

FILE

Original in C/R

cc: CSD
CO

C.F. to note



10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

13 December 1979

Dear Mr. Stang,

Thank you for your letter of 21 November which I have read with considerable interest. I am sorry that you have had to wait for this reply.

As you know, it has been the policy of successive administrations that the Government should not be concerned with the political beliefs of its employees except where considerations involving national security have to be taken into account. This exception does of course apply not only to those employed on security work as such but also to substantial numbers of those in the Civil Service whose work gives access to classified information over a wide range of Government activities.

It is therefore established policy, going back over a number of administrations of both political parties since the war, that individuals who are known to be members of, or associated with, extremist political parties or organisations, whether of the right or the left, dedicated to the overthrow of Parliamentary democracy, are not employed on secret work.

The reasons for relating these criteria to membership of (or associated with) extremist political parties or organisations is that experience in this country and elsewhere has shown that it is

/in such

in such close associations that the individual is most tempted to forget his primary loyalty to the State.

I think your prime purpose in raising this question was your concern lest my statement on 21 November reflected some underlying change in Civil Service recruitment policy. I hope that what I have said in this letter reassures you on this score.

Yours sincerely

Richard Ingham
