purpose. But it was obviously preparing the way for some form of negotiated settlement: (i) in line with the city solicitor's advice; (ii) in accordance with Birmingham Labour leadership dictats; (iii) favourable to the interests of NATFHE; and (iv) to test out her reaction to Gates returning to Bournville College. From April 1986 onwards, Triesman had thrown Bis Weaver to the Bournville NATFHE dogs now transformed into wolves, and the LEA expected those wolves to turn into lambs, despite its officers having seen those wolves, with fangs bared, lead the pack during the *Beider affair*.

The state of affairs presented by Geoff Hall was absurd because how could there be bottom line negotiations on the findings of a grievance? The issue was straight forward; Gates, Cave and Hartland were either guilty of the charges in the grievance; or innocent; and if guilty, were there any mitigating circumstances for their behaviour. However, the latter two options – innocent or mitigating circumstances were not in play because Geoff Hall had confirmed at the LEA's enquiry that none of the three had denied the charges. The findings were there to be acted upon without 'flea-market-style' bargaining, especially as Geoff Hall acknowledged that Bis Weaver was at a disadvantage in terms of what could only be in relation to the prevailing power relationships. If anyone was dissatisfied with the decision, an appeal was available under the grievance procedures but, although we were not aware of it at the time, Day's manoeuvrings had rendered this null and void following his discussions with the employee relations officer to subvert her statutory rights. These pre-enquiry negotiations would be shown later to have received a positive response.

NATFHE officials would be well aware that the LEA's findings were damaging to Gates and the others, otherwise Triesman, the 'second most important official' in NATFHE, would hardly travel to Birmingham to discuss anything trivial. The content of Geoff Hall's discussion with Day and Triesman was never disclosed to us but Bis Weaver's comments on her vulnerability should Gates return to Bournville College appeared to have an effect on the negotiations and some sort of deal was struck. Both the LEA and NATFHE had a lot to gain by burying the issue. NATFHE obviously wanted to avoid another Fernandes affair, and

Birmingham city council, as Dick Knowles' memo pointed out, would not welcome publicity exposing racism in one of its colleges – these were perfect ingredients for a deal. The publicity of a race issue in one of the City's college was something the Labour Party wanted to avoid; and the publicity would also cause a major embarrassment for NATFHE defending three union officers who harassed a Black woman.

The image of officers and officials in NATFHE as representatives of the workers and the Birmingham Labour group leadership as employers resembled the characters in the final scene of Orwell's 'Animal Farm' where "The creatures looked from pig to man, and from man to pig, and from pig to man again: but already it was impossible to say which was which."⁵³

There seemed little doubt that Geoff Hall had wanted to do the right thing but was prevented from doing so by the sordid tactics of the Labour group leadership and NATFHE officials and local officers – a unity of North and South of Watford in an unholy alliance. The tide was going out and we needed to re-focus the LEA's attention on possible consequences if it tried to do a 'NATFHE'. Surely it was not beyond the wit of the LEA to consider that *Woodward and Bernstein* might turn their attention to the LEA and, just as the Gates issue had grown from a complaint in the union to an Industrial Tribunal hearing, dissatisfaction with the LEA's enquiry might also lead in that direction. The day after the meeting with Geoff Hall, a copy of Bis Weaver's application to the Office of Industrial Tribunals accompanied by NATFHE's disingenuous submission were despatched to him to show what NATFHE was capable of doing.⁵⁴

If the LEA lay down with dogs then it could not complain if it got up with NATFHE's fleas and that the appropriate insecticide would be another application to an Industrial Tribunal. * It certainly looked as if the Industrial Tribunal was the only forum where she might secure some degree of justice meted out to NATFHE in whatever 'good-guy' appearance NATFHE chose to present to the Tribunal adjudicators.

