



NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE
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Sir David Holden KBE CB
Stormont Castle
Belfast
BT4 3ST

Our ref: NI 17/18/01

22 February 1973

David

APPEAL OF CONSCIENCE FOUNDATION

You will have seen from the note of the meeting that the Secretary of State met Rabbi Schneier, Father Campion and Mr Joseph P Williams as arranged on 7 February.

2. The proposal as described by the Foundation representatives turned out to be a scheme for the building of a new town (sic!). It would be managed by a Corporation, and financed by Government grants and the issue of stock. I enclose a list of the principal points made by Mr Williams when outlining the project. You will note that the Foundation have not reached a conclusion about the kind of factory they would be prepared to sponsor or support and have thrown the question back to Northern Ireland Ministries by asking for a recommendation. In view of the material sent since last July to the Foundation, it is disappointing in the extreme that they have done no further thinking on this aspect of the scheme.

3. As indicated in the note of the meeting, the Secretary of State made it clear that there would be a number of serious drawbacks to the proposal, not least the provision of a suitable site. I think that the Secretary of State and the rest of us would all be greatly surprised if this grandiose plan ever got off the ground. Nevertheless, there is no doubt that Mr Williams is a wealthy man and has a number of influential friends whose goodwill might be tapped in support of a project providing employment in Northern Ireland. It seems to us here that the best thing now would be to explore the possibility of putting to the Foundation a scheme for opening a factory in an area of high unemployment, suggesting to them that it should be regarded as a pilot scheme. In order to pin them down it

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Sir David Holden KBE CB

22 February 1973

will be necessary to put a concrete proposal to them which will test their willingness to help.

Copies of this letter, with enclosures, have been distributed as shown below.

- 1. All churches and other religious centres and other facilities.
- 2. Schools and other educational centres and other facilities, halls and other amenities with the possibility of providing facilities.
- 3. Schools provided by Government as part of the public school system.
- 4. Housing - integrated estates in a ring around the town centre and other areas.
- 5. Business areas with industry at the perimeter.
- 6. Public houses and other buildings as possible.
- 7. Drains, sewers, etc.
- 8. Dispersal of local people and business.
- 9. Business - focus to be made, business number 12.
- 10. Corporation to make a profit. Stock issued in small enough amounts to allow for small and large subscribers in Northern Ireland, Republic, Great Britain and USA to take shares as well as large subscribers.
- 11. The Foundation and Mr. Williams would interest US industry.
- 12. US industry to help in getting industry started by contributing to production to Northern Ireland factory or factories.
- 13. Northern Ireland Ministry of Commerce to check industry - particularly labour intensive.
- 14. Mr. Jack Lynch proposed as Project Leader if acceptable to NI in light of his connections with the Republic.
- 15. Tax concessions and incentives to be offered up to limit offered by rules.

John Ginnelly
Bill

W J Smith

Copies to: Sir Wm Nield
 Mr P Woodfield
 Mr A C Brooke
 Mr Ewart Bell
 Dr W G H Quigley
 Mr P Jolley
 Mr K Jordan
 Mr Kelvin White - FCO

APPEAL OF CONSCIENCE FOUNDATION

Scheme for new town

1. 30,000 acres required for new town.
2. Contiguous to troubled areas.
3. Town centre earmarked for religious building and administration.
All churches must share halls, committee rooms and other facilities.
4. Schools close to religious centre and must share recreational facilities, halls and other amenities with the community and churches.
5. Schools provided by Government as part of the public school system.
6. Housing - integrated estates in a ring around the town centre and schools.
7. Business area with industry at the perimeter.
8. Public transport - effective and cheap as possible.

Organisations to implement scheme

9. Corporation - Board to run it. Members - local people and American businessmen - Board to be paid. Maximum number 12.
10. Corporation to make a profit. Stock issued in small enough denominations for small man in Northern Ireland, Republic, Great Britain and USA to take shares as well as large subscribers.
11. The Foundation and Mr. Williams would interest US industry.
12. US industry to help in getting industry started by contracting out production to Northern Ireland factory or factories.
13. Northern Ireland Ministry of Commerce to choose industry - preferably labour intensive.
14. Mr. Jack Mulcahy proposed as Project Leader if acceptable to NI in light of his connections with the Republic.
15. Tax concessions and incentives to be offered up to limit allowed by rules.

