



PA
DUB
13/1

10 DOWNING STREET

Prime Minister ⁽²⁾

Since this has attracted
some publicity you may
like to see the TGWU's
reply to Soviet construction
workers.

DUB
12/1



Transport and General Workers Union

R1211

TRANSPORT HOUSE · SMITH SQUARE · WESTMINSTER · LONDON S.W.1P 3JB.

OUR REF GHP/AP

TELEPHONE 01-828 7788 TELEGRAMS TRANSunION LONDON SW1 TELEX No 919009

YOUR REF

Building Construction & Civil Engineering Group
National Secretary — G. P. Henderson

9th January, 1984

Mrs. M. Thatcher,
Prime Minister,
10 Downing Street,
LONDON

A.L.P. 14
1) Mr. Glass 2) Mr. Fisher
To see
DMS
12/1

Dear Prime Minister,

I thought you would like to see copy of the reply I had given to the USSR Construction and Building Materials' Industry Workers' Unions.

I have also sent a copy to the Secretary of State for Defence.

Yours sincerely,

George Henderson

NATIONAL SECRETARY

Transport and General Workers Union



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Building Construction & Civil Engineering Group
National Secretary — G. P. Henderson

9th January, 1984

Mr. I. Lanshin,
President,
Construction and Building Materials' Industry Workers' Unions,
Central Committee,
42 Lenin Avenue,
MOSCOW B119, USSR

Dear Colleague,

On behalf of the Construction, Civil Engineering and Building
Crafts workers of the Transport & General Workers' Union, I
should like to thank you for your letter, with enclosures,
received on 4th January, 1984, about the disturbing growth
in international tension and escalation of the arms race.

The Transport & General Workers' Union is a consistent and
vociferous opponent of the arms race and especially of
nuclear weapons. From fighting against the H-bomb in the
1950's through to our current campaign against the Cruise,
Pershing and Trident missiles, we have remained of the firm
opinion that the possession of nuclear weapons brings neither
security nor stability but in fact places us all in the greatest
peril. We are committed to a policy of nuclear disarmament,
an end to the arms race and the strengthening of international
peace and co-operation and welcome your commitment to the same
objectives.

As workers in the construction industry, we are also very much
aware of the harmful effect which high levels of military spending
are having on our jobs and living standards. In this country,
many construction workers remain unemployed even though we need
more homes, schools and hospitals. We believe that if some of
the resources currently channelled into armaments were diverted
to socially useful production then employment could be increased
and living standards improved.

TGWU SUPPORTS

**SITE
SAFE 83**

EVERY YEAR

I am sure that living standards in the Soviet Union could be similarly improved were it possible to reallocate resources in this way. We hope you will find interesting the enclosed booklet which the T&GWU has produced on arms conversion. We must all look forward to the time when construction workers can be fully employed in useful and peaceful projects.

Construction and other workers in the United Kingdom will, therefore, continue to campaign for detente and nuclear disarmament. We share your extreme concern at the deployment of the new Cruise and Pershing missiles in Western Europe and will continue to do all in our power to achieve the reversal of that decision and the dismantlement of these weapons. Like you, we recognise that this deployment signifies another turn in the arms race, a further increase in military budgets and yet another reduction in the resources available to satisfy the needs of working people.

I must, however, be frank with you and say how much those very same considerations cause us to regret the response of the USSR to that deployment. We abhor the dangerous and provocative actions of NATO in placing these missiles in Western Europe. We understand the fears that such actions must give rise to in the USSR. But, we equally abhor the response of the Soviet Union as described by Chairman Y. V. Andropov in his statement of 24th November, 1983. To respond to the NATO escalation of the arms race by proceeding with its own deployment of medium-range nuclear weapons in the European part of the USSR, by the deployment of longer-range missiles in Czechoslovakia and the German Democratic Republic, and by the redeployment of further sea-based nuclear missiles is for the Soviet Union itself to contribute to an escalation of the arms race which threatens us all.

We must tell you openly that we see such a response, however much it might have been provoked by the actions of the other side, as a serious and dangerous error. It is also, in the age of massive overkill in which we live, totally unnecessary. Nikita Khrushchev once remarked, jokingly but truthfully: "We're satisfied to be able to finish off the United States first time round. Once is quite enough. What good does it do to annihilate a country twice. We're not bloodthirsty people." The Transport and General Workers' Union believes that the comment has considerable relevance. Military balance, in nuclear terms, is meaningless when already a country has the ability to destroy its enemy several times over. This only serves to prolong the arms race, whose rapid and complete demise is something to which we are both committed.

