



MINISTRY OF DEFENCE WHITEHALL LONDON SW1A 2HB

TELEPHONE 01-218 9000
DIRECT DIALING 01-218 6169

D/S of S/76/83

28th March 1983

Thank you for writing to me on 2nd March about Alan Gingles following the article in "The Observer" on 20th February.

The newspaper's account of Gingles' career in the Army is broadly correct. I must however emphasise that Gingles did not seek permission to enter the Service of another Government as he should have done under Queens Regulations, and he did not resign his commission as he would have been required to do in these circumstances if he had applied for permission. My Department was not aware that he joined the Service of another Government; and although he had retired from the active list in September 1979 he still had a reserve liability.

As far as we are aware, two officers have applied to join the South African armed forces since 1st January 1979, and they were both required to resign their commissions before taking up these appointments. You also raised the question of whether such permission would be refused in future. The fact is that we are not in a position to refuse such permission. An officer is required to resign his commission before joining the forces of a country that does not owe allegiance to the Crown, and if he did not do so then the commission would be removed. As you will appreciate, this is the only power that we can exercise over an officer who has already retired from



the Services. Guidance is given to officers about these procedures before they retire, but no specific recommendations are made about which countries' Armed Forces an officer should join; nor do I believe that it would be right to do so. Apart from the necessity of making judgements about the political acceptability of virtually every Government in the world, an officer, once he has left the Service, has all the rights of an ordinary individual to take up whatever employment he chooses.

Michael Heseltine

LETTER TO DENIS HEALEY passed to ANTI APARTHEID MOVEMENT