

32/24

SECRET

89

MT

Confidential filing.

The election of officials in the Civil and Public Services Association (C.P.S.A).

CIVIL SERVICE.

S
3003

November 1987.

Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date
13.11.87							
23.11.87							
7.7.86							

Maintained by
office historian
DO NOT DESTROY

PREM 19/2598

SECRET



Lu RB

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Principal Private Secretary

SIR ROBERT ARMSTRONG

The Prime Minister has seen your Secret and Personal minute (Ref: A086/1962).

The Prime Minister has read this carefully, but has not at this stage offered any comment. She awaits your further advice.

N. L. WICKS

7 July 1986

SECRET

W

E.R.

(F)

RU. Nonfront 7/7.
G...
JCN

N.L.W.

PRIME MINISTER

Sir Robert Armstrong's minute below does not ^{7.7} require decisions at this stage. But no doubt he would welcome any "first thoughts" from you on the way forward. The decision on when to act against Mr. Macreadie is balanced. Early action risks stimulating more support for him, e.g. in a re-ballot. But in my view, the danger of having an avowed militant supporter in charge of the major Civil Service union argues in favour of action earlier rather than later. The principle needs to be established - subversives (if it can be proved that Mr. Macreadie is a subversive) cannot be tolerated in such jobs.

N.L.W.

ms

N. L. Wicks

4 July 1986

Ref. A086/1962

MR WICKS

This is a preliminary note on the problem created for the Government by the election of Mr John Macreadie as General Secretary of the Civil and Public Services Association (CPSA) in succession to Mr Alistair Graham.

2. Mr Macreadie was elected on a wafer-thin majority - just over 100 - in a total poll of over 60,000 votes cast.

3. Mr Macreadie is an avowed supporter of Militant Tendency (MT).

4. There are moves afoot in the CPSA to challenge, and to try to reverse this election, and secure the election of Mr John Ellis, a more moderate candidate who had been generally expected to win. There is at present, however, a great deal of confusion in the CPSA as to what is to be done. There is a procedure for lodging complaints about the conduct of elections in individual branches. Such complaints are considered by a Returning Officer, who has to advise the Executive as to what action is appropriate to take. The action could vary from endorsing the result of an election in a particular branch, recommending a re-run of an election in a particular branch, recommending an inquiry into the conduct of the election in a number of branches or recommending a re-run of the whole election. But I am advised that there is unlikely to be any outcome from this process within a period of less than two months and it could take considerably longer; and it is not possible to prevent Mr Macreadie from taking up office as General Secretary on 14 July. We therefore face the prospect of a period of some

months at least during which Mr Macreadie is in office, and is in a position to pursue the aims of MT within the CPSA from that vantage point.

5. There is an established procedure whereby the "responsible Minister" may issue a notice of refusal to negotiate with or of denial of access to a secret establishment to a union official who:

a. is, or has recently been, a member of a communist or fascist organisation, or of a subversive group, acknowledged as such by the Minister, whose aims are to undermine or overthrow Parliamentary democracy in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland by political, industrial or violent means;

b. is, or has recently been, sympathetic to or associated with members or sympathisers of such organisations or groups, in such a way as to raise reasonable doubts about his reliability;

c. is susceptible to pressure from such organisations or groups.

A union official in respect of whom such a notice is issued has right of appeal to the "Three Advisers" who deal with refusal of positive vetting; these Advisers are The Rt Hon Sir Anthony Lloyd, The Rt Hon Sir Patrick Nairn and Mr Edward Hewlett.

6. In order to issue a notice of refusal to negotiate or denial of access to Mr Macreadie we should have to be in a position to satisfy the Three Advisers that MT is a subversive group within the meaning of the definition, and that Mr Macreadie is, or has recently been, a member, or sympathiser, or associated with the group. I do not think that there should

be any real problem about that but we are putting together the evidence so that it can be assessed by the lawyers.

7. We should then have to decide whether to proceed against Mr Macreadie, when to do so and how.

8. As to whether we should proceed against Mr Macreadie, I think the case for doing so is likely to be strong, provided that we are satisfied that we can make the charge stick. He is known to be an avowed supporter, or at least sympathiser with MT. At a time when the Labour Party is acting to expel supporters of MT from the Labour Party, it could be difficult for the Government to decide not to use the powers it has to declare a member of the MT persona non grata as a Civil Service union official.

9. As to when to proceed against Mr Macreadie, if it is decided to do so, the choice lies between acting quickly, as soon as he takes up office, and waiting until the CPSA's internal proceedings and actions are complete. To act before the CPSA's internal proceedings are complete would run the risk of appearing to interfere within the internal affairs of the union and could give Mr Macreadie an opportunity of saying that the Government was acting unreasonably and overbearingly on the union. On the other hand to wait until the CPSA's procedures were complete could mean quite a long delay, at the end of which it might be more difficult to sustain the charge that he was unacceptable as a partner in negotiations.

10. As to how to proceed against Mr Macreadie, the question is which Minister or Ministers should issue notices. There would certainly be no difficulty about issuing such notices in respect of the Ministry of Defence and Home Office. But it is doubtful whether that would go far enough. The object of the exercise would be to exclude Mr Macreadie from central negotiations as well as departmental negotiations. That could require notices

to be issued by the Prime Minister, as Minister for the Civil Service, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer; or perhaps by the Prime Minister for the Government as a whole.

11. I hope to be able to offer further advice very shortly. In the meantime, if the Prime Minister is asked questions, I suggest that she should say that she understands that the situation created by Mr Macreadie's election is under consideration in the CPSA, to whom this is a problem in the first instance, that the Government is keeping the position under review and considering the situation that would arise if Mr Macreadie's election was confirmed.

RAA

ROBERT ARMSTRONG

4 July 1986

MR. VEREKER

CA Service
c.c. Mr. Ingham
Sir Henry Boyne
(Central Office)

CPSA ELECTIONS

The Prime Minister has noted, without comment, your minute of 13 November on this subject.

M. C. SCHOLAR

23 November 1981

Prime Minister

2

Mus 13/11

PRIME MINISTER

cc:- Mr Ingham
Mr Scholar
Sir Henry Boyne (Central Office)

CPSA Elections

You asked me this morning to check the background to the story in today's papers about the prospects of Macreadie being elected.

I have checked with the CSD/Treasury. The position is that ballot papers are now being returned for the election for CPSA General Secretary and Treasurer. The current General Secretary, Ken Thomas, retires in the early part of next year. There are three candidates: Branstatter, Graham (currently a Deputy General Secretary) and Macreadie (who originates in the CAA). Voting will be concluded on 20 November, and the result will be known shortly thereafter.

Kate Losinska, as a full-time paid official, is not up for election: she is appointed by the National Conference.

I am sure we must be very careful indeed about being seen, however indirectly, to influence the voting. Any perception of Government involvement would carry a high risk of encouraging CPSA members to vote for Macreadie simply to express disapproval of the Government.

13 November, 1981



IT8.7/2-1993
2009:02

Image
Access

IT-8 Target

Printed on Kodak Professional Paper

Charge: R090212