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*Dear Charles*

Thank you for your letter of <sup>11ap.</sup> 30 October. I attach for you some briefing on educational issues for the Prime Minister's forthcoming trip to Poland.

*Yours ever,*

*Tom*

T B JEFFERY  
Private Secretary



## EXCHANGE ARRANGEMENTS WITH POLAND

1. Under the auspices of the Central Bureau for Educational Visits and Exchanges, exchange arrangements embrace teacher and pupil exchanges.

### Teacher Exchanges

2. The best prospect is for developing perhaps ten short (three week) study visits which need not be language-based, and where each teacher might pursue a particular topic within, for example, a European studies context. There would be funding implications arising from teachers' air fares and from the need for supply cover during their absence abroad.

3. Arrangements are in place with Hungary and Bulgaria under which they pay for UK teachers to spend a year teaching, through the medium of English, English language, Physics, Mathematics or Biology. There is currently no such programme with Poland but the existence of specialist English language schools in Poland clearly provides potential for developing one, involving perhaps six teachers in the first instance. Expenses are normally borne by the host Government, though some modest administrative costs would fall to be met within the UK.

4. Each year, some 10-15 teachers from UK attend a UNESCO-sponsored course on Polish culture, history and language. The medium of teaching is English and the UK teachers tend to be international or European studies specialists.

### Pupil Exchange

5. For some years now, UNESCO has sponsored "language camps" in Poland. Currently, three teams of ten teachers and ten sixth form pupils visit Poland in the second half of July to teach English to Polish pupils aged 15-17. The competition from Polish pupils to attend these courses is intense: selection is by ability and is thus mainly from the specialist English language schools. The entire course is conducted in English. The scheme is also over-subscribed amongst sixth formers in UK and would thus be capable of extension, to perhaps 5 or 6 teams of ten



teachers and ten sixth formers. The one caveat is that it is important the sixth formers are properly supervised and monitored by teachers, amongst whom pressure to take part is currently less intense. The UK team pay their own fare, with a £50 subsidy from the Youth Exchange Centre (see also below). Board and lodging in Poland is provided free of charge.

6. It must be acknowledged that pupil exchanges with Poland would be a low priority for almost all schools at present: an equivalent invitation from the Central Bureau in respect of exchanges with Hungary produced a nil response. It might be possible to develop say six pilots involving a careful selection of European studies courses with exchanges, of perhaps 15-20 pupils in each direction, closely related to specific aspects of the curriculum. These might subsequently be capable of extension though the numbers involved would never be large. These pilots would need specific funding through the Central Bureau.

#### Youth Exchange Centre (YEC)

7. In 1987/8 nine reciprocal exchanges were funded under YEC auspices involving some 150 young people in each direction; already in the financial year 1988/9, five exchanges have occurred involving 120 young people in each direction. The final figure is expected to be ten exchanges in 1988/9, involving 240 young people in each direction; with expansion to twenty exchanges, involving some 500 young people in each direction, in 1989/90. The YEC also fund higher education exchanges; 5 in 1987/8 involving some 50 students in each direction; and 5 already in 1988/9, involving a similar number of students. The final 1988/9 figure is expected to be eight exchanges (80 students in each direction) with expansion to twelve exchanges (120 students in each direction) in 1989/90.

8. The British Embassy has agreed to issue free visas to Polish young people taking part in YEC-sponsored exchanges.

International Relations Department

1 November 1988



SECRETARY OF STATE'S MEETING WITH PROFESSOR JACEK FISIAK  
(OBE) MINISTER OF NATIONAL EDUCATION, POLAND, 28 OCTOBER 1988

Professor Fisiak explained that he had been in post for some 14 days. His previous position had been Vice Chancellor of Poznan University. He was retaining his chair of English at that university while serving as Minister of National Education. He told the Secretary of State that he had written a grammar of Middle English (published by OUP); had visited this country 45 times; and had taught at University College, London and at the University of California. He was fluent in well-nigh perfectly accented English. He said that he was highly prejudiced in favour of this country.

Professor Fisiak said that he was determined radically to increase education exchanges between Britain and Poland. One of his first decisions Minister of Education had been to make English language study obligatory for university students of Maths and Physics. While Russian was the only obligatory language in the school system, there were, in each Poland's 49 provinces, schools specialising in English and teaching much of their curriculum through the medium of the English language.

Professor Fisiak said that Polish students in teacher training studying to teach Russian, German and French already visited the USSR, East Germany and France. He hoped that a similar scheme might be established with this country. He also hoped that teacher exchanges - which Mr Payne confirmed were little developed at present - might be instituted. Professor Fisiak also hoped that a substantial school exchange scheme might be put in place. The Speaker of House of Commons had recently visited Poland and had offered to set up an exchange programme with a secondary school in his constituency. Professor Fisiak proposed that a scheme for exchanging 1,000 pupils each way should be developed. English pupils would be accommodated in private Polish homes. The Poles would pay the travel cost of their pupils coming to England. In response, the Secretary of State said that he

would like to give very serious consideration to Professor Fisiak's proposal. He thought that the target of 1,000 pupils moving each way might be a little ambitious but would like to see some exchanges taking place in the summer of 1989. The Polish Ambassador said that his Embassy had a list of English schools with which contact had already been made. The Secretary of State suggested that the list might form a basis for next summer's proposed exchanges. Professor Fisiak strongly implied but did not insist that the exchanges should take place during the summer vacation which, in Poland, starts at the beginning of July.

Professor Fisiak then described the following areas in which he hoped cooperation could be significantly developed:



- i. University Exchanges. Professor Fisiak said that there were already a substantial number of University Exchanges between Poland and Britain, naming, in this country, the Universities of Sussex, Bristol, Strathclyde and UCL. He said that he would like to see the development of joint degrees between British and Polish Universities, with joint appointments of staff. On his present visit, he had been to Cranfield and arranged for 10 biotechnologists to go to Poland.
- ii. The Polish Language. Professor Fisiak said that there were only two lectures in Polish in the UK. He would like to see that figure increase to 5. The Poles were happy to contribute to the costs.
- iii. Handicapped Children. Professor Fisiak said that he would be happy to invite 50 teachers of Handicapped Children to visit Poland.
- iv. History and Geography Textbooks. Professor Fisiak said that there had been a meeting in 1984 to discuss the content of History and Geography Textbooks and that there would be another such meeting in 1989. He would like to see more teaching about England in Poland and more teaching about Poland in this country. He hoped that cooperation in the production of textbooks could be encouraged.
- v. Computers in Schools. Professor Fisiak said that the introduction of computers into schools was one of his highest priorities. He took pride in having introduced information technology into Poznan University. He said that the Poles had already bought a large number of IBM machines. They had been able to do so with Polish currency. They were now building their own secondary school computers. In response, the Secretary of State urged Professor Fisiak to make contact with experts in this country, particularly Acorn.



## 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.