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Civil
Service

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19 August 1981

This is just to thank you for sending the Prime Minister a copy of your circular letter on the formation of the MOD Staff Association. I am sure she will be interested to see this.

WR

G. H. Lawton, Esq.

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FROM G.H. LAWTON, Hon. Secretary the MOD STAFF ASSOCIATION

7 Cedar Court,
Sheen Lane,
East Sheen,
London SW14 8LY
Telephone 01-876-3794

R 19/8

16 August 1981

Dear Prime Minister,

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE: FORMATION OF THE MOD STAFF ASSOCIATION

1. I am writing to inform you that a group of us, loyal to the Crown and recognising the need for a strong and efficient defence capability which can only be achieved by the closest co-operation between the Serviceman and MOD civilian staff who provide his immediate support, have set up the MOD Staff Association. I enclose a copy of the letter addressed to all non industrial staff currently being circulated to MOD offices and establishments around the world which explains the aims of the Association and the reasons for setting it up.
2. The success of this venture, which seeks to bring about a much more united and dedicated Defence Service, depends very much on the willingness of the Government to respond constructively to a new initiative which can benefit all concerned; the Nation, the Services and MOD Civilian employees. Answers to letters to Members of Parliament from constituents working in the MOD have revealed in several cases an ignorance of the duties carried out by civilian staff. A common reply states in positive terms that civilians should not be paid as much as Servicemen because they were never in danger and only worked from nine to five. We are not seeking parity with Servicemen but the fact of the matter is that civilians provide the first line support for the Navy which includes service at sea in a prime target vessel, the Royal Fleet Auxiliary, and serve wherever the Navy serves. Civilians in the RAF serve on air stations and may fly, although not normally in combat roles. There is less operational activity for civilians in the Army Department but even there they carry out base support roles wherever the Army serves. Neither is it true to say that civilians only work normal office hours. We are paid for a specific number of hours work a week (this varies slightly depending on where you are and what you are doing) but civilian staff provide a twenty four hour service for every day of the year as necessary and, in operational support departments can be called out at any time and sent anywhere at short notice. Some can be put into uniform at the equivalent military rank; this happened frequently in the last war whilst the last occasion in peace time occurred to 'naval' civilians during the Aden crisis. The Service and Civilian elements of the MOD are totally interdependent and there is a need for this to be recognised.
3. The vast majority of MOD civilians are loyal to the Crown and abhor strike action. However, there is a deep resentment at the way both the Government and the Unions have handled the recent pay dispute. Our canvasses show that there is widespread interest in the proposals put forward in the attached letter but everyone is insistent that whatever pay structure is finally agreed and accepted, it is backed by STATUTORY safeguards which any Government will find it difficult to break. The record of successive Governments over the last twenty years in setting aside or breaking pay agreements with its employees has caused even the most dedicated Public Servant to place no trust whatever in the words of politicians whatever their political colour.
4. The aims of the Association provide a new initiative which seeks to bring an end to industrial relations problems in the MOD. I hope we may be able to count on your support for a constructive response from the Government which recognises that the Service and Civilian wings of the Ministry are part of the same team.

Yours sincerely,

G.H. Lawton

Hon Treasurer
MOD Staff Association
Room
St Giles Court
London WC2
01-632 7806

Hon Secretary
MOD Staff Association
Room 419
Empress State Building
London SW6 1TR
01-385 1244 Ext 2685

August 1981

TO: ALL NON-INDUSTRIAL CIVIL SERVANTS IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

Dear Colleague,

THE FORMATION OF THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE STAFF ASSOCIATION

1. This letter proposes the setting up of a Ministry of Defence Staff Association with the purpose of looking after the interests of ALL non-industrial staff in the Ministry more EFFECTIVELY and for LOWER SUBSCRIPTIONS than the current Civil Service Unions.

WHAT IS WRONG WITH THE CURRENT CIVIL SERVICE UNIONS?

2. The Ministry of Defence is an organisation with responsibilities and problems found in no other part of the Civil Service. The security of the United Kingdom rests upon it. Its effectiveness depends upon the closest co-operation and mutual trust between the Serviceman and the Civilian who provides his support and upon whom his life may depend. The MOD is unique and needs a system of dealing with industrial relations problems adapted to its special circumstances.

3. The current Civil Service Unions are not geared to cope with exceptions. Whilst the MOD Sections in the Unions purport to do so, they have to follow national policies decided by Annual Conferences and National Executive Councils, often politically motivated, and many of which are directly against the interests of MOD members.