(f) Another Scar on Dorian's Portrait

The *kernels* must have recovered some of their confidence with the branch all sewn up and Bis Weaver having to run the gauntlet down a path chosen by the REC/BLC. They

* In 1988, after the NATFHE case was wrapped up attention was turned fully on to Birmingham city council and that showed the similarity between NATFHE and the Labour council when dealing with race issues

were about to squeeze another ounce of conformity from the branch, on another issue, which was influenced by an act on my part. But before responding to my action, the *kernels* began another excursion to defend Gates by keeping him at the forefront as a victim of the employer, which was presented it as an issue that made all branch members victims too. The spark for this unpalatable exercise could be traced back to December and the subsequent decision of the city solicitor that Gates was ineligible to remain as a staff governor, while on study leave. An election was arranged for a replacement.⁵⁵ One of the new Black staff members, Robbo, a NATFHE member, and one long term woman member of staff, member of the NAS/UWT, put themselves forward for election.

Shortly after nominations were called for, representatives of Bournville NATFHE branch – two branch officers, went to management to inform it the union had taken up Gates' removal from the governors with the LEA. The issue had reached Stage three of the union-employers procedures and that a status quo position had been reached, therefore, no election could take place until the issue was resolved. NATFHE had also been in touch with the other candidate's union, the NAS/UWT.

Despite the matter being dealt with at Stage 3 and with a member of another union standing as a candidate, a NATFHE branch officer went to tell the other candidate that the NAS/UWT had agreed to support NATFHE's action and Robbo had withdrawn. Shortly after this visit, on the 21st January, the day of the Beider special branch meeting, a union member told Robbo that a NATFHE branch officer would be coming to see him about not standing in the election. It was almost a week before the officer, on the 27th January, got around to seeing Robbo to tell him the NAS/UWT candidate had withdrawn, and if he did not withdraw, whoever was elected would be sent to 'Coventry'. * Robbo felt in a difficult position – being sent to Coventry was something he did not want to face, so he agreed to withdraw although he made it clear he wanted nothing to do with what he described as the union's 'shenanigans.' This was how Bournville NATFHE officers dealt with new Black members of staff and somehow they considered themselves to be 'anti-racists'. In the meantime, the other candidate received a letter from the NAS/UWT advising her to withdraw only if the other candidate did. The next day, Robbo decided to discuss the situation with the other candidate and learned she had not withdrawn and she showed Robbo the letter from her union. The two candidates decided to see management about the pressure exerted on them to withdraw.

* That West Midlands city was certainly getting its fair share of visitors

The *kernels* were keen to prevent an election for Gates' replacement or more accurately to keep Gates on the Board, although any practical benefit from pursuing this course of action could only be minimal other than trying to preserve the image that the *kernels* were fire-proof. However, the implications of putting pressure on another Black member and a non-NATFHE woman member of staff must have struck home to someone in NATFHE and the branch officers did an about turn and withdrew their objections to an election. Robbo received an apology from the branch officer, which was more than Bis Weaver had ever received, and the officer put the blame on the other union, despite 'the other union' having nothing to do with the threat to send both candidates to Coventry – that all belonged to NATFHE. The election brought success to the NAS/UWT candidate. *⁵⁶

While the *kernels* had been hammering away at the governors' issue, our focus was on extending knowledge of the situation at Bournville College. Cave and Hartland had mentioned at the Beider enquiry how widely spread was the information on the Weaver harassment case and had virtually accused Bis Weaver of being the broadcaster-in-chief. On this, as usual, they were wrong because it had developed its own momentum mainly from the actions of the *kernels* themselves. However, after the *Beider affair*; the REC's 'McCarthyite' enquiry; and the University of Warwick incident, we intended to accommodate to their 'suspicions'. We would make sure their efforts became known to a wider audience whenever possible in order to get even more on the record and put the branch committee on the defensive. The gloves were off and although the punches we threw were little more than sparring, after the Industrial Tribunal hearing it would be down to bare knuckles fighting.

