



10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

THE PRIME MINISTER

15 January 1987

Dear Mr. Orlov.

Thank you very much for your letter of 29 December. I greatly valued our meeting on 28 November. As you know, I hope we can have another talk if you can get over to London some time before my visit to Moscow at the end of March.

I was very interested in your suggestion of a campaign for a universal amnesty for Soviet political prisoners. I am in no doubt that they should all be released, and shall do what I can to help. I shall consider carefully before my visit how best I can contribute. You can be sure that I shall press the case for greater respect for human rights with all my force during my talks in Moscow.

We shall not subscribe to a concluding document at the Vienna conference that fails to take proper account of our concern for human rights. But I am not convinced that we should necessarily refuse to sign the final document if the USSR do not agree to a complete political amnesty. My fear is that this could stop us from following up the Vienna meeting, and thus actually deprive us of the advantage the

ECL

Helsinki Accords offer in providing a forum for continuing public scrutiny of the Soviet human rights record.

My very best wishes for 1987.

Yours sincerely
Margaret Thatcher

Dr. Yury F. Orlov



cc FCO
Press

10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

THE PRIME MINISTER

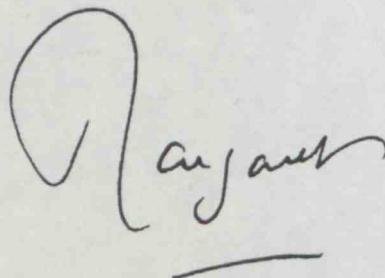
15 January 1987

Dear Nicholas.

Many thanks for your letter of 7 January with which you enclosed a letter from Yury Orlov about an amnesty for all political prisoners in the Soviet Union.

I have replied to Dr. Orlov, saying that I believe, of course, that all political prisoners should be released and will consider carefully how to contribute to this in my talks in Moscow. I will of course press with all my force while I am there for greater respect for human rights.

Yours ever



The Lord Bethell

ECU



fe VSCADY

10 DOWNING STREET

LONDON SW1A 2AA

21 January 1987

From the Private Secretary

I promised to let you know the gist of the Prime Minister's reply to Mr. Orlov.

The Prime Minister said how greatly she had valued their meeting on 28 November. She hoped that they could have another talk if he was able to get over to London some time before her visit to Moscow at the end of March.

The Prime Minister said that she was very interested in Mr. Orlov's suggestion of a campaign for a universal amnesty for Soviet political prisoners. She was in no doubt that they should all be released, and would do what she could to help. She would press the case for greater respect for human rights with all her force during her talks in Moscow.

The Prime Minister added that we would not subscribe to a concluding document at the Vienna conference that failed to take proper account of our concern for human rights. But she was not convinced that we should necessarily refuse to sign the final document if the USSR did not agree to a complete political amnesty. Her fear was that this could stop us from following up the Vienna meeting, and thus actually deprive us of the advantage the Helsinki Accords offer in providing a forum for continuing public scrutiny of the Soviet human rights record.

CHARLES POWELL

The Lord Bethell

6

CFC
GR

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

13 January 1987

Dear Charles,

//
/ You wrote on 8 January enclosing letters from Lord Bethell and Doctor Orlov to the Prime Minister. I now enclose the original letter from Doctor Orlov which reached us from New York, and draft replies to him and to Lord Bethell. The former could be forwarded through our Consulate General in New York if you wish.

Doctor Orlov asks the Prime Minister if she will press, both publicly and privately during her visit to Moscow, for a universal amnesty for political prisoners in the USSR.

The Foreign Secretary sees obvious attractions in a call for an amnesty for political prisoners. We already firmly believe, of course, that all political prisoners should be released. The Prime Minister could support the idea in her talks with Gorbachev. Doctor Sakharov as well as Doctor Orlov has endorsed it.

As to supporting the idea in public, however, the Foreign Secretary considers that careful thought will need to be given at the time of the visit to how much of the Prime Minister's discussion with Gorbachev we should reveal. Much will depend on the Prime Minister's judgement at the time of how Gorbachev would react to public as opposed to private pressure.

It should be recognised that there would be formidable practical difficulties in securing such an amnesty. For example, not all prisoners whom we regard as "political" are imprisoned on political charges, such as "anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda": many are sentenced on trumped-up criminal charges.

The Foreign Secretary cannot therefore agree with Doctor Orlov's plea that the CSCE signatory states should not sign a concluding document at Vienna unless the USSR agrees to a political amnesty. The Soviet authorities would be unlikely to bow to such pressure; and for the West to insist on such linkage would risk halting the CSCE process in its tracks, and preventing us from following through the

/progress



progress that has already been made in the human rights area. The Foreign Secretary considers that this is unfortunately an area where the best is likely to be the enemy of the good. But it is also an area where there is at least the possibility of changes in the scene, either in the form and timing of pressure for a more public commitment on our part or in the form of some fresh Gorbachev initiatives. The Foreign Secretary will, of course, keep the Prime Minister closely informed about any changes of this kind.

Yours ever,

(L Parker)
Private Secretary

C D Powell Esq
10 Downing Street

FROM:

Reference

PRIME MINISTER

DEPARTMENT:

TEL. NO:

Your Reference

BUILDING:

ROOM NO:

SECURITY CLASSIFICATION

Top Secret

Secret

Confidential

Restricted

Unclassified

PRIVACY MARKING

..... In Confidence

CAVEAT

Enclosures flag(s)

TO:

To [unclear]
CV

Copies to:

cc press

Doctor Yury F Orlov
c/o British Consulate General
New York

SUBJECT:

CVF

Thank you very much for your letter of 29 December. I greatly valued our meeting on 28 November. As you know, I hope we can have another talk if you can get over to London some time before my visit to Moscow at the end of March.

