

CONFIDENTIAL



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

25 May 1984

The Rt Hon Margaret Thatcher MP
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
London SW1

Dear Prime Minister

I have now heard again from Richard Sammons and I discover to my anger and amazement that no-one from the Government or from the intelligence service has made any approach to him to investigate the facts that I have given to you. Not unreasonably he is now becoming extremely reluctant to continue to be persuaded not to make any of this available to the press. In addition, as one of the prime witnesses in the Shabli case he has still not been told when the case will come to trial, although he gathers from the Libyans that they believe this will come in the middle of June.

I have persuaded Mr Sammons once again not to say anything which could play into Libyan hands and harm rather than help the British community there, but I must say my own personal position is becoming intolerable and I would be grateful now if you would give permission for me to speak direct to the Head of MI6 on this matter.

The salient new information is that a man who has just got out of Libya and is known to Richard Sammons and is closely involved in the Shabli family has now given him further information. This man does not wish his identity to be disclosed and he works for a foreign company. Apparently the secret police in Libya are now attempting to stamp all British passports that they have got their hands on. The stamp is in Arabic and apparently says that the holder needs a special exit visa. This in effect closes the door on any British subject very quickly leaving the country if they have this stamp in their passport. Previously I gather it has been possible to leave Libya by bribing officials but the need for a visa will probably make it impossible to even bribe anyone.

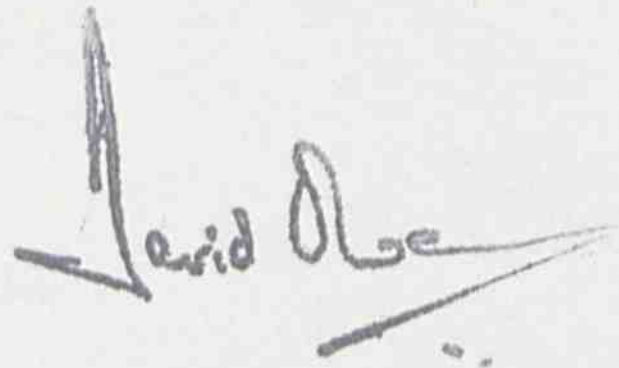
What is even more worrying is that this man claims that the stamping of the passports is linked to the Shabli case.

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I am of course very aware that this may be another case of special pleading, or that information is being passed on in the knowledge of the channel that is open to me, via Mr Sammons. However since the contact was the person who warned about the vulnerability of employees of British Caledonian I do not believe that this information can be discounted.

What I find hard to understand, is that in the absence of any discussion with Mr Sammons, how can you decide whether or not this information should be discounted. Quite bluntly, I do find the handling of this information beyond any rational explanation. You should know me well enough by now to be assured that I have no intention of making a party political point about this affair. But if the handling of this case and this information is representative of the way we are handling intelligence information in this country at the moment, then I have very considerable anxieties. I am not certain whether there is any other course open to me within the secrecy of Government other than to put my position to the Head of MI6. I know that Jim Callaghan arranged for you to see him on a number of occasions when you were in Opposition and I know that the then holder of the office thought such contact was beneficial.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'David Owen', with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

David Owen

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