

Prime Minister,

to see, especially § 9.

MS

N.L.W.

23.12

Ref. A086/3577

MR WICKS

Lord Rothschild came to see me yesterday evening. He will be leaving for his "summer holiday" in three days time, and will be away for at least three weeks.

2. Lord Rothschild made clear to me the resentment which he felt, partly because the possibility of prosecuting him was under consideration, and partly because he felt that he had had no help whatever from the Security Service, which he felt owed him a debt for years of work for them, some of which had been dangerous. He said that the Security Service had done nothing for him, not even a word of thanks. When the stories began to come out about his bringing Peter Wright over to England in 1980, the Security Service had made no attempt to get hold of him and find out what had actually occurred.

3. It also became clear that Lord Rothschild's resentment is not just personal but also on account of his family. He said that it used to be said that "a Rothschild's word is as good as the Bank of England" and he was not prepared lightly to allow doubt to be cast on that statement of faith.

4. Lord Rothschild said that he had first become aware that Peter Wright was writing a book in 1977, only a year after Wright retired.

5. Lord Rothschild asked why Peter Wright had not been more rigorously cross-examined in court. I said that I thought that this was partly because Mr Turnbull had constantly objected to Mr Simos's questions and the objections had been upheld, and partly because Mr Simos thought that, if Mr Wright was put under too much pressure, he would come out with a whole lot more stuff

in court. Lord Rothschild seemed to think that that was a real danger: that Wright had known a great deal about the affairs of the Security Service. He thought that we were quite right to try to stop publication of Wright's book which could well contain some serious disclosures.

6. Lord Rothschild asked about the allegation that the Prime Minister had been to see him in his flat in the summer of 1980. He thought that she might have been to the flat while she was Leader of the Opposition (though not to discuss security and intelligence matters) but he had no memory of her going to the flat after she became Prime Minister. I said that I was aware of no evidence that she had done so: I believed that she did not remember any such visit, and there was no trace of it in the diary. I thought that the allegation rested on a remark by Peter Wright that Lord Rothschild had said to him, in his flat, that the Prime Minister, "sitting on that couch there", had said something to him. I remarked that the phrase "sitting on that couch there" did not sound like Lord Rothschild, and I thought that it might well be a little bit of journalistic license, of which there was a good deal in Mr Wright's manuscript.

7. Lord Rothschild asked to see a copy of the minute which he had sent to the Prime Minister in June 1979 about counter suppression. I showed him a copy. He said that, re-reading it, he thought that it was not a very good minute: rather diffuse.

8. Lord Rothschild asked whether he would be told if and when a decision was taken not to prosecute him. I said I was sure he would be told.

9. Finally he asked me to record and pass on his gratitude to the Prime Minister for her press announcement and her subsequent remarks on television.

REA

ROBERT ARMSTRONG

23 December 1986



СЕРТИФИКАТ

№ 12

1918

SECRET



10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Principal Private Secretary*

23 December 1986

Thank you for your letter of 23 December about the letter which Lord Rothschild sent to me on 22 December.

I have decided, in the light of what you say in your letter, that it is not necessary for me to reply to Lord Rothschild's letter.

I am sending a copy of this letter, together with a copy of yours, to Stephen Boys Smith (Home Office), Michael Saunders (Law Officers' Department) and to Trevor Woolley (Cabinet Office).

(N. L. WICKS)

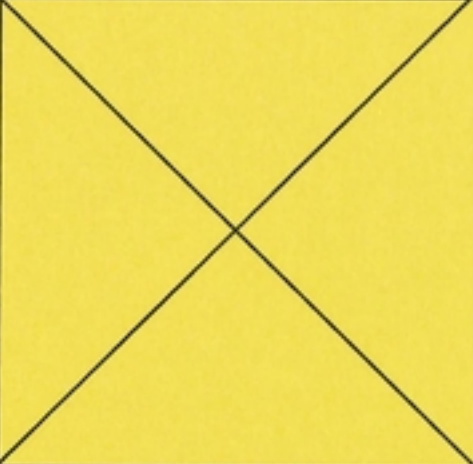
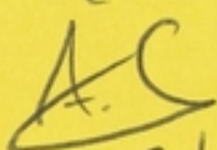
Bernard Sheldon, Esq.

SECRET

prem 19 | 1953

Letter dated  
23.12.86



DEPARTMENT/SERIES ..... <u>Rem 19</u> PIECE/ITEM ..... <u>1953</u> (one piece/item number)	Date and sign
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10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Principal Private Secretary*

22 December 1986

*Dear Bernard,*

Lord Rothschild has just sent me the letter attached which questions one aspect of the letter which I sent him on 25 November concerning his obligations under the Official Secrets Act.

You very kindly provided the draft on which I wrote to Lord Rothschild and I should be grateful if you could let me know what reply, if any, I should now send in response to his latest letter. If a reply is needed, it would clearly be right for it to be despatched before Christmas.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Stephen Boys Smith (Home Office), Michael Saunders (Law Officers' Department) and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

N.L. Wicks

*his only  
Nigel Wicks*

Bernard Sheldon, Esq.

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*VC*