



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

I agree that

(a) we should do both (a) and

London SW1A 2AH

(b) at X below? Yes no

(b) we should use the reply from
you enclosed with this
letter? Yes no

30 January 1984

if you please,

A.V.C. 20/11.

'Peace' Letters from Soviet Citizens

Thank you for your letter of 11 January in which you recorded the Prime Minister's request that we should consider how best to respond to the thousands of letters the Prime Minister has received from Soviet citizens enclosing the printed 'I vote for peace' circular which was published in the Soviet press.

It seems to us that the most effective way to respond would be:

(a) to select a small number of the letters whose senders supplied addresses and to arrange to send replies in Russian from the Prime Minister through our Embassy in Moscow;

(b) for you or a suitable FCO official to call in an appropriately senior member of the Soviet Embassy to hand over a reply from the Prime Minister to a sackful of the letters with which no senders' addresses were given.

For (a) to be effective, the scale of the operation would have to be small. Letters from this country to the Soviet Union would almost certainly be intercepted by the Soviet authorities. The only way of ensuring that there was a reasonable chance of a reply reaching its destination would be to send replies from our Embassy in Moscow. The replies would be put in the standard Soviet printed envelope, and each envelope would be addressed in hand by a Russian-speaking British member of our Embassy staff, who would then personally post the letters, a few at a time, in post boxes around Moscow. The resources of our Embassy are not great enough to do this on a large scale, and in any case a larger operation would be detected by the Soviet authorities who could ensure that the correspondence was intercepted in spite of our efforts. The course proposed, though a token response, is the only workable scheme which would ensure that at least a small number of replies did actually reach Soviet citizens.

/ If the

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If the Prime Minister is content with this, we would propose that the attached draft reply be submitted to her for approval. We will then arrange to have it translated and typed out in Russian for her signature, and for 20 or 30 of the incoming letters, if possible from different parts of the Soviet Union, to be selected for reply.

As to the summoning of a member of the Soviet Embassy, we would be guided by the Prime Minister as to whether she would prefer you or an FCO official to do this. The line which we might take would be to say that the Prime Minister had received a large number of letters from Soviet citizens who had not given any address to which a reply might be sent, and that we were therefore handing over the Prime Minister's reply with the request that it be made known to the Soviet authorities in case any of these citizens enquire what response may have been given, in which case we would ask that the Prime Minister's reply be made known. We might add that we would arrange for suitable publicity to be given here (we have in mind the BBC external service in Russian in particular), and that we hoped that since the original text which was used by the petitioners had been published in Komsomolskaya Pravda (the official youth paper), that the Prime Minister's reply also might be published in the Soviet Union.

[Handwritten signature]
[Handwritten signature]
(R B Bone)
Private Secretary

A J Coles Esq
10 Downing Street

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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

2 February 1984

'PEACE' LETTERS FROM SOVIET CITIZENS

Thank you for your letter of 30 January.

The Prime Minister agrees both that she should reply to a small number of the letters whose senders supplied addresses and that a senior member of the Soviet Embassy should be summoned to receive a reply to a number of letters with which no senders' addresses were given.

We should prefer the FCO to summon the relevant Soviet diplomat.

Could you now arrange to have the draft reply enclosed with your letter translated and typed out in Russian for signature by the Prime Minister.

Roger Bone, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.



10 DOWNING STREET

Prime Minister.

Do you want action to
be taken as suggested below?

A.T.C. 1/2.

PEACE

RESTRICTED

17/1 289
GR 19/1

1-23/11 File



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

11 January 1984

Reminded FCO 18/11.
Should come over tonight or tomorrow 19/11
Reminded 20/11. Chased again 24/11
Reminded 26/11 with Foreign Sec in Rome.

"PEACE" LETTERS FROM THE SOVIET UNION

In December the Prime Minister received a circular entitled "I vote for peace" signed by over 21,500 citizens of the Soviet Union. In some cases one circular was signed by many persons. In others, individual cards were signed. We now have 21 sacks of these documents at No. 10.

I enclose a copy of a typical example.

We have considered whether to send replies - and would not necessarily have been daunted by the numbers - but in most cases addresses have not been provided. The Prime Minister nevertheless considers that we should consider responding in some way. I should be grateful to know in the next few days whether you see any possibilities for bringing a reply to the attention of the signatories or the Soviet public more generally. It would presumably have to be in Russian.

I am copying this letter to Richard Mottram (Ministry of Defence).

A. J. COLES

Roger Bone, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

NR

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