The 'rights' and 'monitoring' issues provided a springboard when Bis Weaver decided to draw in the Labour Party Black Sections, of which she was a member, to take on those Birmingham NATFHE members in the White Left of the Labour Party for their abject neglect of her rights and interests. In different directions, the Rule 8 complaints were used to inform the TUC of events in NATFHE; and the branch committee was informed of a Rule 8 taken against it, which forced the committee to face up to the complaint if it did not already know of it. To make sure the committee was aware of it, I sent a copy of my complaint to the

* Robbo had come under a lot of pressure from people in the department where we both worked. There was hostility directed at him because of his association with me, which gave him a sense of isolation in the department. He had been to see his departmental head about the hostility but nothing was done. At the end of the Summer term, he decided to leave Bournville and in his resignation letter he cited the discriminatory actions of his 'colleagues' as his reason for leaving. He mentioned that I (Gordon Weaver) was "isolated in the Division" and "they were giving [me] a hard time." He also said that he did not want to finish up being treated like Bis Weaver and I were treated.⁵⁷

Bournville branch secretary and the chair, explaining that I thought “it was incumbent on me to send out a copy of the complaint to appropriate bodies in NATFHE.” This was to show the branch committee it was not fireproof and an onslaught could be directed at them as much as from them, and they had more to hide from than we had. The letter went to keep a lid on things.⁵⁸

A letter went to Norman Willis, general secretary of the TUC, seeking advice. Despite not needing advice, it would let the ‘big boys’ know what was happening in NATFHE under the name of trade union practice. In my letter, the Rule 8 against the branch committee was the entry point to the main issue, which covered the victimisation of me “for giving support to a Black woman member...seeking justice...against a lay-officer, who had abused and harassed her over a considerable period of time.” Having tried “to seek redress through the union,...NATFHE have closed down all avenues within the union...” and I referred him to modern European history for the implications of the union’s actions.⁵⁹

The NATFHE Bournville branch nomination issue was not overlooked. On the 3rd February, the branch secretary was encouraged into revealing, in front of two witnesses, that Bis Weaver’s nomination of me for the vacant delegates place on the West Midlands Regional Council had been referred to head office, which approved it.⁶⁰ This was additional confirmation that letters from Bis Weaver to the branch committee (in this case the letter of nomination dated 11th January 1987) were opened prior to being sent on to head office. In a letter to the branch secretary, Bis Weaver denounced the branch committee’s action in seeking approval from head office and then not informing her that the “nomination was acceptable so that [she] could seek a seconder for her nomination.”⁶¹ This was further proof that her rights in the union came under the control of unelected head office bureaucrats and was not restricted to correspondence as even her entitlement to participate in the electoral process came under head office control. We also sent a note of this to the Labour Party Black Section to keep it in touch with the actions of those NATFHE officers – also members of the Birmingham Labour Party ‘Left’ as was the branch secretary, who “were prepared to participate in the denial of Bis Weaver’s...democratic right to nominate a candidate of her choice to a NATFHE position.”⁶²

Ballot papers, with my name included, were distributed for a 9th February election but no result was ever announced. Nonetheless, somehow or other, by means only possible in NATFHE, Hartland, the other candidate, became delegate to regional council. The issues were a long way from being settled and we were storing ammunition for a prolonged battle

against the so-called Left in NATFHE and to pursue it into whatever crevice it chose to spread its tentacles.

The circulation of my Rule 8 around the fiefdom led Bournville branch officers into calling another special branch meeting for the 5th February. All members attending the special branch meeting were aware of its purpose because news of it was circulated prior to the meeting. Branch officers were also due to meet with management to discuss A3 remission immediately after this meeting. *

At the meeting, Cave, in the chair, informed the branch he had been nominated to move a motion concerning a Rule 8 served on the branch committee. Cave handed over the chair to Ms Deeson, who read out the motion: “This Branch reaffirms its confidence in Branch Officers and Branch Committee to continue as its elected representatives.” The chair explained that “A Rule 8 was served on the Branch Committee for its actions in April last year [but] the contents...cannot be discussed – Processes would now have to run their course.”

In yet another exercise to rally the troops, Cave explained, or more appropriately entertained the branch with some spin. He announced that a Rule 8 had been taken out “against the 1985/6 Branch Committee on grounds that it brought the Branch into disrepute over the correspondence...sent to Head Office.” This was inaccurate because the complaint dealt with the production of a statement, which raised six different limbs of complaint; and for the removal of certain of my trade union rights.⁶³

Cave outlined the ramifications of a Rule 8 – “expulsion of members, suspension from office; or dismissal of the case.” His prognoses of these possible consequences were technically correct but given NATFHE’s batting record the first two were hardly realistic options. He read out the names of members affected by the complaint, including me – as if I could be held culpable for the production of a statement vilifying me and removing my union rights; a point made in a letter to the branch secretary a few days later.⁶⁴ Cave said “the motion is designed to secure confidence in the branch committee in order to carry out its normal functions.”

