

Gilmour TP.



10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

29<sup>th</sup> May 1979.

Dear Sir,

Thank you for your letter about the future location of Conservative Research Department.

Three or four people have written about this and I think it best to send the same reply. I therefore enclose a copy. If you still feel strongly - perhaps we can have a word about it at some appropriate time.

when we are not engaged on other  
matters.

Yours ever

Raymond

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From: The Rt. Hon. Sir Ian Gilmour, Bt., M.P.



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

24th May 1979

*Mr Annie Munster,*

I am sorry to trouble you on a matter which is not my business. But the proposal to move the Research Department into Smith Square came up when I was Chairman of CRD in 1974. I looked at it very carefully then and came to the conclusion that any such move would be a profound mistake.

I mean no disrespect to Central Office - especially after their superb organisation of the Election. But the functions of Central Office are very different from those carried out by the Research Department. And the differences have been symbolised by the geographical separation between Old Queen Street and Smith Square. As you know, the members of the Research Department are not outstandingly well paid, but they like their job, partly because of its obvious political interest and partly because they like the conditions under which they work. They also value their partial independence of Central Office and the hitherto accepted recognition that there is a distinction between political research and the various jobs done by Central Office. The Research Department's possession of its own separate building has enabled a collegiate spirit to be built up over the years which has done much to make the Research Department a unique body ~~itself~~ - something very different from, say, the Labour Research Department. And in my view that collegiate atmosphere and spirit would be destroyed if the Department was absorbed into Central Office.

That would, I think, be a very great loss. It would also be a pity, surely, to end the 50 year old tradition of the Research Department's independence and succumb to the current very non-Tory fashion of uniformity and centralisation.

/ Cont....

I very much hope therefore that the decision  
can be reconsidered and reversed,

I am sending a copy of this letter to Peter  
Thorneycroft and Michael Jopling.

*James  
la.*

The Rt. Hon. Mrs. Margaret Thatcher, M.P.,  
The Prime Minister,  
10 Downing Street,  
London, S.W. 1.

S.I.C.



10 DOWNING STREET

DRAFT LETTER TO SIR IAN GILMOUR

Thank you for your letter about the future location of the Conservative Research Department.

We all serve the same cause and want to further that cause in the best way we can. In that spirit, I should like to make a few points.

1. For some time I have been concerned that the excellent work done by Research was not influencing our work through organisation and publicity as it should. I therefore asked Angus Maude to oversee both research and publicity departments. That, however, didn't and couldn't of itself bring about the ~~desired~~ closer cooperation.

2. A number of our people at research are suggesting that they are somehow "independent" of the Conservative Party. But How can you be "independent" of the cause you exist to serve. And how, if that cause is "One Nation" can you resist any movement to be "One Party". Alternatively, if the "independence" argument means intellectual independence - of course we all have that. ~~CPC is in Central Office, but~~  
~~the tracts produced under its name (including some (of) the~~  
(by?)

~~most distinguished authors) do not suffer on that account.~~

"Independence" in that sense of the word doesn't alter because one office area is exchanged for another.

3. The economics. I prefer to spend more on people and less on bricks and mortar rather than the other way round. To finance three premises instead of one means we can't pay as much as I would wish. Further the cost of extra buildings will rise faster than our capacity to raise the money from constituencies or elsewhere; and an increasing proportion has to come from constituencies.

(Chris Patten's letter - add after section 3:)

You may know that when we were in Opposition I ran my own political office as economically as possible - thanks to Richard Ryder. Quite a lot of the grant we received from the taxpayer was therefore available to research for them to back up the work of our front and back benchers in Parliament. As far as our back benchers are concerned, the work still has to be done - but there is now no grant money - and rightly so.

Hitherto, research has come under a Deputy Chairman - Angus was Deputy Chairman. It has been suggested that somehow it will come under the National Union. That of course is just not true. The Chairman <sup>and</sup> Deputy Chairman are appointed by the Leader of the Party, as is the Treasurer. The National Union is a separate organisation.

The Chairman and Alistair McAlpine are making a large area of Central Office available to research. It can be laid out and organised exactly as Research wishes so that the work can be carried out as smoothly as possible. All the office facilities are available there - computers, exchange telegraph, other office equipment, etc. Wouldn't it be better now to concentrate on designing and arranging the new space in a way that has not been possible before?

The facilities will be different - I hope better, and thus cooperation easier. I believe that can only advantage the principles and philosophies of the Conservative Party.