



CONFIDENTIAL

Prime Minister

FCS/82/107

CHIEF SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY

We have other options to look into. I have written to the Home Secretary and other departments about this. I will have a meeting with the Home Secretary on this. I will have a meeting with the Home Secretary on this. I will have a meeting with the Home Secretary on this.

Minuto note. dependents which other countries.

A.J.C. 29/7.

Polish Refugees

1. In correspondence between us on this subject in May, we touched upon the issue of Polish detainees wishing to leave Poland to settle in the UK and what our response to their applications might be.
2. As indicated in my minute of 11 May, our policy and that of our partners has been to make known to the Polish authorities our strong disapproval of any attempt to force Polish detainees or others in Poland to emigrate. This view was expressed forcefully both in the European Council Statement of 31 March and in the Luxembourg Communiqué of NATO Foreign Ministers of 18 May.
3. Although we believe our efforts have been successful in deterring a larger number of applicants, there has nevertheless been a steady trickle of requests from Poles wishing to leave their country. The total number of such applications is now believed to stand in the region of 3,000; the majority of which have been addressed to the US, the FRG and French embassies. The UK so far has received approximately 90 settlement applications upon which no action has yet been taken.
4. Notwithstanding the earlier Western decision to resist applications made under pressure from the Polish authorities, a number of our allies have now taken steps to admit some applicants to their countries and the majority of our European Community partners are processing settlement applications. The US and the FRG have taken the lead, the former agreeing to take some 150 ex-detainees and their families provided they meet a number of criteria which show that they would be under political threat if they remained in Poland. The FRG have likewise agreed to admit a number of ex-detainees.



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5. In the light of these moves, we have come under renewed pressure from some of our allies to give a clearer indication of our own thinking on this issue and of our willingness to share the burden now falling upon Western Governments. We can expect this pressure to grow and to be reinforced in Parliament and in the press once news of the FRG and US response becomes widely known.

6. In these circumstances, I think it would be right now to adopt the approach outlined by Willie Whitelaw in his letter of 3 April as the basis for a suitable UK response to this problem. As you will be aware, the criteria specified by the Home Secretary for processing these applications: viz a general requirement for refugee status, links with the UK and the provision of adequate UK sponsorship, including accommodation, closely followed those adopted for use in processing applications from Poles in Austria. As such, they should provide a workable selection process intended to minimise the burden imposed upon HMG.

7. In our earlier correspondence you expressed concern that our response to applications from Polish refugees should take account of other potential obligations whether towards those Poles already in the UK or as a result of the Falklands conflict.

8. On the first of these issues, I understand that of the original 2-3,000 Poles in the UK at the time of martial law, only some 800 now remain and that this number is decreasing as many of these Poles are returning to their native country. So far only a third of this number have applied for permanent settlement in this country and this total may further decrease as the situation in Poland clarifies. By comparison with the problems faced by some of our partners and allies therefore, our figures are modest. It would not be understood by them or by the public more generally

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if we were to adduce this as a major stumbling block to UK acceptance or at least some ex-detainees.

9. Furthermore, it now seems clear that we will not be faced with an influx of large numbers of people from the Falklands or of refugees of British origin from the Argentine. I understand that only some 30-40 families from the Islands now remain in the UK and these are expected to return soon.

10. Against this background I hope you will agree that we should now proceed on the basis agreed earlier with the Home Secretary to process settlement applications in accordance with the stipulated criteria. As with the Poles in Austria, we do not think it would be desirable to set a quota; equally we do not expect selection on this basis to result in the admission of large numbers of Poles. In line with our practice towards applications from Poles in Austria, we will keep you informed if it should appear that our intake might be higher than anticipated.

11. In view of the evident sensitivity of this issue, and our wish not to encourage the Polish authorities to increase their pressure on Poles to emigrate, it would seem inappropriate to make any public announcement. I suggest however that if my proposals are acceptable, our officials should consult together about defensive press briefing.

12. I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister, members of 'H' Committee and Sir R Armstrong.

(FRANCIS PYM)

Foreign and Commonwealth Office
27 July 1982

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