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# TRADES UNION CONGRESS

GENERAL SECRETARY: RT. HON. LIONEL MURRAY OBE

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The Rt Hon Margaret Thatcher, MP,  
Prime Minister,  
10, Downing Street,  
London,  
S.W.1.

DEPT Secretary's

OUR REF LM/JW

YOUR REF

10, June, 1981

*at by hand  
Verba*

*Prime Minister*

*I showed you this on the way  
to the Palace this morning.  
We have asked Lord Somers  
for advice on a reply.*

Dear Prime Minister,

## Civil Service Dispute

I write to express my grave concern over recent developments in the dispute over civil service pay and conditions, and to urge you to reconsider urgently the Government's current rigid stance over negotiations with the civil service unions.

*John  
10/6/81*

My concern is not prompted by any wish to single out civil servants for special or discriminatory treatment in any way. Indeed, my anxiety is in large measure stimulated by the far-reaching and damaging effects which your Government's actions could have on the conduct of industrial relations more generally.

The TUC is tireless in its pursuit of the establishment of stable arrangements through which pay and conditions of employment can be regulated through orderly collective bargaining. In the civil service since the 1950's, and in recent years throughout the public services more generally, there has been a widespread recognition of the need to supplement the bargaining process with agreed, independent mechanisms through which fair and impartial comparisons can be made with the remuneration of people in employment elsewhere in the economy. These arrangements are essential if public servants are to have confidence that they will not be arbitrarily singled out by Governments to be made the scapegoats in periods of economic adversity.

Not only has your Government unilaterally and high-handedly interfered with the independent Pay Research Unit, which impartially provided those comparisons through which civil service pay could be determined, it has even refused to disclose the contents of the Unit's factual reports.

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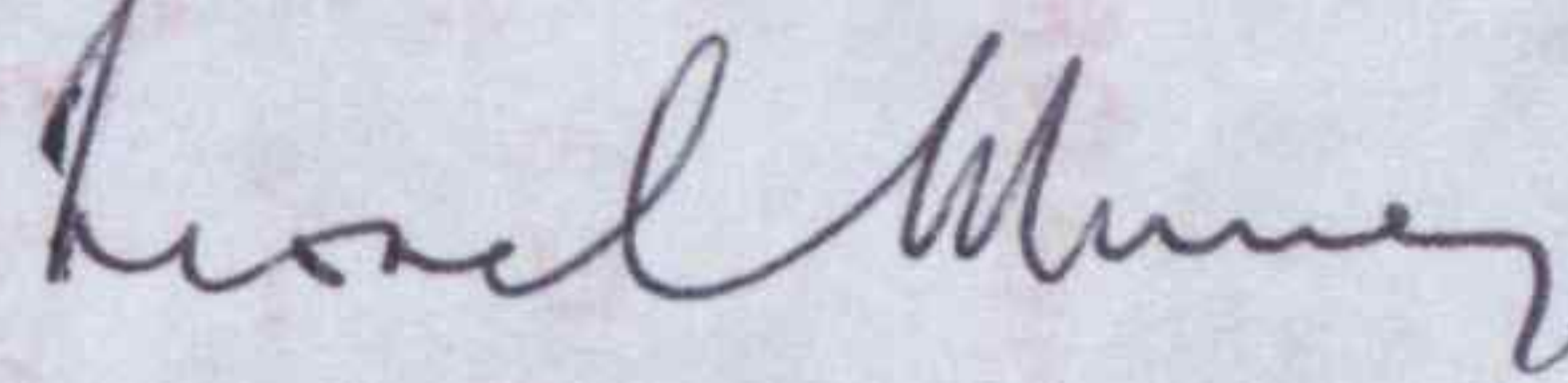


Furthermore, your Government's failure to engage itself in serious negotiations has been followed by a refusal to agree to refer the dispute that inevitably ensued through the previously agreed and longstanding arbitration procedures. These actions - if not rapidly retrieved - will cause long-term damage to industrial relations in the civil service, and indeed more generally.

Governments have a unique responsibility to set an example in the conduct of industrial relations. The failure to honour basic obligations to your own employees, and the breach of existing agreements in this cavalier way, have brought profound discredit on your Government, setting an example which could rebound more generally to the cost of us all in the years ahead.

I urge you to restore public confidence in the vital importance of honouring agreements by taking urgent practical steps to respect and abide by the terms of the undertakings previously given to civil servants.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Harold Murray". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the typed name "General Secretary".

General Secretary