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Chelsea College

University of London
Department of Nursing Studies

Nursing Education Research Unit
Director: The Baroness Cox

Manresa Road, London SW3 6LX
01-351 2488 Ex 2595/2372

CC NAT HEALTH:
NURSES PAY: P2

16th March 1983.

Dear Pamie Minister,

First, I would like to thank you very much for inviting me to lunch last Sunday and for giving me the opportunity to participate in the discussion on various aspects of education.

I still feel very concerned about the situation at the Polytechnic of North London. I hope that the measures being proposed will prove effective. The subversion is so insidious, the staff are so entrenched and the supporting networks are so mutually reinforcing that it will require very thorough, skilful and persistent investigation and follow-through to achieve a solution. On the question of student union activity: I must repeat the point I made on Sunday - that the legislation already introduced is having NO effect on colleges like the Polytechnic of North London, nor will it ever do so while bodies like the ILEA have the power to allocate the grant given to Student Unions. At the Polytechnic of North London the Student Union is as well financed as ever, with most of the £180,000 of public money being spent on six full-time Union Officers - typically revolutionary socialists - and their political activities. I would like to repeat the view, held by all the members of the Centre for Policy Studies Education Study Group, that voluntary membership (with a proportion of money earmarked for student facilities) will be the only effective means of destroying this closed shop in places where it is doing most damage. We could provide more information on this if it would be helpful, including details of the continuing disruption at the Polytechnic of North London.

The Report of the National Council for Educational Standards research project on examination results should be ready for publication within the next few weeks. We hope that it will provide powerful ammunition for debate on such matters as educational standards, diversity of schooling, freedom of choice, expenditure and pupil/teacher ratios.

/Contd.....

Finally, you asked me to let you have a note on the proposed Review
Body for Nursing and Midwifery Staff. I attach this on a separate sheet.

Thank you again,

Yours sincerely,

Cassie Co.

The Prime Minister,
10 Downing Street
London S W 1

CONFIDENTIAL COMMENTS

ON

CONSULTATION DOCUMENT: REVIEW BODY FOR NURSING AND MIDWIFERY STAFF.

1. At present, the morale for nurses and midwives is generally very low. Many bore the brunt of trying to maintain essential services for patients during recent months when other health care staff were on strike. They are also having to adjust to yet another reorganization. And salary levels for well qualified and highly experienced staff, including those with demanding clinical responsibilities, are still low in absolute and relative terms.
2. They were pinning their hopes on the establishment of the Review Body which, it has been suggested, would be comparable to that which was set up to determine doctors' and dentists' pay. They hoped that it would recognise as a special position their principled refusal to take industrial action and that it would take fully into account their professional qualifications and responsibilities.
3. The Consultation Document which has recently been released is a bitter disappointment. The main source of anger is the inclusion of unqualified staff: auxiliaries and assistants. In this it is fundamentally different from the doctors' and dentists' Review Body. The reasons for dismay include the following:
 - a) The overriding concern of the profession is the provision of the highest possible standards of nursing and midwifery care. Currently, much thought is being given within the profession to ways in which promotion and remuneration should be based on the principle of accreditation. In other words, increased remuneration will be given only when it is merited in terms of qualifications and experience. The whole emphasis is on providing the best possible professional service to patients and to the community.
 - b) The government's proposal that the Review Body's remit will include staff who have no formal qualifications undermines and detracts from this basic principle. While no one would belittle the value of the contribution made by auxiliaries and assistants, it must be recognised that they do not form a part of the professional nursing team in terms of qualifications and responsibilities. To include these staff in the same Review Body would inevitably confuse and dilute discussion of the position of qualified nurses and midwives.
 - c) It is deeply regretted that the government did not present the possibility of inclusion of unqualified staff as an option for discussion. To have distributed the Consultation Paper with terms of reference which explicitly incorporates them is very unfortunate. The unqualified staff tend to be members of the large public service trade unions and many people feel bitter about the fact that they have tried to bask in the reflected glory of the professional nurses' moral stance. For example, the offer by militant trade unionists "to go to prison for the nurses" during the recent industrial disputes infuriated many nurses who were striving to maintain essential services to patients in conditions which were made extremely difficult by those very same people.

