

Box → POLITICAL OFFICE

Conservative and Unionist Central Office

32 Smith Square Westminster SW1P 3HH Telephone 01-222 9000

Memorandum from: Mr Gordon Reece  
Date: 4th June 1979

To: Mr Richard Ryder

For your information. You might like to show this, or the sense of it to the Prime Minister as you judge appropriate.

Sewell

P.M.  
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Press Dept.  
Cco.

12th June 1979

Thank you for letting me know about the David Boddy incident with Sally Oppenheim's Private Office.

I showed the entire memo to the Prime Minister and instructions have gone out telling Private Offices to be more outward-going as far as the Party is concerned.

Please let me know if there are any more cases of obstruction.

Richard Ryder  
Political Office  
Gordon Reece Esq

# Conservative and Unionist Central Office

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Memorandum from: David Boddy

To: Gordon Reece

Date: 4th June 1979

Gerry Mulligan thought you might be interested to hear of a small story involving ourselves in the Press Office and the civil service, which occurred yesterday (Sunday).

Derrick Hill of the Daily Express called seeking background guidance on the issue of price increases. I undertook to contact Sally Oppenheim for him. During my conversation with Hill I said that it was important to realise that the price increases coming through were the result of Labour policies and were in the pipeline, and were not a result of four weeks of Tory rule. He agreed, and said that he would be seeking to reflect that line in the story.

I could not contact Mrs Oppenheim at her home, so I rang the Dept of Trade, hoping to get their duty press officer to tell me how I could contact her. Someone on duty at the Dept said they would ring me back. (I had announced myself as being from CCO Press Dept).

Twenty minutes later I was phoned by Sally Oppenheim's Private Secretary, not the Press Officer, who was anxious to know why I wanted to speak to the Minister. So I told him!

He said he did not think the Minister should get involved in the business of making predictions (who had said anything about making predictions?), and although I did not take a verbatim note of our conversation, he was rather unhappy about Sally talking to Hill. I told him that politically it was very important that Sally should get the point about the pipeline price increases across. Reluctantly (or so it seemed) he then agreed, and told me how to contact her.

As it happened, I had to leave the office, and David Davies took over. David contacted Sally and put the proposition to her. She was agreeably surprised to see that we were still operating like this, and expressed the sentiment to David that she felt she had been taken over (my words) by the civil service. David explained to her that we were very much in operation, and that we intended to keep a careful political eye on events.

I think the example is interesting for two reasons:  
Firstly, that Sally should be surprised to learn that we are still politically active (do the rest of the Cabinet know?);  
Secondly, the anxiety of the Private Secretary re her talking - even on background basis - to the Express.

This note may be of use to you somewhere along the line as we continue, through these early days, to develop a relationship with the Government and civil service.

*David*