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## 10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Private Secretary*

31 October, 1983.

### World Conference of Soviet Jewry

The Prime Minister received a delegation of the Praesidium of the World Conference on Soviet Jewry at 10 Downing Street this morning.

The President of the Praesidium thanked the Prime Minister for receiving them, and said that the World Conference wished to express their appreciation of the Prime Minister's continued support for the cause of Soviet Jewry. The Conference was greatly troubled by the further reduction in the numbers of Jews allowed to leave the Soviet Union - only 900 had been released so far this year. In all, 700 thousand affidavits had been sent from Israel, but only 270 thousand Jews had been allowed to leave.

The Prime Minister said that she was greatly concerned about the deteriorating situation. She had noted in particular the establishment of a Soviet Anti-Zionist Committee. The right response to these developments was difficult to judge. On the one hand, the policy of drawing public attention to the plight of individuals symbolised the oppression of many, and made it difficult for the Soviet Union to engineer the "disappearance" of the prominent people involved. On the other hand, it also made it harder for the USSR to release them.

The Prime Minister said that she had been very disappointed that Anatoly Shcharansky had not been released. For a time the signs had been hopeful, and she had herself met Mrs. Shcharansky in July. The delegation referred also to the case of Iosif Begun who had been sentenced to 12 years imprisonment and exile although his only "crime" appeared to be that he taught Hebrew. The Prime Minister expressed her deep concern.

Members of the Delegation described the action taken by other Western Governments in support of Soviet Jewry. Mr. Shultz had agreed that whenever he or one of his officials had contacts with the Soviet Union, the issue of Soviet Jewry should be raised. The Canadian Government had made clear that future bilateral relations would be seriously affected by the USSR's treatment of Soviet Jews. The French

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Government also had a very good record in this area, and it was fitting that Britain and France as two of the world's most mature democracies should be of one mind on this issue.

The delegation asked the Prime Minister if, during the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting, she would ask Mrs. Gandhi to exert her considerable influence with the Soviet Union to improve the treatment of Jews. The Prime Minister readily agreed to raise this subject at Delhi. She added that the West's influence with Mrs. Gandhi would be enhanced if the United States in particular could match the speed and scale of the Soviet response to her requests for practical aid.

The Prime Minister concluded by re-emphasising her strong support for the cause of Soviet Jewry, and her concern both about the disappointing number of Jews allowed to leave the USSR and about the apparent resurgence of anti-Semitism. She re-affirmed her willingness to give whatever help she could.

David Barclay

Roger Bone, Esq.,  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

MR. COLES

Noted

(1) S.U. 17/11.

(2) Take note of letter to CHOGM.

A.J.C. 22/11

I attach a letter recording the Prime Minister's meeting with the Praesidium of the World Conference of Soviet Jewry.

The only point of action is recorded in the penultimate paragraph, where you will see that the Prime Minister agreed to intercede with Mrs. Gandhi on behalf of the Soviet Jews in the course of CHOGM. I imagine that the letter will be sufficient to ensure that this is mentioned in the briefing.

DMB

31 October, 1983.

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PROCEEDIUM OF SOVIET JEWRY ~~WOMES~~ DELEGATION

1. Mr. ArieH Dulzin (Chairman of Jewish Agency)
2. Mr. Gerald Craft (President, Bnei British World Organisation)
3. Mr. Julius Berman (Chairman, Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organisations)
4. Mr. Edgar Bronfman (President, World Jewish Congress)
5. Mr. Abe Harman (Chancellor of the Hebrew University, Jerusalem and Chairman of Israel Council for Soviet Jewry)
6. Rev. ArieH Handler (Chairman, National Council for Soviet Jewry (Britain))
7. Claude Kellman (Chairman, Soviet Jewry Actions Committee (France))
8. Isi Leibler, C.B.E. (President, Executive Council Australian Jewry)
9. Morris Abram (Chairman, National Conference of Soviet Jewry (USA))
10. Mr. Greville Janner, Q.C., M.P. (President, Board of Representatives of British Jews)