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TELEX TO :

THE RT. HON. MARGARET THATCHER, MP  
PRIME MINISTER  
10 DOWNING STREET

GB - LONDON SW1  
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DEAR MRS THATCHER,

IT IS WITH GREAT REGRET THAT I LEARN THAT THE QUESTION OF THE RESTORATION OF CAPITAL PUNISHMENT IS, ONCE AGAIN, TO BE DEBATED IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS. WHILE IN NO WAY DO I WISH TO CALL INTO QUESTION THE RIGHT OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS TO DEBATE ANYTHING IT CHOOSES, I DO STRONGLY FEEL THAT WERE SUCH A VOTE TO RECORD A MAJORITY RESPONSE TO THE QUESTION, IT WOULD BE AN EXTRAORDINARY AND TERRIBLE DECISION. BRITAIN WOULD BE TAKING A GREAT STEP BACKWARDS FROM ITS POSITION OF MORAL AUTHORITY BOTH IN THE COMMUNITY AND IN THE COMMONWEALTH. SUCH A RETROGRADE STEP COULD NOT FAIL TO HAVE NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES FOR YOUR COUNTRY'S LAUDABLE STANCE ON HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE WORLD.

IT WOULD CONTRADICT THE TERMS OF THE EUROPEAN CONVENTION ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE UNITED NATIONS CHARTER ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT IN JUNE 1981 AGAINST THE DEATH PENALTY.

I FULLY RECOGNISE THAT THERE WILL BE A FREE VOTE ON THE ISSUE AND THAT THEREFORE EVERY MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT WILL BE SEARCHING HIS OWN SOUL, AND NOT THAT OF HIS PARTY, FOR THE DECISION HE WILL TAKE. I WOULD NEVERTHELESS RESPECTFULLY ASK YOU TO OPPOSE THE RESTORATION OF THE DEATH PENALTY IN GREAT BRITAIN.

YOURS SINCERELY,

PIETER DANKERT

LUXEMBOURG, 11.7.1983

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