Cave advised the branch of the branch committee’s intention to resign immediately if the motion fell, which would leave only three committee members, unaffected by the Rule 8, to run the branch until a new committee was elected in three weeks’ time. An added

* The A3 issue affected all members of staff as it concerned the reduction in teaching hours to carry out specified administrative tasks

inducement to not let the motion fall was the ‘news’ that none of the resigning members would put their names forward for the new committee.

The branch secretary, when seconding the motion, mentioned that a Rule 8 complaint against a branch committee had happened only twice before, according to a head office official. Raising the motion at this particular time exhibited skilful timing and may well have been prompted by more adept tacticians than seemed to exist in the branch executive. Despite her ‘sympathies’ previously expressed privately to Bis Weaver but never mouthing anything positive for her in any union arena, the branch secretary explained why the motion had been brought before the branch. The issue was serious and “affects day-to-day union activities; salaries action; city acceptance of A3 remission.” It was difficult to see how facing a Rule 8 complaint could affect the branch’s present activities and, if the Rule 8 had such an effect on the Committee, how could a motion of support improve the committee’s effectiveness, as the Rule 8 was still outstanding and would remain so for a considerable time. * This was just another attempt to mobilise the branch but neither of us gave a jot about what the branch would do or would not do. But surely, the membership could not be that dumb or partisan not to see that the branch committee’s actions for well over nine months had been to use its majority vote against Bis Weaver and anyone connected with her.

The branch Committee was covering all options to ensure the branch showed its full support for the committee because it would not accept a simple majority; the committee insisted on a majority of at least two-thirds or all its members would resign. **

Branch officers had the advantage, as they always did, as branch members fell into an easy slumber when motions affecting Bis Weaver and I were proposed. As all members were to be allowed to speak on the motion, we had decided to take full advantage of this novelty with carefully prepared contributions. This time branch officers were openly defending their own interests and they would not be able to bask so easily in their usual undoubted dominance. Appalled at the way branch officers had circulated rumours against Bis Weaver during the *Beider affair*, we had no reservations about broadcasting a few truthful examples of incidents involving branch officers. Our own offensive was launched against Cave and Hartland right inside the lion’s den, unlike Bis Weaver’s opponents who often stoked the fires against her in the corridors of the college. I decided my contributions would deal with:

* Rule 8 complaints were usually not heard for many months in line with usual union practice, according to Paul Mackney.⁶⁵

** This is from my notes of the meeting. In the branch minutes this was recorded as “a straight forward majority.”

(i) the *Beider affair*, not the one ringing through those very same corridors; and (ii) the consequences of my anti-racism letter written in early 1986. The statement put to the branch was:

1. I have heard from Birmingham Liaison Committee that the case of unfair dismissal of a part-time member of the college against management has been dropped. This doesn't surprise me because the person in question made unfounded and defamatory allegations against another member of staff, Bis Weaver. There were serious ramifications behind the motion of support for the part-timer. In fact, the Chair and one other member of the Branch Committee - Cave and Hartland, reported those defamatory statements to senior management (the Principal) without informing Bis Weaver of their intention to do so. So much for their commitment to trade union practice
2. This is not the first time that Cave has gone formally to senior management to complain about another member of staff. On the 12th March 1986, he went to the Vice Principal about my anti-racist views, which were expressed in a letter sent to NATFHE Journal, and I was called into senior management to explain them. I asked the Branch Committee to act on this serious issue in March/April 1986 and its response was to get the Branch to pass a motion enabling them to ignore all my correspondence. This ensured that no action would be taken against Cave. That is the reason why I was included in the 29th April motion.

After making the statement I added:

I will not cast a vote on this motion in continued protest at the Branch's discriminatory policies against a Black women member of the Branch, who is pursuing legitimate objectives in the union.