4. Every year, motions are put up at Annual Conferences seeking reductions in defence spending or affiliation to politically motivated passivist organisations. Recent examples include the affiliation by the CPSA to the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament and the acceptance of a motion in the SCPS for 'plans to be developed for the use of (MOD) manpower ... (THAT MEANS YOU) to be diverted to 'socially useful purposes'. The latter debate argued strongly for unilateral disarmament. It is YOUR JOB that is being offered up by YOUR UNION (or so it claims to be) looking after YOUR INTERESTS ?? for which you pay YOUR SUBSCRIPTION.

5. The Civil Service Unions have campaigned strongly to persuade MOD personnel to take long term industrial action in key areas of defence over the last two years. Whatever the justification for so doing, it is MOD PERSONNEL who will have to suffer the consequences. The Armed Services will not tolerate continual disruption of vital support services. The inevitable consequence will be a loss of civilian jobs on a large scale, reduced prospects of promotion and less interesting work for those that remain. Whatever the outcome of the current dispute, YOUR FUTURE has been put at grave risk by YOUR UNION.

6. THERE IS AN URGENT NEED FOR A CHANGE OF ATTITUDES ON ALL SIDES AND A NEW INITIATIVE. A MOD STAFF ASSOCIATION OFFERS JUST THAT.

PROPOSED AIMS FOR THE MOD STAFF ASSOCIATION

7. The proposed aims of the MOD Staff Association are:

a. The offer of a 'no strike agreement' and full Staff Side co-operation in the introduction of new technology and improved working methods in return for:

(1) A satisfactory method of determining pay backed by statutory safeguards which any Government would find difficult to break. This might be done by embodying the Agreement in an Act of Parliament: there are other constitutional mechanisms which could be used. A possible method of determining pay would be to relate civilian pay to service pay after taking account of differences in conditions of service. To overcome pay relativity problems, we would press for a unified pay structure into which all specialisations would be slotted. This system works well in the Diplomatic Service.

(2) A satisfactory method of dealing with possible redundancies resulting from the introduction of new technology or whatever. We feel that there would be no lack of volunteers for premature retirement given reasonable terms.

(3) The maintenance of the Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme.

b. Subject to a satisfactory agreement on 'a', an amendment to civilian conditions of service which would require all non industrial staff to sign an undertaking not to take industrial action. This is a condition of service in the Civil Services of several European Countries and the USA.

c. The normal rights and facilities to represent our members on personal cases and in all matters relating to their welfare and legitimate interests. A prime aim of the Association would be to provide a much improved personal service to members.

d. Within the Association:

(1) All elections and major decisions to be decided by SECRET BALLOT of all members at Branch and National level.

(2) No affiliations to any form of political body or outside pressure group such as the TUC, CND, Anti-Nazi League, etc: neither would we contribute to any organisation other than (with membership agreement) recognised Civil Service Charities.

(3) To seek advantageous discount agreements for members with retail outlets, insurance firms, etc and mortgage facilities.

THE COST OF MEMBERSHIP

8. By careful economy in administration, no affiliations and, except in special circumstances, by confining circulation of information to a monthly 'house magazine' which would give a factual account of the activities of the Executive Council, agreements reached and problem areas to be dealt with as well as providing a forum for members' views, it is considered that the Association could be run on a subscription of TWO POUNDS (£2.00) paid monthly or at a discounted annual rate of TWENTY POUNDS (£20.00) a year provided that the full annual payment was made by 31 January each year. There would be a reduced rate for young members until they reached their twenty first birthday. This subscription rate compares favourably with that of most Trade Unions and is considerably cheaper than most of the Civil Service Unions.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

9. THIS IS UP TO YOU. Attached you will find a pre-addressed series of proformas. If you are interested in joining, please tick the appropriate boxes/insert the required information and forward them. Please indicate whether you are prepared to play an active part in your area eg by joining or setting up a Branch Committee.

10. On receipt of your application to join and your subscription, you will be sent a Membership Card. In consultation with those who are prepared to play an active role, membership meetings will be arranged so that Branches can be set up. A draft Constitution and Rule Book are currently being prepared for discussion and agreement.

11. Subject to a satisfactory response, the Association will apply for 'listing' and ultimate registration as a Trade Union in accordance with the legal requirements. At the same time, formal approaches will be made to MOD Management to obtain negotiating rights. Informal approaches have already been made to Civilian Management (Industrial Relations) who has stated that any Staff Organisation 'should have in membership a substantial proportion of the Staff in the class(es) or grade(s) for which recognition is sought'. Obviously, the greater the response from YOU, the better the chances of obtaining recognition.

12. The setting up of an organisation of this kind costs money. Financial contributions will be gratefully received. The initial membership fee to cover the period to 31 December 1981 will be TEN POUNDS (£10.00) for everyone over the age of TWENTY ONE on 31 AUGUST 1981. The fee for members under the age of twenty one on 31 August 1981 will be FIVE POUNDS (£5.00). Cheques/Postal Orders should be made payable to:

The MOD STAFF ASSOCIATION

and crossed. Cheques should be endorsed 'Not Negotiable!'

