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10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

26 March 1982

Dear Mrs. Eker.

Thank you for your letter of 16 March about the sad case of Ida Nudel.

As you know, I take a close interest in all human rights matters in the Soviet Union. I deeply deplore the obstacles placed in the way of Soviet Jews who wish to emigrate. The treatment of refuseniks such as Ida Nudel casts grave doubt on the commitment of the Soviet authorities to their humanitarian obligations under the UN Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Helsinki Final Act.

Ida Nudel's case is of particular concern to me. I have recently exchanged letters with Ida's sister in Israel; Mrs Elena Fridman. I also drew attention to her plight in my speech to the Board of Deputies of British Jews last December.

We are disturbed by the recent reports of Ida Nudel's health and of the conditions in which she is being held as punishment for her strong desire to emigrate to Israel. I very much hope that she will be released from her internal exile later this month.

Our policy on individual cases is to make representations where we judge that they may be effective. We have recently conveyed to the Soviet authorities at a senior level our concern about a number of particularly deserving cases, including that of Ida Nudel. I do not think further such representations at the present time are likely to be useful. But if Ida Nudel is not released from exile, we shall consider urgently how to proceed.

Mrs Rita Eker

Your sincerely
Margaret Thatcher