Cave's reaction was to say that my contribution "has nothing to do with this [motion]" and the "Beider issue has not been dropped." However, he decided not to "enter into that sort of character assassination" or "lower [himself] into that debate." This was very wise on his part since how could he deny the action he had taken on my anti-racism letter but it did seem that as far as Cave was concerned character assassination only operated one way and clandestinely. As for the Beider issue, Cave was not completely off key as an agreement had been reached but all that had come out of it was a face saving formula, which the branch secretary should know about because she was at the LEA-NATFHE meeting dealing with Beider.

One branch member, a constant dissident voice, had decided to support the motion, but disclosed that his "confidence has taken a dent of late [due to] lack of information given to the Branch on a variety of issues – Weavers', Beider [and] McKenna [and] "All [that Branch members] have to rely on is rumours with no information from the Branch Committee...[and] are asked to take decisions [based] on inaccurate information."

Bis Weaver made an entrance into the proceedings with a view of the branch, which had given her the impression that "trade union facilities are not available to Black members."

She gave two reasons why she thought this to be so, although she was in a position to provide numerous examples. She linked the underhand methods used by Cave and Hartland in the *Beider affair*, mentioned in my contribution, to show this was not the first time they had used 'smear tactics' against her. She told the assembly that

On the 25th April, three members of the Branch Committee, Cave, Gates and Hartland went to senior management to make unfounded complaints about my handling of the HMIs' visit. They did not tell me and I knew nothing about it until I was called into management and I had to fight on my own. It was not a pleasant experience [and] I had no representation from the union.

She added that

As a result of the (29th April) motion, I cannot nominate a person for a post in this union without it going to Head Office for approval first. Heather Stretton told Gordon Weaver yesterday that she had asked Head Office if she could accept my nomination of him for regional delegate. She said this in front of Ian Mallinson and Ann White. These incidents show a blatant disregard for my basic trade union rights and the way the union had treated me was appalling.

Condemning the unprincipled practices of branch officers brought little response from the assembly of members - no comments or questions coming our way. Nor did anyone from the so-called numerous people to whom Bis Weaver had allegedly made remarks about the racism of Gates, Cave and Hartland come forward to challenge her refutation of Beider's claims.

The branch secretary ignored Bis Weaver and referred to the previous speaker's comments. As consistent as ever when in front of branch officers, she threw up the barrier of casework saying it is impossible to discuss issues concerning (i) a Rule 8 against the branch committee; (ii) an Industrial Tribunal; and (iii) the LEA's enquiry.

Only one member, the Access co-ordinator, spoke of her intention not to vote for the motion. She referred to her experiences at the hands of two branch officers as unprofessional, describing the experience as "like brushing up against the law" and one that she "would not like to repeat." * The coordinator, a Black woman and a fairly recent appointment in the college, was able to see things as they were and knew how to do the right thing unlike the long standing branch members who never did. We had not known of the coordinator's experience at the hands of these two officers until then but alongside Bis Weaver and Robbo that meant three Black members of the branch had fallen foul of 'long standing anti-racists' in Bournville College.

* She was referring to Cave's and Hartland's approach to her just prior to her appearance at the Beider enquiry

One member, who alongside Gates, Cave and Hartland, had refused to co-operate with the equal opportunities policy in June 1986 asked “who are the real enemies?” and he seemed to know who they happened to be. They were “the people who are racist and anti-union,” and he advised the branch to “come together and support the Branch Committee to do a difficult job.” Bis Weaver and I, already identified as ‘enemies of the union’ in smears circulating the college and the region, could only speculate on who he meant and we concluded he meant us. But were we really racist as well as anti-union? Perhaps, in the vocabulary of this member and a few others, too, we probably fitted that description. Being in Bournville branch was an extremely valuable learning experience for those observing ‘anti-racists’. Before the vote was taken, Cave refused to discuss the *Beider affair* dismissing it as irrelevant and refuted the allegation made against any branch committee member of acting without tact * which drew the comments of “bull” from me, and “rubbish” from Bis Weaver whereupon Cave, having tried to defend Hartland and himself under the general term of branch committee members, declined to make any further comment. This was recorded in the minutes as “G Weaver interrupted the Branch Chair in an abusive manner.” Left only with the vote, the branch rallied to the cause with forty-seven in favour, three abstentions, one against and two not voting.⁶⁶

