



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

15 October 1979

Dear Ian,

Report of Inquiry into certain Trade Union  
Recruitment Activities

The Prime Minister was grateful for your Secretary of State's minute of 12 October with which he enclosed Mr. Andrew Leggatt's Report of Inquiry and a draft press notice which Mr. Prior would like to issue when the Report is published on Wednesday.

The Prime Minister's view is that the Report is so decisive in its condemnation of SLADE's recruitment methods that it is essential that action is taken to provide protection against any recurrence. She has suggested that the third paragraph of the draft press notice be changed as follows:

"In the light of Mr. Leggatt's findings I am now considering what further action is needed to afford protection against any recurrence. I hope that the Report will be widely read and discussed. Informed public opinion is enormously important in checking behaviour of this kind."

I am sending copies of this letter to the Private Secretaries to members of the Cabinet and to Martin Vile (Cabinet Office).

Ian Fair, Esq.,  
Department of Employment.

Tim Labour

TTCR 003

CONFIDENTIAL

cc Mr James  
Mr Lupton  
Mr Hodgson

Prime Minister

The report is a damning indictment of SLADE's methods.

PRIME MINISTER

REPORT OF INQUIRY INTO CERTAIN TRADE UNION RECRUITMENT ACTIVITIES

Suggest changes to para 5.  
The rank is a decision we must take when you

Are you content with the Draft press notice and how the report be published in newspapers?

I have received the report of Mr Andrew Leggatt QC who was appointed on 7 June to inquire into "recent industrial relations developments, including in particular union recruitment activities, in the artwork, advertising and associated industries". Arrangements have been made to publish the report on Wednesday 17 October. TL 12/10

The report is factual and contains no recommendations, but it clearly confirms and reinforces the criticisms that have been directed at the recruitment tactics of SLADE (the Society of Lithographic Artists, Designers, Engravers and Process Workers) in Parliament and the media over the last two or three years. It is likely to attract considerable attention.

I enclose an advance copy of the report and of the press statement I propose to make on the day of publication, indicating that we are considering what action may be needed in the light of Mr Leggatt's findings. I think it important that colleagues who may be asked for their views should not go beyond that general line for the time being.

I am about to circulate a paper for Cabinet dealing with matters outstanding from E Committee's discussion of my proposals for legislation on picketing, the closed shop, and union ballots; and I shall be covering the Leggatt Report in a preliminary way in that paper.

I am sending copies of this minute and enclosures to Cabinet colleagues and to Sir John Hunt.

*Law Fair*

J.P.  
12 October 1979

(Approved by the Secretary of State for Employment and signed in his absence)



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LEGGATT REPORT

DRAFT PRESS NOTICE

1. Mr Andrew Leggatt QC was appointed on 7 June 1979 by the Secretary of State for Employment to inquire into "recent industrial relations developments, including in particular union recruitment activities, in the art work, advertising and associated industries, and to report". Mr Leggatt has now submitted his report, which is published today (Cmmd ).

2. Commenting on the report, Mr Prior said:

"The evidence in this report fully justifies the criticisms that led to the setting up of this Inquiry. The report documents the bullying tactics adopted by SLADE and their total disregard for the clearly expressed wishes of those whom they sought to recruit.

I believe that the use of methods such as these to boost union membership, which are so much in conflict with the voluntary tradition and foundation of trade unionism, will be deplored by responsible trade unionists. I note that those directly concerned were not willing to defend their conduct before this independent inquiry.

*Put this sentence in*  
3. I hope that the report will be widely read and discussed. Informed public opinion is enormously important in checking behaviour of this kind. (I am now considering) in the light of Mr Leggatt's findings whether further action <sup>is</sup> ~~may~~ be needed to afford protection against any recurrence".

4. A summary of the main findings of the inquiry is attached.

*Original that page 3 be revised or withdrawn*

REPORT OF INQUIRY INTO CERTAIN TRADE UNION RECRUITMENT ACTIVITIES

1 Mr Andrew Leggatt QC was appointed on 7 June 1979 "to inquire to recent industrial relations development, including in particular union recruitment activities, in the artwork, advertising and associated industries; and to report."

2 The inquiry found that between 1975 and 1978 the National Graphical Association (NGA) and the Society of Lithographic Artists, Designers, Engravers and Process Workers (SLADE) undertook a recruitment campaign within the artwork and advertising industry, which had hitherto employed mainly non-union labour. Although both unions relied on "blacking" or threatening to black non-union sources, the NGA was generally selective and sought mainly to protect its traditional areas of recruitment. SLADE on the other hand recruited indiscriminately, and by its uncompromising tactics was often able to impose a closed shop on companies where not only the employer but all the employees were opposed to it.

3 The report says that SLADE's main purpose was to increase its membership. In addition to recruiting in art studios, photographic laboratories and advertising agencies, SLADE's campaign was also directed at freelancers. The intention was to maintain its own standing and influence as a union, which were threatened by the application of new technology.

4 The report gives a number of detailed case histories based on evidence given to the inquiry. In a typical case, SLADE officials tried to persuade the employees of a company to join. When this failed, sometimes after a secret ballot overwhelmingly rejecting

union membership, the union would approach management. The threat of blacking would be made at this stage if it had not been made earlier. Management would then be faced with the choice of either conceding the union's demands or having the companies' work blacked at printing houses. Some gave in immediately; others held out until blacking seriously affected their business. In a few cases, the company only found out that SLADE was seeking to recruit its employees when its work was blacked. Mr Leggatt comments that this form of duress was likely to succeed since almost all the work of those concerned had to go through printing houses and competitors were always available to carry out work which was blacked.

5 The report finds that the recruitment campaign was conducted "without any regard whatever to the feelings, interests or welfare of the respective recruits." It comments that SLADE officials were mainly ignorant of the kind of work done by their new members and that many of those recruited were unsuitable for membership and unlikely to benefit from it. The report is particularly critical of the way in which freelance artists were recruited.

6 The report concludes that on the whole the unions' recruitment tactics were within the law, but questions whether they could be regarded as good trade union practice. The report notes that SLADE now finds itself with many members who are opposed to its policies, as well as having provoked widespread criticism. Mr Leggatt comments in conclusion that since the print unions preferred not to give evidence to the inquiry, "it is impossible to gauge whether they have learned from their recruitment activities that meaningful co-operation cannot be procured by force."