- d) If the proposed Review Body does include unqualified staff in its terms of reference, this will be seen as a betrayal by government of its commitment to give nurses and midwives their own Review Body. And it certainly does not meet the condition that it "should follow the same general pattern as the Doctors' and Dentists' Review Body"- one can hardly imagine that Body including other unqualified health care workers in its remit!
4. Therefore, I suggest that the government has a moral obligation to set up a Review Body on the terms as they were originally understood by the profession, and in a way which is consistent with its own promise of comparability with that established for Doctors and Dentists. If it does this, it will hearten and reassure a large group of dedicated and principled people who deserve no less. If it fails them in this, it will bring further demoralisation to an already hard-pressed profession, which has set an example to the nation in its principled refusal to take industrial actions which would harm those who are vulnerable.
5. In political terms, the significance of the nursing and midwifery profession should not be underestimated: it includes nearly half a million people, and has the affection and support of the general public. A mark of government appreciation would be very popular; a policy which hurts the nurses and causes them to attack the government would be gratuitously self-damaging.

Therefore, in summary, this note pleads for the establishment of a Review Body for Nurses and Midwives which is concerned with QUALIFIED staff and those IN TRAINING FOR A STATUTORY QUALIFICATION. It should NOT include unqualified staff such as auxiliaries and assistants.

(N.B. I do not feel that it is ideal that the Review Body for Nurses and Midwives should also deal with other professions related to medicine, such as Physiotherapy or Occupational Therapy, as is currently proposed. However, this is a less serious matter than the problem of unqualified staff. Also, I think that it is worth emphasising at this stage that it would be most unfortunate if the Review Body were to contain a member of the medical profession - for obvious historical and professional reasons).

CAROLINE COX
DIRECTOR
NURSING EDUCATION RESEARCH UNIT
CHELSEA COLLEGE
UNIVERSITY OF LONDON.



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

17 March, 1983

CC NAT HEALTH:
Nurses Pay: P12

I enclose a copy of a letter the Prime Minister has received from Baroness Cox, Director of the Nursing Education Research Unit of Chelsea College.

I should be grateful if you could let me have a draft reply for the Prime Minister's signature to reach me here by Monday, 28 March.

(Timothy Flesher)

S. Williams, Esq.,
Department of Education and Science



DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

ELIZABETH HOUSE, YORK ROAD, LONDON SE1 7PH

TELEPHONE 01-928 9222

FROM THE SECRETARY OF STATE

CC NAT HEALTH:
Nurses Pay: Pg 2

Timothy Flesher Esq
Private Secretary
10 Downing Street
London SW1

28 March 1983

Dear Tim,

Thank you for your letter of 17 March, enclosing this one to the Prime Minister from Baroness Cox.

Baroness Cox's letter covered three matters: the funding and activities of students' unions, examination results, and the proposed Review Body for Nursing and Midwifery Staff. I attach a draft reply covering the first two; the last matter is for DHSS and I agreed with your correspondence section that they should submit their part of the draft reply direct to you in order to prevent delay.

Yours ever
Stephen.

STEPHEN WILLIAMS
Private Secretary

Thank you for your letter of 16 March.

I share your concern about the situation at the Polytechnic of North London; so does Keith Joseph as you know. He has made his view plain to the CNAA (to whom Miss Jeffery addressed her complaint); they intend to mount an enquiry.

On the question of student unions, I agree that we have seen recently a number of disturbing examples of political activity. However, I am afraid that student unions cannot accurately be described, in the normal sense of the term, as closed shops. They are integral parts of their parent institutions and their constitutional position is defined in Articles of Government - or of Association in the case of London polytechnics - and the rules made under them. Under these Articles the ILEA cannot be prevented from earmarking sums in aid of union functions and Keith has very little power to intervene. Indeed his predecessor's announcement of the new funding system (which did not incidentally require legislation) acknowledged that it could be appropriate for local authorities to be concerned in the question of allocation. He is, however, currently considering whether it is open to him to write to the authorities of the Polytechnic of North London pointing out that, although they do not control the funding of their students' union, they have a responsibility under the Articles of Association to ensure that the monies made available to it are spent in ways consistent with its charitable status.

The use made by students' unions, however, of the public funds allocated to them has been the subject of a number of complaints, all of which are carefully investigated. Keith is in fact currently pursuing a complaint by the Federation of Conservative Students about the activities of the students' union at Bradford University which could give rise to further advice being given to institutions generally on the conflict between certain activities of students' unions and their charitable status. Not all unions have such status, although those of the London Polytechnics do. I realise that some of the public money made available goes on sabbatical officers with the

consequences in many cases which you describe. I know that Keith
is considering the options.

I am glad to be kept in touch with the progress of the NCEA's research
on examination results. I know that Keith Joseph and Rhodes Boyson
look forward to seeing what the Council's report has to say.

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Leisure Project:
Thea Cox BSc (Econ) MA
01 351 2488 Ex 2594/2595

Research Fellow responsible for the
Midwifery Project:
Sarah Robinson BSc
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Research Fellow responsible for the
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