16. Scheme projected to make maximum use of its emotional appeal.
17. Mr. Williams to fly over to Belfast or London to discuss detailed plan with Northern Ireland officials as soon as Secretary of State gave go ahead.

Associate with previous file



Office of the Secretary of State
for Northern Ireland

Central Secretariat
Stormont Castle
Belfast BT4 3ST
Tel. Belfast 63011

W Slinger Esq
Ministry of Community Relations
STORMONT

13 February 1973

Dear Mr Slinger

Sir David Holden has asked me to pass to you the enclosed copy of the minutes of the meeting between the Secretary of State and the Appeal of Conscience Foundation in London on Wednesday 7 February 1973. He has also asked me to say that he will be in touch with you in the near future to arrange a discussion.

Yours sincerely

Valerie Bowden

V BOWDEN (MISS)
(Personal Assistant)

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NOTE OF A MEETING BETWEEN THE SECRETARY OF STATE AND THE APPEAL
OF CONSCIENCE FOUNDATION AT 5.30 PM ON WEDNESDAY 7 FEBRUARY 1973

| | | |
|----------|--------------------|-----------------------|
| Present: | Secretary of State | Rabbi Arthur Schneier |
| | Mr Lewin | Mr Joseph P Williams |
| | Mr Perkins | Father Campion |

The Foundation was concerned with the conflict in Northern Ireland and the consequences in the United States of America. In 1970 they had sent a fact-finding mission to Northern Ireland and as a result of this had formed the basis of a proposal which they felt could be helpful in the present situation.

The proposed plan as outlined by Mr Williams was to take over an area of some 30,000 acres and build a new town. The new town would be based on a central square which would house all the churches and the town's administration offices. Industry would be based on the perimeter of the city and it was hoped that transport costs could be kept to a minimum. The Foundation would undertake to get the right industry group into the area. The whole project would be a profit making one and low priced stock would be offered preferably to small investors in Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland, Great Britain and the USA. Mr Williams had ^{among his friends} several influential and wealthy people who would be willing to help get the project started. Before the project could be started his Foundation required recommendations from the Secretary of State as to the best type of industry group. The type of industry should be labour intensive in order that employees could be drawn from the more troubled areas of Northern Ireland. Mr Williams went on to recommend a project leader. This would be Mr Jack Mulcahy who had several business interests in the Irish Republic; the Secretary of State had not heard of Mr Mulcahy but he would check on his acceptability to HMG for a project of this sort.

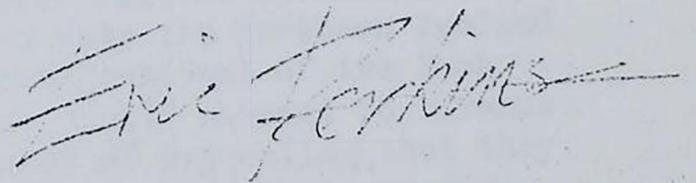
The Secretary of State thanked Mr Williams for explaining his proposals so clearly. This was obviously a very good idea and we would co-operate with the Foundation as much as possible. There were however a number of drawbacks to the proposal.

- a. Of the 1½m population of Northern Ireland over 600,000 lived in Belfast. The worst of the troubles were in the Belfast area and to provide a site for development near here would mean enlarging an already too large community.

- b. Intimidation in Northern Ireland was a major problem which had resulted in housing estates being exclusive to one religion or the other. It would therefore be very difficult to set up an integrated new town.

With regard to the type of industry group to be set up, the Secretary of State pointed out that although industrial training in Northern Ireland was very good the population still lacked advanced skills. It was therefore essential that the new industry should be one that did not require too much precision. He would have to take advice from his officials as to the best type of industry but speaking personally he felt that it would be best in either the shipbuilding or engineering line.

It was agreed that if the idea was to work it should be based on a new town some way away from Belfast but drawing its population from Belfast. Some of the new industrial training centres could be geared specifically for this project and tax concessions etc in Northern Ireland were particularly good. The Secretary of State undertook to inform Mr Williams as soon as possible as to the best kind of industry.



ERIC PERKINS
8 February 1973

Circulation as attached.



