

Prime Minister (2)

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DEPARTMENT

Press and Information

Rt Hon Mrs Margaret Thatcher MP
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
LONDON SW1

June 10, 1982



Dear Prime Minister

Employment Bill 1982

It is the view not only of the TUC, but also of many employers and others closely involved in industrial relations, such as personnel managers, that the Employment Bill 1982 which your Government is currently pressing through Parliament will cause serious damage to relations between workers and their employers and harm to British industry.

This measure will deny to workers the exercise of rights which have been theirs for decades. It will bring uncertainty where clarity is needed - for instance the right of public servants to take industrial action to defend their jobs will be brought seriously into doubt. It will make it illegal for British trade unionists to take action in support of fellow trade unionists in other countries - such as Poland or South Africa - in their struggle for freedom and dignity. It will undermine long-standing union membership arrangements which have been agreed between workers and management and have done much to stabilise industrial relations and prevent the proliferation of trade unions in particular companies.

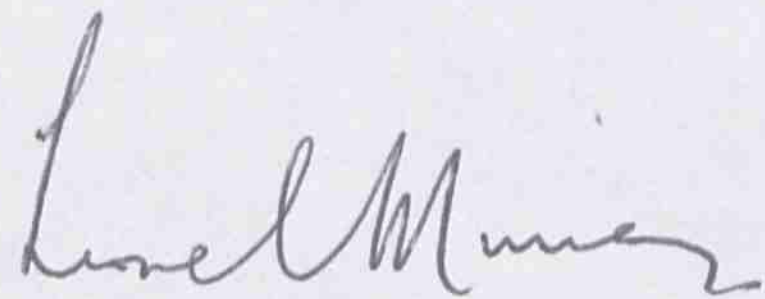
The TUC General Council find it astonishing that the Government should set out to encourage a small number of individuals who are dissatisfied with the collective bargaining arrangements in their workplaces - from which they themselves benefit - to refuse to accept their proper responsibilities. To encourage selective dismissals during strikes not only denies to workers the right to support each other in difficulties: it will inevitably exacerbate disputes at the very time when all sensible people would wish to concentrate on finding a solution to the initial problems.

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The TUC has corresponded with your Employment Secretary, Mr Tebbit, on these issues, and has sought to make clear to him the difficulties which will be created by this legislation. We have offered to discuss with him in a serious manner any problems which he believes exist now. He claims that we misunderstand his intentions. Far from it: it is Mr Tebbit who misunderstands, or is carelessly disregarding, the effects which this legislation could have.

Today the TUC has, through leaflets and advertisements, been warning the public of the dangers of the Bill. Your Government has it within its power to withdraw the Employment Bill. I urge you to do so before it is too late, and to concentrate instead on the real employment issue - the vital task of reducing the number of people who are out of work.

Yours sincerely



General Secretary