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10 DOWNING STREET  
LONDON SW1A 2AA

THE PRIME MINISTER

19 October 1988

Dear Mrs. Woolf.

Thank you for the letter and the flowers which you gave me last Wednesday.

I am not sure that you are right to say that leaving the Soviet Union is harder than ever. Despite continuing unjustified restrictions and the tragic cases which we hear about all too often, it is nevertheless true that the number of Jews allowed to leave the USSR is rising and could well reach 20,000 this year, two and a half times the total allowed to leave in 1987. Whilst it would obviously be better if all those who wished to emigrate were allowed to do so freely, the trend is nevertheless welcome.

I am not satisfied yet that the Soviet Union has irrevocably decided to improve its human rights record. We shall keep up pressure on the Soviet authorities, urging them to move ahead with the new emigration legislation which they have promised, and we shall go on raising specific hardship cases which you and others bring to our attention. We shall certainly not weaken in our resolve on this. But at the same time it is right to recognise that improvements are being made. We and other Western delegations in Vienna have been trying to combine acknowledgement of this with the appropriate mixture of pressure and inducement to persuade the Russians to take the further steps which we all wish to see. We and the United States are very much of the same opinion when it comes to these important issues and our

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delegations work closely and effectively to secure improvements in Soviet performance and commitments. Ambassador Shifter of the United States State Department was in London recently for talks with Foreign and Commonwealth Office officials precisely about how best to achieve this.

I can assure you that it has all along been our position that the concluding document at Vienna which will serve as a yardstick against which to measure actual Soviet performance, must not only represent a considerable step forward in human rights and other important areas, but that the balance between the humanitarian and security-oriented commitments must also be right. This is a view shared by all Western delegations and is very much at the head of our agenda as Vienna moves into its concluding stages.

Yours sincerely

Raymond Shifter

Mrs. Cecily Woolf





CF  
papers

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

17 October 1988

Dear Charles,

Brighton and Hove Committee for Soviet Jewry

You and Nigel Wicks both wrote on 12 October to ask for an early draft reply to the letter handed to the Prime Minister by Mrs Woolf.

The so-called 35's are very much the hard line of the Soviet Jewry lobby in the UK. They seem to have heard that the Americans are wobbling on their conditions for agreeing to a Moscow human rights conference although the letter does not say so. Ambassador Shifter, Assistant Secretary for Human Rights at the US State Department, called at the FCO on 12 October to explain the latest US position and to explore UK intentions following an appeal from Mr Shultz to consider a common set of pre-conditions. I have already written to you about this.

The National Council for Soviet Jewry with whom we are also in regular contact tell us that a decision to agree to a Moscow conference in circumstances where everyone else is prepared to go along with it would be accepted by the majority of the Jewish lobby so long as significant and real improvements such as the release of all the long-standing refuseniks had been achieved.

The present reply therefore focusses on general reassurances.

Yours ever,  
L Parker

(L Parker)  
Private Secretary

C D Powell Esq  
PS/No 10 Downing Street

DRAFT: minute/letter/teleletter/despatch/note

TYPE: Draft/Final 1+

FROM: Prime Minister

Reference  
PO3AAH

DEPARTMENT:

TEL. NO:

SECURITY CLASSIFICATION

- Top Secret
- Secret
- Confidential
- Restricted
- Unclassified

TO:  
 Mrs Cecily Woolf  
 Secretary  
 Brighton and Hove Committee for Soviet Jewry  
 12 Wilbury Gardens  
 Hove  
 E Sussex BN3 6HY

Your Reference

Copies to:

*DEZA*

*To [unclear]*

PRIVACY MARKING

.....In Confidence

CAVEAT.....

SUBJECT:

Thank you for the letters and the flowers which you gave me on Wednesday. I hope that I shall continue to deserve them!

