

PRIME MINISTER

MEETING WITH THE CHIEF RABBI

The Chief Rabbi is coming in to see you on Monday. He wants to see you about Soviet Jewry (on which he has sent in considerable background) and about the Government's campaign on AIDS.

On Soviet Jewry you are aware of the enormous degree of interest and concern. Very many people have asked to come to see you. Since you cannot receive them all, you have asked them to put their views in writing. Many, such as the Board of Deputies and the Orthodox Jews, have already done so. It will be very useful to you to have all this material as background for your visit. There are some slightly more promising signs that restrictions on emigration may be eased. You certainly intend to raise the issue with Mr Gorbachev, both the question of emigration and the treatment of Jews in the Soviet Union. But past experience suggests that the effectiveness of representations is in inverse proportion to the amount of public fanfare which accompanies them. And obviously the scope for you to raise specific cases and individuals is limited.

If the Chief Rabbi asks whether you will be meeting any refuseniks in Moscow, you might tell him in strict confidence that you hope to do so (and those whom you hope to meet include Mr and Mrs Begun). But it is vital that news of this is not made known in advance, or there is a risk that difficulties will be placed in the way of the meeting.

The particular point which the Chief Rabbi wants to raise (and the subject of his increasingly irritable correspondence with

the Soviet Ambassador) is the wish of the Conference of European Rabbis to send a delegation to Moscow to discuss the condition of Soviet Jewry. This is not strictly a matter for you, but you could offer to consider whether there is any way you can help.

CDP?

C D POWELL

6 March 1987