



DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

ELIZABETH HOUSE, YORK ROAD, LONDON SE1 7PH

TELEPHONE 01-928 9222

FROM THE SECRETARY OF STATE's Office

16 February 1982

C Whitmore Esq
10 Downing Street
London SW1

Dear Clive,

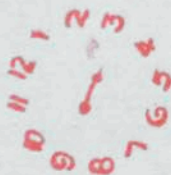
You drew my attention last week to an article in The Sun of 8 February about the use of leaked Cabinet Committee minutes on a trade union course at the Northern College.

... I now attach a note for the Prime Minister on the particular course, the Northern College and the arrangements for funding and inspection of trade union studies generally.

Yours sincerely
Imogen Wilde

MRS I WILDE
Private Secretary

146 FEB 1982



TRADE UNION COURSE AT NORTHERN COLLEGE: ARTICLE IN "THE SUN", 8 FEBRUARY 1982

The Sun article claimed that copies of stolen Cabinet minutes were used as course material on a trade union course for shop stewards at Northern College near Barnsley recently.

2 Enquiries have been made of the College Principal by HM Inspectorate. The Principal said that he had not seen the document but thought it might be a facsimile of a reproduction of the Cabinet minutes which he understood had appeared in the local NUM paper "Yorkshire Miner" about a year ago. It had attracted attention in the area at the time and might have been brought into the College by NUM students. He did not deny that it might have been used as course material. He did not offer to have it withdrawn from use.

3 The course in question is a four-week advanced course in European trade union studies funded partly by the TUC from its own resources and partly by the EEC. It is attended by voluntary and full-time trade union representatives. The course is not one of those funded through the DES/DE grant to the TUC for trade union studies (see paragraphs 7-8 below) though it is assisted from public funds in that the cost of the tutor is met from the DES grant to the College (see paragraph 4 below).

Northern College

4 Northern College is one of six long term residential colleges of adult education (LTRCs) in England, of which Ruskin College is probably the best known. They form a small but important element in the adult education sector specialising in "second chance" opportunities for extended and concentrated study in areas of general, non-vocational education. The College was established at Wentworth Castle near Barnsley in 1978 and is funded by a consortium of South Yorkshire local education authorities. It receives a grant from DES; for 1981/82 this is £45,000. Some students hold DES bursaries but none on the TU course concerned.

5 The College has not enjoyed an easy infancy. Local Chambers of Commerce attacked its establishment on the grounds that there had been inadequate consultation of local industry and that it was likely to encourage disruptive

elements. Last year a newly-arrived student complained to Barnsley Education Authority, with a copy to Dr Boyson, of an extreme left-wing atmosphere at the College which she found disagreeable and intolerant. Mr Roy Mason MP also wrote to the Secretary of State. The Sunday Express carried an account of what seemed to be politically bullying behaviour on the part of some fellow-students.

6 Apart from routine visits by the General Inspector assigned to the College, a joint visit was made by four HMI in November 1979. In general, it was found that the course had been designed with care, but the selection of reading material caused unease in view of a lack of objectivity. HM Inspectors plan to carry out a full inspection in the week beginning 17 May: the balance of course content will be one of the aspects to be studied.

Trade Union Courses

7 Since 1976 DES and DE have paid grant aid in equal share for programmes of trade union education and training run by the TUC and non-affiliated trade unions. In the current financial year the total grant aid from the two Departments is £1.92 million. After reviewing the usefulness of this support particularly with regard to industrial relations, the two Secretaries of State have recently agreed after consulting the Chief Secretary to the Treasury that grant at a reduced level (£1.6 million) should be made available for 1982/83. The TUC's bid was for a substantially higher figure.

8 The grant aid is subject to conditions. These recognise courses provided for work place representatives and others such as health and safety representatives in:

- / a the principles of trade unionism;
- b activities concerning the role of trade union members and trade union representatives in industrial relations, including negotiations and consultations; in health, safety and welfare; in the work of union branches and union organisations related to such activities; and in the work of statutory bodies.

Salaried employees of the TUC and unions are specifically excluded.

9 HM Inspectorate is represented on a TUC group which advises on course content. Courses are subject to inspection. The Secretary of State is anxious that the courses supported should reflect current economic realities and this is being pursued with the TUC in the context of the 1982/83 grant; the first reactions from the TUC are encouraging.

May 1 see
the last 3
inspected results.
M



MP

File A14

Tolson

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Principal Private Secretary

17 February 1982

Dear Imogen,

Thank you for your letter of 16 February 1982 with which you sent me a note on the trade union course at Northern College which was the subject of an article in "The Sun" of 8 February.

X/ I have shown the note to the Prime Minister and she would like to see the last three Inspectors' reports on trade union courses.

Yours sincerely,

Shirley Williams.

Mrs Imogen Wilde,
Department of Education and Science.

AK

cc Sir Robert Armstrong
Mr Ingham

MR WHITMORE

My minute earlier today about Roger Carroll and the Sun's copy of the Minutes of E(79)13.

2. I have now spoken to Mr Carroll who was much less forthcoming to me than to the Secretary of State. He said that the document was being used at a trade union training course, which he did not identify. College officials claimed it was being used without their knowledge and Mr Carroll seemed to be concluding that it was being used, perhaps, by one instructor. The document came into the possession of the 'Sun' from a "horrificed" shop steward who had been on the course.

3. Mr Carroll wanted to know the outcome of the leak inquiry the Prime Minister had referred to in an Answer on 6 December, 1979. I told him I didn't know (but am sorting out a line with David Wright if one turns out to be available).



NEVILLE GAFFIN

5 February, 1982.

Minute Minutes

2

This is horrific. It may be when we see the minutes (which are over two years old) in their published form in the Sun that we shall have some clue about their origin, but I doubt it. cc Sir Robert Armstrong
Mr Ingham
MR WHITMORE I find what is said about the financing of the T&G union amazing and I will prove this false on Monday. *The course will be financed through DES*

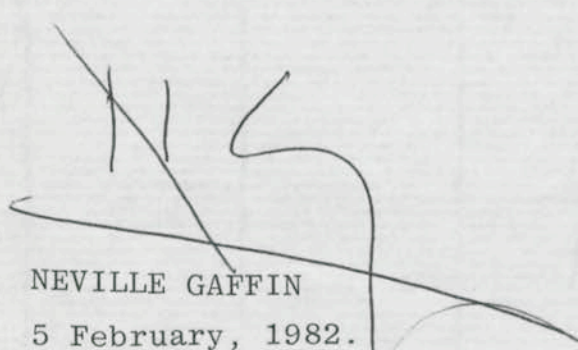
The Secretary of State for Industry has just telephoned me to say that at a lunch today with Roger Carroll, of the 'Sun', Mr Carroll produced a photostat copy of the Minutes of E(79)13 which discussed the civil nuclear power programme. *mb*

x) 2. Mr Carroll explained that the document - which the Secretary of State thinks was partly leaked to 'Time Out' magazine - is now used as teaching material by the Transport and General Workers Union on their "long course" (which is open only to members who are "very far to the left"). The course is funded partly by the taxpayer and partly by the EC. But according to Mr Carroll although EC items appear on the syllabus there is no teaching on these subjects.

3. The key sentence in the Minutes on which the T&G focusses attention is one which suggests that the development within the UK of civil nuclear power would weaken the coalminers.

4. According to Carroll, in answer to a question, his editor was planning to publish next Monday or Tuesday and had probably already been in touch with Special Branch.

5. The Secretary of State wondered whether there was any room for legal action to prevent publication. I doubted it.


NEVILLE GAFFIN

5 February, 1982.