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10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

9 June 1980

Dear Professor Schapiro,

Thank you and Mr. Reddaway very much for your letter of 14 May.

I agree with what you say about the severity of the present wave of repression against dissidents and about the threat it poses to the continued existence of a number of dissenting groups. We in the West have a permanent responsibility to do all we can to help those who are being persecuted in the Soviet Union. But that responsibility is now even greater than before. Private organisations and individuals have a crucial role to play in publicising what is happening. So do Governments. As you recognise, Ministers have made a point in recent speeches of drawing attention to this subject, particularly in the context of Soviet preparations for the Olympic Games. I have done the same in Parliament myself, and the Government has been making private representations to the Soviet authorities about these matters. These efforts will continue.

I was interested to learn of your analysis of the effects of the campaign by President Carter and others in 1977 against the persecution of dissidents. I look forward to seeing the article when it is completed. I sympathise with your suggestion for a major new campaign led by Western leaders. But it will be essential to ensure that the timing is right and that co-operation amongst major Western leaders is assured. I think the chances would be better nearer the time of the Madrid Review Conference of the CSCE, and will ensure that your suggestion is borne in mind as the date of the Conference draws closer.

Yours sincerely
Margaret Thatcher

Professor Leonard Schapiro

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