



Poland. ②

Prime Minister

To note

A-7 C. 7/5

Treasury Chambers, Parliament Street, SW1P 3AG

The Rt Hon Francis Pym MC MP  
Secretary of State  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office  
Downing Street  
London SW1A 2AL

4 May 1982

POLISH REFUGEES

I have seen your minute of 19 April to Willie Whitelaw about Polish refugees in reply to his letter of 3 April to Peter Carrington.

I can well understand that, as you say, we may come under some pressure, at home and abroad, to do more to help the Poles. We are, however, already allowing a number of them to extend their stay in this country, in recognition of the political position in Poland. At the same time we may have to accept evacuees from the Falkland Islands, and face the possibility of having to handle significantly large numbers of our own people who may have to leave Argentina.

In view of these factors, and our recent experience with the expensive and still uncompleted Vietnamese programme, I am reluctant for this country to respond to the Polish predicament by offering at this stage any commitment to a UK quota or to a Polish 'resettlement' programme.

I do see, of course, that we should expect that a large proportion of the Poles temporarily here will wish to remain. I accept that they should, if necessary, be allowed to do so, and that we should permit family reunions if the Polish authorities make them possible. But such reunions should be on the basis of continued sponsorship for an indefinite period by the Polish emigre community.

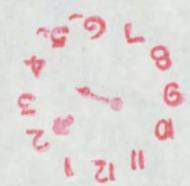
I can see the attraction in Willie Whitelaw's suggestion that we might take some detainees and refugees from Austrian camps on similar terms of sponsorship. But I fear, as I think he does, that this might put too great a burden on the existing Polish community. The result might be that we lose the advantage of

the protection it is currently giving those temporarily resident here, and which it might give to their dependants. I therefore think it is essential to be totally satisfied that any further admissions would be within the capacity of the Polish Community and would not have such an effect.

I am sorry not to be as positive as perhaps you may wish, but I think we should be very careful in taking on any further commitments at this time.

I am sending copies of this letter to the Prime Minister, members of H Committee and Sir Robert Armstrong.

LEON BRITTAN



4 MAY 1982