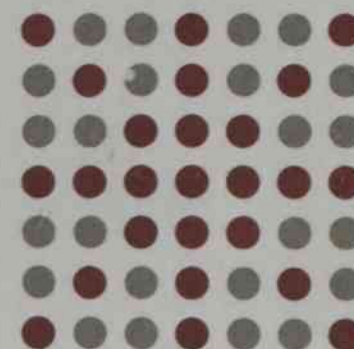


The British Council

R20/10



From the Chairman

Sir David Orr MC LLD

The Right Hon Margaret Thatcher MP  
Prime Minister  
10 Downing Street  
LONDON  
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Promoting cultural, educational  
and technical co-operation between  
Britain and other countries

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20 October 1988

*Pl keep in  
briefing book*

*Dear Prime Minister*

I am delighted that your visit to Poland is on again and that you will have a chance to see something of our work there. I am enclosing a short note on it.

Poland is particularly interesting as we operate without diplomatic status and as a result the Poles give us great freedom. There is a tremendous response to the work we do and a good part of it is paid for by them.

Your visit will be a great filip to our staff and will throw a spotlight on all we are trying to achieve. I am most grateful that you have made the time available for this visit.

*Yours sincerely  
David*

*David Orr*

## THE BRITISH COUNCIL IN POLAND

NOTE FOR THE PRIME MINISTER'S VISIT: NOVEMBER 1988

### 1. AIMS

To meet the high demand in Poland for contact with Britain and British ideas, in particular

- to improve the teaching of English at secondary and university level;
- to provide access to British books and periodicals;
- to promote collaboration in science, technology and medicine, particularly through establishing links between research teams;
- to provide examples of the best in British performing and visual arts.

### 2. BACKGROUND

The Council has worked in Poland since 1938 and so celebrates its 50th anniversary this year. The formal framework for its operation is provided by the Anglo-Polish Cultural Convention signed in 1978. It allows greater flexibility than similar agreements with other East European countries; in Poland the Council is not restricted by the fixed, rigid pattern of quotas of exchanges typical of work elsewhere in the Soviet bloc. The office in Warsaw, known locally as the British Institute, is the Council's biggest in East Europe: it has recently been refurbished and extended to enlarge the library and to incorporate a purpose-built cinema and exhibition area. Poland is the only Soviet bloc country where Council staff are non-diplomatic and are allowed to operate independently of the Embassy. The budget for 1988/89 is £1,640,000, almost all from government grant. (This includes the cost of HQ services.)

### 3. PRINCIPAL ACTIVITIES

- **English Studies Support.** This programme accounts for 45% of the Representation's activity and works through the Polish education system to improve the quality and effectiveness of the teaching of English language and literature. In five university towns, the Council has set up English Language Centres or "studia", at Polish request, for teaching English to Polish academic staff who need the language for research and conference purposes. The studium model has been pioneered in Poland and the Council is now looking to extend it to other parts of East Europe. The Council also funds six English lecturers in Polish universities.

- **Books and Libraries.** The Council's library in Warsaw is open access with a large and heavily-used loan and reference stock. There is extraordinarily high demand for British books and periodicals in Poland. The Council focuses on meeting the needs of academics, professionals, teachers and students and provides access to British data-bases carrying scientific and medical information as well as bibliographies. Outside Warsaw, the Council stocks three British Reading Rooms in key university towns, which are open to all comers: running costs and staffing are met by the universities. A fourth Reading Room opens in November 1988 in Lodz and there is demand for more to open in other provincial towns.

- **Interchange.** 550 professional visits between Poland and Britain take place every year on a cost-sharing basis. These are mainly in science and technology and English language and range from short-term stays to full postgraduate scholarships and academic links between institutes and research teams. Opportunity to provide management training for Polish industry and commerce has recently arisen. This has important implications for British exports; the Council will be giving high priority to developing work in this sector. As a first step, the Council, with the FCO and the Polish Chamber of Foreign Trade, is setting up a seminar on export marketing with British experts and Polish exporters.

- **Arts.** Few countries are more receptive than Poland to arts events. If suitably selected they offer a window on to an open society. They are used to demonstrate British excellence to a wide audience and develop contacts between artists and teachers. In addition to public performances, British companies and artists often undertake workshops and masterclasses for Polish students: these have attracted large numbers in Warsaw and outside the capital. The English Stage Company's recent productions of 'The Recruiting Officer' and 'Our Country's Good' will be presented at the Warsaw International Theatre Meeting in November. Also in November a British film week, of contemporary films, will be held in Warsaw.

#### 4. STAFF

Representative - Richard Alford, OBE.  
4 other London staff and 34 local staff.