Immediately, after the branch meeting, a copy of Bis Weaver’s Rule 8 was sent to the three local union secretaries, to reveal its existence alongside mine, under the guise of asking if they had been informed by head office of this other complaint. We did not expect the branch officers to call another branch meeting asking for support but it let them know they could do what they liked because it would be met with revelations of how they actually conducted themselves.⁶⁷

The next day, a reply came from Norman Willis, who informed me that “For constitutional and practical reasons it is not normally the practice of the TUC to intervene in matters between affiliated members and their unions” but he was sending my request for TUC advice and his response to NATFHE’s general secretary.⁶⁸

To put more kindling on the brushfire that was developing, Bis Weaver also wrote to Norman Willis drawing his attention to the unconstitutional removal of her trade union rights “without proper procedures being followed” and citing the real reasons for the branch committee’s actions. It was nine months since that motion was passed and her rights “have

* recorded in the minutes as “without integrity”

still not been restored.” Furthermore, “additional conditions are being imposed on” her right to nominate candidates for union office. Pointing out that “at the time those rights were taken away...[she] was the only Black women member of the Branch.” She sought advice on “the action the TUC is prepared to take...to [restore her] rights...”⁶⁹

On the same day, the Black Workers’ Support Group wrote to Norman Willis expressing concern about a member of the group, Bismillah Weaver, “being denied full trade union rights in her NATFHE Branch at Bournville College,” and asked what the TUC is “going to do about the systematic and blatant denial of her trade union rights, at a time, when the TUC is seeking to encourage Black participation in trade union activity?”⁷⁰

NATFHE, via the TUC, should be getting the picture that whatever they were prepared to do, underhandedly or otherwise, the Weaver issue was just not going to go away and NATFHE should settle itself in for the long haul. It had the resources but did it have the competence to take on an increasingly assertive Black opposition.