I am not sure that you are right to say that leaving the Soviet Union is harder than ever. Despite continuing unjustified restrictions and the tragic cases which we hear about all too often, it is nevertheless true that the number of Jews allowed to leave the USSR is rising and could well reach 20,000 this year, two and a half times the total allowed to leave in 1987. Whilst we ~~should~~ <sup>it would obviously be better if all</sup> naturally like to see all those who wish to emigrate <sup>yes</sup> allowed to do so freely, the trend is nevertheless welcome.

Naturally I am <sup>not</sup> far from satisfied yet that the Soviet Union has irrevocably decided to improve its human rights record. We shall keep up pressure on the Soviet authorities, urging them to move ahead with the new emigration legislation which they have promised, and we shall go on raising specific hardship cases which you and others bring to our

Enclosures—flag(s).....



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attention. We shall certainly not weaken in our resolve on this. But at the same time it is right to recognise that improvements are being made. We and other Western delegations in Vienna have been trying to combine acknowledgement of this with the appropriate mixture of pressure and inducement to persuade the Russians to take the further steps which we all wish to see. We and the United States are very much of the same opinion when it comes to these important issues and our delegations work closely and effectively to secure improvements in Soviet performance and commitments. Ambassador Shifter of the US State Department was in London recently for talks with FCO officials precisely about how best to achieve this.

I can assure you that it has all along been our position that the concluding document at Vienna which will serve as a yardstick against which to measure actual Soviet performance, must not only represent a considerable step forward in human rights and other important areas, but that the balance between the humanitarian and security-oriented commitments must also be right. This is a view shared by all Western delegations and is very much at the head of our agenda as Vienna moves into its concluding stages.

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Mrs. C. Woolf

14/10



File No

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Case 17/10

10 DOWNING STREET  
LONDON SW1A 2AA

*From the Private Secretary*

12 October 1988

I enclose a copy of a letter handed to the Prime Minister in Brighton this morning by the Secretary of the Brighton and Hove Committee for Soviet Jewry. In handing it over, Mr. Woolf claimed that the United Kingdom was under heavy pressure from the United States to accept unjustified compromises.

The Prime Minister is keen to reply promptly, possibly even on Friday. I should be grateful for a **very early draft reply.**

CHARLES POWELL

Lyn Parker, Esq.,  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.



Brighton and Hove Committee for Soviet Jewry  
Incorporating the 35's (Women's Campaign for Soviet Jewry)

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Mrs. C. Woolf,  
12, Wilbury Gardens,  
Hove, E. Sussex BN3 6HY.

c/o The Rt. Hon. Margaret Thatcher, M.P.,  
Conservative Party Conference,  
Brighton.

12th October, 1988.

Dear Mrs. Thatcher,

Re: Helsinki Review: Final Document at Vienna.

Many thanks for kindly allowing me to present you with this letter and the flowers, which are a token of appreciation for all your help in the past.

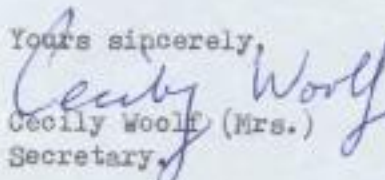
As you know, it is now harder than ever to leave the U.S.S.R. 'Secrecy' restrictions hold for an indefinite period, sometimes 20 years; financial waivers from relatives are withheld because of KGB pressure; and conscription is used as a further 10 years delay. Despite glasnost, we now learn that a new law makes demos virtually impossible with penalties for dissidents of long imprisonment.

On behalf of all Soviet Jewry groups in this country, we therefore beg you not to sign the Final Document at Vienna unless it is linked with unconditional emigration and full human rights. This is a crucial bargaining counter for our oppressed brethren.

Like Sharansky, whom you helped to freedom, we believe that the Soviet Union cannot be trusted to keep future agreements until they have first fulfilled their obligations under the U.N. Declaration of Human Rights.

We applaud the British delegation's present refusal to compromise on these issues and hope that no pressure from the United States will succeed in changing this policy.

Yours sincerely,

  
Cecily Woolf (Mrs.)  
Secretary.

SOU. UNION: Soviet Jewry  
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