

United Biscuits

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

6th February 1980

Dear Margaret

You will know what Elizabeth I said to William Cecil :
"that without respect of my private will you will give me that counsel
which you think best" - and it is in that spirit that I write to you.

As I think you know, I am a member of a sounding group
that Jim uses from time to time on human relations and related matters.

The pressures to go further than the measures as out-
lined in the Employment Bill must be very great. My belief is that the
Bill as amended achieves about the right balance - at least as a first
step. I have talked with a number of senior industrialists whose judge-
ments I respect, representing a wide cross-section of industry, and almost
unanimously they take the same view. I believe that it is important at
this stage to retain the goodwill of the moderate trade unionists, which
you are doing, and not force them into the militant camp.

There will be some who think that this is a "wet"
approach - and they may be right - but I do not believe your government
will be able to redress "at a stroke" the accumulation of union power
built up over many years. To try to do so, it seems to me, may provoke a
degree of confrontation which could become insupportable.

I remember using a phrase to you : "information about
your own troops". Your troops in this case are of course partly public
opinion, but partly industrialists, and I believe that those who may be
demanding even stronger action than is proposed will not be at the barri-
cades behind you when the shots start flying.

Yours
Heckler.