¹ City cont to BW & GW 8 Jan 1987 File Y 9

² BW to BEx 9 Jan 1987 cc B/VWG File F 3

³ GW to BSec 4 Jan 1987 File M 29

⁴ BW to BSec 11 Jan 1987 File F 9

⁵ BW to PD 10 Jan 1987 Rec’d Del V 407378 File F 6 - 7

⁶ BW to PW 9 Jan 1987 File F 4 - 5

⁷ BEVN RB NC 10 Dec 1986 p 3 File S 29 - 34

⁸ GW to RDty 9 Jan 1987 File M 31

⁹ T/p conv RDty & GW 15 Jan 1987 File M 34

¹⁰ GW to RDty 15 Jan 1987 File M 37

¹¹ GW to BEx/BCtte 10 Jan 1987 File M 32 - 33

¹² GW to KS 13 Jan 1987 File M 35

¹³ BW to CD 10 Jan 1987 File F 8

¹⁴ CD to BW 12 Jan 1987 File F 11 - 16

¹⁵ BW to CD 13 Jan 1987 File F 17 - 19

¹⁶ CD to BW 16 Jan 1987 File F 20 - 21

¹⁷ B/V BrMtg Agenda 14 Jan 1987 File R 45

¹⁸ BW to BSec 20 Jan 1987 File F 22

¹⁹ HB Application Form

²⁰ BEVN RB NC 10 Dec 1986 p 3 File S 29 - 34

²¹ Notes & Mins, BrMtg 21 Jan 1987 File R 47 - 49

²² Notes & Mins, BrMtg 4 Mar 1987 File R 57 & 70/1

²³ Mgt to DG, NC, BH, DH 9 Jul 1986 File D 50

²⁴ T/p conv KS & JF 11 Jan 1987; T/p conv KS & GW 12 Jan 1987 File Z 22

²⁵ T/p conv KS & GW 12 Jan 1987 File Z 22

²⁶ T/p conv JF & GW 19 Jan 1987 File U 23

²⁷ Mins REC Mtg 21 Jan 1987 File X 65

²⁸ Notes B/VWG Mtg 22 Jan 1986 File Z 24 - 26; BW to B/VWG 22 Jan 1987 File F 23

²⁹ Notes BW & UoW Mtg 22 Jan 1987 File Y 9

³⁰ JF to BW/GW 19 Jan 1987 File U 26 - 27

³¹ BW to JF 22 Jan 1987 File U 24 - 25

³² GW to JF 22 Jan 1987 File U 30 - 31

³³ GW to JF 23 Jan 1987 File U 32

³⁴ T/p conv KS & GW 24 Jan 1987 File Y 9

³⁵ Fromm E [1955] *Fear of Freedom*, Routledge, Kegan & Paul, London

³⁶ BW/GW to KS 24 Jan 1987 File U 33 - 35

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- ³⁷ T/p conv KS & GW 24 Jan 1987 File Y 9
³⁸ WMARC Mins 18 Jun 1986 item 4.1 File U 3 – 5
³⁹ WMARC Mins 9 Jul 1986 item 3 & 5 File U 15 – 16
⁴⁰ WMARC Mins & notes 18 June & 9 Jul 1986 File Z 8; File U 3 – 5 & 15 - 16
⁴¹ WMARC Mins 9 Jul 1986 Item 5 File U 15 - 16
⁴² WMARC Mins & Notes 29 Oct 1986 File Z 15 & File U 19 - 20
⁴³ Report on WMARC by J Frew 21 Jan 1987 File U 28 - 29
⁴⁴ KS to DE 29 Jan 1987 ccs BLG, ARNSP File F 29 - 30
⁴⁵ GW to KS 2 Feb 1987 File U 38 - 40
⁴⁶ JF to BW and JF to GW 2 Feb 1987 File U 36 - 37
⁴⁷ DE to KS 3 Feb 1987 File U 44
⁴⁸ Mtg AR, BW & GW 27 Jan 1987
⁴⁹ Conv LEA Off & BW/GW 8 Jan 1987 File Y 9
⁵⁰ LEA to BW 29 Jan 1987 File N 38
⁵¹ GW to AR 11 Feb 1987 File F 38
⁵² Notes Mtg LEA & BW 3 Feb 1987 File P 65 - 66
⁵³ Orwell G, Animal Farm, London 1989 p95
⁵⁴ BW to GH 4 Feb 1987 File N 39
⁵⁵ BCFE Memo 19 Dec 1986; Contact to BW 6 Feb 1987 File Y 10
⁵⁶ Conv BR & GW 21, 27 & 28 Jan & 16 Feb 1987 File Z 27
⁵⁷ GW notes of Principal's Mtg, 29 Sep 1987 File W 43 (the rest of the verbatim minutes (5 pages) are in the author's possession); PMT - staff mtg 6 Jul 1988 GW Notes File W 44
⁵⁸ GW to BSec, BCh, Reg Sec, BhLC Sec 22 Jan 1987 File M 38
⁵⁹ GW to NmW 25 Jan 1987 File M 39
⁶⁰ Conv GW & HS 3 Feb 1987 File Y 10; GW to BSec 3 Feb 1987 File M 40
⁶¹ BW to BSec/BCtte 3 Feb 1987 File F 32
⁶² Note, BW to BLPBS 3 Feb 1987 File F 33
⁶³ GW to PD 27 Dec 1986 File M 27 – 28
⁶⁴ GW to BSec/BCtte 12 Feb 1987 File M 42 - 43
⁶⁵ PMc to Reg Sec 8 Apr 1986 BW IT Bundle 55
⁶⁶ Notes and Mins of Br Mtg, 5 Feb 1987 File R 51 – 56; GW to BSec/BCtte 13 Apr 1987 File M 51
⁶⁷ BW to BSec, Reg Sec, BhLC Sec 5 Feb 1987 File F 34
⁶⁸ NmW to GW 5 Feb 1987 File M 41
⁶⁹ BW to NmW 8 Feb 1987 File F 35 - 36
⁷⁰ BWSG to NmW 8 Feb 1987 File F 37