

FROM: T McCUSKER
CCRU
DATE: 17 JANUARY 1992

cc: Mr Ledlie
Mr Hamilton
Mr McNeill
Mr Walker

PS/PAYMASTER GENERAL (B&L)

FAMILIES AGAINST INTIMIDATION AND TERROR (FAIT)

1. Purpose of Submission

This paper considers an application from FAIT to CCRU requesting core funding to enable FAIT to develop its work both in supporting the victims of paramilitary punishment attacks and in highlighting the human rights abuses of paramilitary organisations.

2. Background

Around 2 years ago a Downpatrick woman, Nancy Gracey, whose son was shot by PIRA in a punishment shooting, began to publicly challenge the paramilitaries and to attract media attention. Subsequently a number of other people joined her in this task and the FAIT organisation was established. Its constitution states its objects as:-

to promote the well-being of all families in Northern Ireland, and in particular to help families to live free from intimidation and terror from paramilitary groups;

to provide support services for families who have suffered intimidation and terror;

to provide services to prevent families from suffering intimidation and terror;

to provide services to remove the fear of intimidation and terror from families;

to promote and carry out, or assist in promoting and carrying out, research, surveys and investigations;

to organise or assist in organising meetings, lectures, classes and exhibitions, and publish, or assist in publishing reports, periodicals, recordings, books and other documents and information;

to obtain, collect and receive money and funds by way of grants, donations, legacies, subscriptions, or other lawful methods; and

to do all such other lawful things as maybe necessary to the attainment of the above objects.

3. Following its formation, FAIT became involved in a number of cases where there were threats of paramilitary punishment. Their most publicised involvement being in relation to the "Newry Hostages Campaign". In that incident they were heavily involved in orchestrating the campaign on behalf of the families of those who had been threatened and also the associated publicity. In this they were heavily supported by the Peace Train Organisation which includes a number of prominent people, including politicians from both sides. That incident brought the organisation into a certain amount of conflict within the area and with the Roman Catholic church and provisional IRA. At one level criticism related to their handling of the incident and at another to their perceived political orientation. The provisional IRA made considerable propaganda suggesting that FAIT was simply the mouthpiece of the Workers Party/Official IRA. This was strongly denied.

In the past the organisation relied mainly on voluntary activity and also some temporary funding through Charitable Trusts, the Northern Ireland Community Relations Council, and lately from CCRU. Funding from CCRU was a temporary arrangement agreed with the Minister of State to enable the organisation to continue to function while it was attempting to develop a strategic plan and operational programme. CCRU has contributed £4,665 to the organisation over the last 5 months.

5. Project Proposal

FAIT has submitted a project which outlines two broad areas for which they require support:-

research and the highlighting of abuses
support for families and individuals

6. On research, FAIT intend to undertake work to highlight the human rights abuses of paramilitary organisations. In essence what they hope to do is to document abuses of human rights through punishment shootings, exclusions, job losses, etc and then to highlight these abuses through the media, both local and international. They also intend to support any individual or organisation who wish to highlight their case publicly. They have approached various Charitable Trusts for funding support and they anticipate that some of this aspect of their work will attract recognition, provided their work is recognised by Government.
7. In terms of support for individuals and families they see this in 3 stages:-

Crisis intervention
Short-term support
Long-term support

crisis intervention is seen as an immediate response to a paramilitary threat of punishment or exclusion. The response might take the form of transportation away from a particular locality to a safer venue within Northern Ireland, or possibly the highlighting of a particular exclusion order. Annex 1 provides details of the extent of reported punishment incidents in recent years.

9. Short-term approaches involve co-operation with statutory bodies and others in finding short-term accommodation and using various networks to ensure the safe return of individuals to their homes.
10. In the longer term there may be no alternative for an individual to leaving Northern Ireland for a prolonged period. This requires the organisation to develop a support network in Great Britain, and also to ensure continuing support for the individual and his or her family.

11. Other Provision

FAIT is not the only organisation involved in this work. Corrymeela, Peace People, Bryson House and Base 2 are involved in helping the mainly young people under threat. The first three do not in any way specialise or proclaim their role in the work but their prominence as peace groups automatically attracts people in trouble. Base 2 is a specialist organisation which acts as a contact point for young people under threat and also provides contacts in Great Britain. It is funded as a pilot project through church related charitable bodies in Great Britain.

12. The main difference between these groups and FAIT is the use of publicity. FAIT adopts a role of highlighting the paramilitary issues while the others concentrate on their work with individuals. Co-ordination between groups has not been great and there have been claims about FAIT being more interested in publicity than substance. Allegations have also been made about some groups having to pick up the mistakes of others. The

catutory sector tends to be on the fringes of this work and usually networks with the different groups involved. CCRU and the Community Relations Council are examining ways of ensuring better co-ordination.

