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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

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1 November 1988
R. Smith

Dear Charles,

Thank you for your letter of 26 October, covering a further letter from Sir Bernard Braine MP about Mr Brian Wrobel's proposal for a British-Polish seminar on human rights.

Sir Bernard deals with the possible pitfalls outlined in the Prime Minister's letter to him of 4 October. On the first of these, he is probably right to say that the Polish authorities would be less likely to refuse passports if the Prime Minister endorsed the seminar, especially following the granting of a passport to Dr Onyskiewicz (about whose case we had protested to the authorities following representations from Sir Bernard). There are of course other possible problems. The Polish authorities will know of Mr Wrobel from his ill-fated attempt to organise a human rights seminar in Warsaw in November 1987 through official Polish channels. On that occasion the Poles involved refused to discuss the subject although it had been the stated objective of the meeting. This failure is one reason why Mr Wrobel has sought Parliamentary - and the Prime Minister's - support this time.

The Polish authorities may now be less inclined to object to a seminar on this subject following the successful conference on human rights organised by Solidarity in Krakow in August (which James Moorhouse MEP attended and reported to the Prime Minister in his letter of 19 September).

Overall this idea seems to be taking satisfactory shape, and the Prime Minister may feel it justifies her support in principle and is worth mentioning to the Poles during her visit. If so, she might say that she understands that the Parliamentary Human Rights Group in Britain are planning a British-Polish seminar on human rights in Oxford next April as the first step to establishing a regular non-governmental dialogue on the subject. They hope to invite about six Poles. The Prime Minister might say that, although this would be a completely non-governmental project, she considers it worthwhile



and hopes that the Polish authorities will also give it their support. She might add that she was impressed by the open debate at the human rights conference in Krakow, and that she would like to think that bilateral contacts on human rights could continue in that vein. She would certainly hope that the authorities would put no difficulties in the way of the British proposal.

/ I attach a draft reply to Sir Bernard.

Yours ever,

(L Parker)
Private Secretary

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