NB. PLEASE DO NOT SEND CASH THROUGH TRANSIT OR BY POST.

FINALE

13. The proposal to set up a Staff Association is a radical departure from anything which has happened in the Public Service in living memory. However, there are precedents. Inland Revenue has its own Staff Federation; the Diplomatic Service has a unified pay structure; Civil Servants in several Foreign Countries, relatively better paid than we are and enjoying much more respect in their communities, have 'no-strike' agreements. The proposals provide a new initiative which, given your backing and goodwill on all sides, is realistic and can work. It will take a lot of hard work to set up the Association and hard negotiation to achieve our aims: we do not underestimate the difficulties which will not be overcome immediately. BUT WHAT IS THE ALTERNATIVE? Do you want the current type of confrontation to go on year after year? There is every indication that it will unless there is a change of attitudes on ALL sides. The proposals offer an opportunity for all concerned to benefit. FOR YOU, better pay, retention of civilian posts and prospects of further civilianisation and improved promotion opportunities; FOR THE SERVICES, a guarantee of high quality support; FOR THE NATION, a highly efficient and cost effective DEFENCE SERVICE to protect their freedom. THE DECISION IS YOURS.

Yours sincerely

Tom Lawton

(G H LAWTON)
Hon Secretary

Paul Ledbrook

(P LEDBROOK)
Hon Treasurer

Sponsors

Tom Sawyer
~~Robert~~

Bob
Patricia Hill

J. D. Chiswell

W. E. ...
Buller Hill

J. ...
Lalwader

Dr. ...
C. G. ...
D. ...

B. ...
P. A. Goodie
M. Archer
D. ...
P. ...
R. A. ...

D. Buckley

Calitman
Norman

H. Verity
D. ...
F. P. ...

M. ...
A. ...
Mary J. Shields

T. ...
G. Y. Crayden
D. ...

To: The Hon Secretary
MOD Staff Association
Room 419
Compress State Building
London SW6 1TR

Tel No 01-385 1244 Ext 2685, 2130

From: ((Full Name)
(
(Title: Mr, Mrs, Miss, Ms (other)
(Honours/Qualifications
(OFFICIAL ADDRESS
(.....
(..... GRADE
(HOME ADDRESS
(.....
(.....
Official Tel No Ext

PLEASE READ CAREFULLY

1. I have read and understood the attached proposals for setting up a MOD Staff Association. I agree in principal with its stated aims and hereby apply to become a Member. I agree to further the aims of the Association and to abide by any agreement made by the Association on behalf of the Membership or my particular Class or Grade.

2. I enclose a cheque/postal order/money order for £10.00 (TEN POUNDS), (£5.00 (FIVE POUNDS) for those under 21 years of age on 31 August 1981) being my 'Founder's Subscription' covering the period ending 31 December 1981 for which a receipt will be issued. (If no receipt has been received after one month, please contact the Hon Treasurer Tel No 01-632 7806 or the Hon Secretary). Thereafter, I agree to pay the annual/monthly subscription at the rate agreed from time to time at Annual Conference. For 1982/83, the subscription will be TWO POUNDS paid monthly or TWENTY POUNDS for the year provided that full payment is made by 31 January 1982: half these rates will be charged to those under 21 on the date of payment.

NB: All applications for membership received before 31 December 1981 will entitle the applicant to a special FOUNDER MEMBER's membership card.

3. I certify that I am under 21 years old over 21 years old on 31 August 1981 (Please tick appropriate box).

4. I understand that my 'Founder's Subscription' will be used to meet costs in setting up the organisation necessary to pursue the aims of the Association and will not be recoverable in full under any circumstances. Professionally audited accounts will be rendered at the first Annual General Meeting of the Association.

5. I may terminate my Membership of the Association at any time after 31 December 1981 by giving one month's notice in writing to either the Branch Secretary or the Hon/General Secretary.

6. Until annual election procedures are instituted, I am prepared to:

- a. Help set up a Branch Committee in my area
 - b. Act as Chairman , Secretary
Treasurer , Branch Committee Member , Distributor of Association
 - c. Literature , Auditor in my area.
 - c. Serve on the National Committee of the Association
- (please tick appropriate box(es)).

I understand that no official facilities will be granted until the MOD Staff Association has been formally recognised by the Official Side.

* If under 21 years old, please state date of birth
.....

Signed.....
Date

To: CPRO(B)
DGDA Acs 5
'B' Block
Warminster Road
Bath BA1 5AA

From: Full Name
(in caps)
Official Address
.....
..... Tel No
Staff No
Pay Roll No

Dear Sir

I am resigning from my Union the Will you please arrange for my subscription to be stopped with effect from 198 ...

Signature
Date