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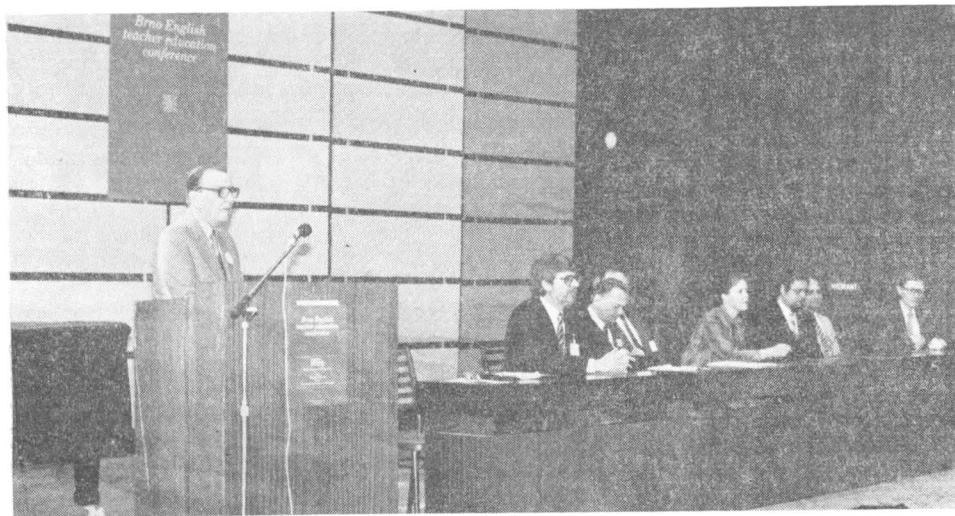
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**BRNO ENGLISH TEACHER EDUCATION
CONFERENCE**
MASARYK UNIVERSITY, FACULTY OF ARTS,
6–9 MAY 1991



In 1986 and 1989 Josef Hladký organized and hosted two national conferences of English and American Studies that brought to Brno scholars from the English departments of all Czechoslovak universities. The conferences were such a success that when the British Council started looking for a suitable venue for a first-ever British-Czechoslovak conference on English Language Teaching in the autumn of 1990, they could not have been better advised than to turn to Josef Hladký's expertise and experience. And Hladký and his team at Masaryk University rose to the challenge and with Mrs Rosalind Burford and her colleagues from the English Language Promotion Unit of the British Council in London prepared a conference that will enter the history of English Language Teaching in Czechoslovakia as the beginning of a new era in British-Czechoslovak cooperation.

The conference, whose importance was underlined by the visit of HRH the Prince of Wales, who addressed the participants on Wednesday 8 May, and HRH

the Princess of Wales, was a working meeting of teacher trainers and teachers from the U.K. and Czechoslovakia as well as the launch of the new five-year British Council English Teaching Initiative for Eastern and Central Europe in Czechoslovakia. It was opened by Professor Jan Firbas, who illustrated the usefulness of the results achieved by the Prague School for the language teacher and language learner by concentrating on the differences in communicative value displayed by the English and the Czech verbs in the flow of communication, and by Professor Henry G. Widdowson, who dealt with the word, sentence and context in the light of the research into discourse as carried out by applied linguistics. Then the 200 Czech and Slovak participants, 20 British presenters and 20 in-country British lecturers spent 4 very full days working in 20 workshops in which they covered the most important issues of English Language Teaching and Teacher Training: cultural studies in ELT, evaluation and assessment, testing, teaching materials, classroom management, language learning through radio and TV, student-centred learning, teacher development and teacher training skills. The conference was accompanied by an exhibition of books and teaching materials prepared by the British Council and by leading British ELT publishers, who rounded up the event by a series of methodology workshops where they introduced their publications to the Czechoslovak conference participants and Czechoslovak publishers.

Thanks to the meticulous work of Hladký's team, the expertise of the workshop leaders and the emphasis on practical issues, BETEC 1991 was much more than just a conference: it was four days of intensive learning and exchange of ideas and experience that should prove beneficial to all its participants.

Miroslav Pospíšil