I was very interested in your suggestion of a campaign for a universal amnesty for Soviet political prisoners. I am in no doubt that they should all be released, and ~~will~~ ^{shall} do what I can to help. I ~~will~~ ^{shall} consider carefully before my visit how best I can contribute. You can be sure that I ~~will~~ ^{shall} press the case for greater respect for human rights with all my force during my talks in Moscow.

~~You may be sure that we will not subscribe to a concluding document at the Vienna conference that fails to take proper account of our concern for human rights.~~

~~But I do not believe we should ultimately refuse to sign the final document if the USSR do not agree to a complete political amnesty. My fear is that this could stop us from following up the Vienna meeting, and thus actually deprive us of the advantage the Helsinki Accords offer in providing a forum for continuing public scrutiny of the~~

Soviet human rights record.

My very best wishes for 1987.



DRAFT: minute/letter/teleletter/despatch/note

TYPE: Draft/Final 1+

FROM:

Reference

Prime Minister

DEPARTMENT:

TEL. NO:

SECURITY CLASSIFICATION

TO:

Your Reference

- Top Secret
- Secret
- Confidential
- Restricted
- Unclassified

Lord Bethell

CUG

Copies to:

cc final reply to press

PRIVACY MARKING

SUBJECT:

.....In Confidence

Many thanks for your letter of 7 January with which you enclosed a letter from Yuri Orlov about an amnesty for all political prisoners in the Soviet Union.

CAVEAT.....

I have replied to Doctor Orlov, saying that I believe, of course, that all political prisoners should be released and will consider carefully how to contribute to this in my talks in Moscow. I will of course press with all my force while I am there for greater respect for human rights.

COJ.

Enclosures—flag(s).....

U47AAG

Lord Bethell
22/1



SS

10 DOWNING STREET

LONDON SW1A 2AA

From the Private Secretary

8 January 1987

I enclose a copy of a letter to the Prime Minister from Lord Bethell, covering a copy of a letter which Dr. Orlov has apparently written to the Prime Minister and is being transmitted through our Consulate-General in New York.

You will no doubt let me have a draft reply to Dr. Orlov's letter when it arrives. It would be helpful to have at the same time a draft reply to Lord Bethell.

C D POWELL

Colin Budd, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office

GA



10 DOWNING STREET

LONDON SW1A 2AA

From the Private Secretary

8 January 1987

I am replying on behalf of the Prime Minister to your letter of 7 January.

It was helpful to have the copy of Dr. Orlov's letter and we are considering his advice. I shall let you know the outcome.

C D POWELL

The Lord Bethell



FROM
NICHOLAS
BETHELL

TELEPHONE
01-402-6877

73 SUSSEX SQUARE
LONDON W2 2SS

RS/1

The Rt Hon Mrs Margaret Thatcher, MP
10 Downing Street
London SW1

7th January 1987

Dear Margaret,

The enclosed letter addressed to you from Yuri Orlov was handed in a few days ago to our Consulate General in New York. Dr Orlov sent me the enclosed copy of the letter just to make sure that it reached you safely.

I do very much hope that you can take Dr Orlov's advice and make jointly with our allies an approach to the Soviet government, whether publicly or privately, calling for an amnesty for all prisoners of conscience.

There can be no doubt that such an amnesty, if implemented by the Soviet government, would have a tremendous effect on public opinion in all Western countries. It would help to build confidence between East and West. It would be a tremendous step along the road to real detente.

I do hope that you will be able to find a way of pointing out to the Soviet government that such an amnesty would be of great help to us all in ensuring world peace.

Yours ever,

Nicholas

December 29, 1986

Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher
c/o Consulate General of Great Britain
845 Third Avenue
New York, NY

Dear Mrs. Thatcher,

Thank you for taking the time to meet with me last month. As you know, there have been several rapid developments in the USSR since we spoke. Tragically, Anatoly Marchenko, a political prisoner whom I mentioned to you in our meeting, died in prison on December 8. On the other hand, Academician Andrei Sakharov has returned to Moscow and renewed his plea for the release of prisoners of conscience.

Anatoly Marchenko's death will not have been in vain if we can launch a campaign for a universal amnesty of political prisoners in the USSR. This was Marchenko's chief demand in his August 4 appeal announcing his hunger strike. This has been the constant demand of Academician Andrei Sakharov and all dissidents.

The last political amnesty was carried out 30 years ago under Khrushchev. (It actually was a rehabilitation, since official acknowledgement was made that the political prisoners released were innocent.) Although there has not been a political amnesty since Khrushchev's day, his example shows that such an action, in principle, is not impossible for the Soviet leadership.

According to our very incomplete list, at least 800 people known to us would be freed under such a political amnesty. (These are only the people whose cases are known; most likely several thousand more have been tried under such political articles as Art. 70 (anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda) and Art. 190-1 (slander), or under trumped-up criminal charges for politically-motivated reasons, but information is not available.)

Although it is not clear what precise method would be best here, without a doubt the time is ripe now for action at a high level. It would be wonderful if you could raise the question of a universal political amnesty in the USSR, both openly, in public statements, and privately, in closed discussions. I urge you to do this during your forthcoming meetings with Soviet officials in Moscow, in order to avert another tragedy like the death of Marchenko.

The main demand of Shcharansky, myself and others is that the Helsinki signatory states should not sign a concluding document at the Vienna Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe unless the USSR agrees to declare a political amnesty.

Thank you for your support and attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Y. Orlov

Dr. Yury F. Orlov

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