We, therefore, hope that you will feel able to use your influence to achieve a reversal of these decisions to deploy further missiles in favour of a resumption of meaningful and effective discussions at the earliest opportunity.

The T&GWU sends its greetings to Soviet building workers and urges them to continue their struggle for peace and international co-operation in the knowledge that construction workers in

Britain will be continuing that same struggle in their country.

Yours fraternally,

George Henderson

GEORGE HENDERSON,
NATIONAL SECRETARY



ПРОФЕССИОНАЛЬНЫЙ СОЮЗ РАБОЧИХ СТРОИТЕЛЬСТВА
И ПРОМЫШЛЕННОСТИ СТРОИТЕЛЬНЫХ МАТЕРИАЛОВ
ЦЕНТРАЛЬНЫЙ КОМИТЕТ

СССР, Москва, В-119, Ленинский просп., 42

SYNDICAT DES TRAVAILLEURS
DU BATIMENT ET DES MATERIAUX
DE CONSTRUCTION
Comité Central
42, Avenue Lénine,
Moscou, B-119, URSS

CONSTRUCTION AND BUILDING
MATERIALS' INDUSTRY
WORKERS' UNIONS
Central Committee
42, Lenin avenue,
Moscow, B-119, USSR

SINDICATO DE TRABAJADORES
DE LA EDIFICACION Y
MATERIALES DE CONSTRUCCION
Comite Central
42, Avenida Lenin,
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CONSTRUCTION, CIVIL ENGINEERING
AND BUILDING CRAFTS OF THE TRANSPORT
AND GENERAL WORKERS' UNION

GREAT BRITAIN

Dear Comrades!

The Soviet building workers, as well as all the people of our country, are deeply concerned with continuous growth of international tension forced by the US Administration and its NATO allies.

Deployment of the American first-strike nuclear missiles which has started in West Germany, Great Britain and Italy is an extremely dangerous and imprudent act immensely aggravating the deadly threat of world disaster. This deployment, undertaken against the will and interests of the peoples, signifies another turn in the arms-race, increase in military budgets and further cut in allocations for social needs of the working people.

The workers and trade unions in construction industries are fully aware that escalation of the arms-race, militarization of economy and stockpiling of nuclear arsenals lead to curtailment of construction works - particularly housing, social and cultural projects -, increased unemployment, reduction in living standards, general deterioration of the working people's conditions and infringement upon their democratic and trade union rights. At the same time the world is short of more than 300 million flats and scores of millions of construction workers can't find a job.

The Soviet construction workers and their trade union wholly and resolutely support the peaceful foreign policy of our state, the decisions set forth in the Statement by Comrade Y.V.Andropov aimed at averting a new war and safeguarding universal security.

The American leadership and its NATO allies have turned down the constructive proposals of the USSR, torpedoed the possibility of mutual accord what forced the Soviet Union to take counter-measures to ensure its security and that of the other countries of the socialist community.

We are fully resolved to join our efforts in struggle for disarmament, switching the means over to peaceful construction and development, provision of jobs for construction workers, satisfaction of their urgent needs and vital requirements.

Documents of the IXth International Trade Conference of Workers of the Building, Wood and Building Materials Industries (Sofia, October 1983), representing over 21 million workers of our trade, stress that "Genuine economic and social progress is possible only in atmosphere of détente, peaceful co-existence and disarmament what requires prospects for lasting and durable peace.

Peace, jobs, social and economic progress - these are the interconnected objectives, and we must unite in struggle for them on both national and international levels".

We are forwarding to you herewith the Statements by Comrade Y.V.Andropov as well as the Statement made by the Presidium of the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions which expounds the position of the Soviet trade unions in connection with deployment of the American missiles in Western Europe and contains concrete proposals on expansion of anti-war collaboration between trade unions of the socialist, capitalist and developing countries.

We do hope that the above Statements will meet understanding and give rise to actions in defence of peace and life on earth thus answering vital interests of the working people of our trade.

Looking forward to your answer,

yours fraternally,

Igor Lanshin

IGOR LANSHIN
President

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