13. Funding Requirements

FAIT have submitted a fairly ambitious budget proposal of around £80,000 for the first year and around £55-£60,000 for subsequent years. This includes office support costs plus the salary of a co-ordinator, an advice/support worker and a secretary/book-keeper.

14. Support of this magnitude from CCRU could only be justified if FAIT demonstrated that the totality of its work fell clearly within the community relations remit, and that its credibility at community level and its professionalism in this work were such that there was no room for doubt about its potential success.

15. In terms of a community relations remit, a fairly broad view would have to be taken. The work does not sit easily within the traditional or accepted sense of community relations in terms of promoting greater cross-community contact or in increasing mutual understanding. It has to be acknowledged however, that this particular form of paramilitary activity, whether in carrying out punishment shootings or implementing exclusion orders, is clearly a symptom of the overall community relations problems in Northern Ireland. CCRU considers that their proposed work programme, particularly that in highlighting incidents of abuse and the human rights dimension could contribute to greater understanding about the issues underlying the divisions in Northern Ireland and could be considered under the CR Programme.

16. There have been various reactions to the work of FAIT. Its preference to publicise the issues involved has drawn criticism from some, mainly those already involved in the work, but also

inn Fein and PIRA. This is a risk strategy for FAIT because there has been a suggestion that PIRA have indicated that anyone using FAIT will get a heavier sentence. It is therefore a critical issue for them in terms of achieving credibility on the streets. If they are seen as publicity seekers and political opportunists then neither victims or families will use them and their role will greatly diminish.

17. On the political side there is no doubt that some prominent members of FAIT have links with the Workers Party, but there is no evidence of paramilitary involvement. The PAB view is that the political links are strong enough to cause concern and that the two prominent people and are not particularly credible people. Other bodies, for example, NICRC and the Probation Service, have also expressed concerns about FAIT's organisational and political naivety.

18. Recommendation

These issues can be summarised quite simply. There is no disagreement that FAIT is one of a number of groups providing a valuable and necessary service for people under threat of paramilitary violence and for their families. There are few, if any, community interventions which are more dangerous and difficult and groups working in this area are deserving of support. Neither can all of their work be replicated by the statutory authorities. Against this, FAIT is both organisationally and politically naive and the provision of financial support by Government carries some risk of political embarrassment, either through the activities of FAIT itself or from other organisations, including PIRA.

19. The view of CCRU is that despite these reservations about FAIT it should be given a chance to develop a cohesive and structured programme. There are always likely to be reservations about new organisations and new approaches, and political connections always

carry some risks. There would also be a cost to FAIT in accepting Government funding. They are not so naive as to be unaware of this and are content to accept this risk against the benefits and opportunities which funding would provide further to develop their services. There are also some political implications in refusing to help. Most reservations about FAIT are on a professional plane which can be corrected by strict funding conditions, but these would not be known or appreciated by a wider audience which sees FAIT as a group of courageous people prepared to take on the paramilitaries.

20. CCRU proposes that Government should give FAIT some funding for a pilot period of 12 months subject to fairly firm conditions in terms of operation and strategy and also subject to a comprehensive review before any further funding could be committed. A grant of £30,000 would be reasonable support for a 12 month pilot and CCRU would insist on additional conditions to the normal funding agreement. These would include:

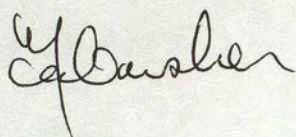
- (1) a requirement to have a liaison committee consisting of representatives from FAIT, CCRU, NICRC; the Probation Service; and possibly an independent academic. The remit of this group would be to consider and advise on the development proposals for FAIT and also to provide linkages to other organisations in the field.
- (2) FAIT would be required to enter into a co-ordinated arrangement with the other organisations involved in this area. CCRU and NICRC will be taking this forward.
- (3) Any suggestion of the promotion of party political support will result in the immediate withdrawal of funds.
- (4) FAIT must provide CCRU with full details of the existing membership of FAIT and undertake to provide details of new membership.

- (5) There will be a formal evaluation of FAIT's work by an independent consultant which will form the basis for the consideration of any further funding.

21. The Paymaster General is invited to:

- (1) note the background to the development of FAIT and the rationale behind the funding application to CCRU;
- (2) agree that, despite some reservations about organisational and political immaturity, FAIT should receive some Government support;
- (3) agree that a contribution of £30,000 be made towards support costs of FAIT for a pilot period of 12 months during which time strict conditions about the development of the work and its evaluation will be enforced.

22. The Paymaster General may wish to discuss.



T McCUSKER

TMCC1823/1/92