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Sir David Holden KBE
Central Secretariat
Stormont Castle
Belfast
BT4 3ST

Your reference

Our reference

Date

1 February 1973

APPEAL OF CONSCIENCE FOUNDATION OF THE USA

Lewin was in correspondence with Sir Harold Black last summer and autumn about the proposal by the Appeal of Conscience Foundation, who are a wealthy and influential American body, to establish a new integrated community incorporating a factory, a school and housing somewhere in the Province.

An interdepartmental meeting was held at Stormont Castle on 23 July to discuss the proposal. While difficulties were seen in parts of the Foundation's approach, it was agreed that they should not be discouraged, and that a meeting with them either in London or Belfast would be desirable. Since then the NIO has sent their President Rabbi Arthur Schneier factual material about industrial development and education in Northern Ireland, and we have continued to remind them that we looked forward to a meeting. In the interim they set up a sub-committee to refine their proposals, but nothing further was heard until the Foreign Office told us this week that Rabbi Schneier was in Europe and was anxious to meet the Secretary of State.

A meeting has now been arranged with the Secretary of State for Wednesday afternoon 7 February in London, and Rabbi Schneier will be accompanied by Mr Joseph Williams, who is principally concerned with the Northern Ireland project. He is the founder of Unicard and a Vice President of the Bank of America. We feel that the Secretary of State should attempt to advance things with the Foundation, probably to the extent of suggesting that they should visit Belfast, either on Thursday 8th or Friday 9th February for further discussions. Should they agree (we have no knowledge of their plans) it will be necessary to make arrangements to receive them at very short notice. If they go to Belfast on Friday Mr Howell would probably wish to be associated with the meeting. We would all have preferred this to have been conducted in a more orderly way; and it is particularly unsatisfactory as far as Belfast is concerned as this is inconclusive until after the meeting with the Secretary of State on Wednesday.

I would be grateful for any views which you may have on the reception of the Foundation, either in London or in Belfast, and particularly on the line the Secretary of State should be advised to take.

I am copying this letter to Mr Brooke, Mr Slea, Dr Quigley, Mr Perham and Mr Slinger, who all attended the July meeting.

N R Cowling

X
did not
come to
Belfast

APPEAL OF CONSCIENCE FOUNDATION

1. A meeting was held in the Conference Room of Stormont Castle at 4.00 pm on Tuesday, 23 July 1972, to discuss the proposal of the above Foundation for financing a project in Northern Ireland. Those present were:-

Sir Harold Black, Central Secretariat

Mr Brook, Ministry of Commerce

Mr Shea, Ministry of Education

Mr Meharg, Ministry of Education

Dr Quigley, Ministry of Health and Social Services

Mr Perham, Ministry of Development

Mr Slinger, Ministry of Community Relations

Mr McAllister, Central Secretariat

2. A general discussion on the proposal took place during which the following points were made:-

- (a) That information about Northern Ireland industrial incentives, areas of high unemployment and successful industrial ventures had already been passed to the Northern Ireland Office for transmission to the Appeal of Conscience Foundation;
- (b) That, while the proposal to establish a factory, a school and community housing followed the normal pattern of development in that creation of employment produced a demand for housing which in turn produced a demand for school places, the three elements in the proposal could not be rigidly tied together. In particular it was noted that the right of parents to choose the appropriate school for their children would have to be regarded as inviolate and there would be difficulties in making attendance of the children at school a condition of employment of either parent;
- (c) That the proposal to establish a school might best be pursued by those responsible for the factory being made trustees of a

voluntary school, thus providing a formal link between the two. It was emphasised that the establishment of a school in any area would be conditional on there being a need for that school, and therefore on there being no surplus of school provision in the area. It was also noted that the minimum number of children necessary to justify the establishment of a primary school would be 75, which would require probably something in the order of 100 houses, and the minimum for a non-selective secondary school would be in the order of 1,600 houses;

- (d) That the proposed development would be most likely to be successful in a "virgin" area where the factory and associated housing and school could be developed in an integrated way and would be less likely to be subjected to disabling constraints by way of too heavily established community patterns of behaviour;
- (e) That the Appeal of Conscience Foundation themselves would require to discuss the proposal in detail with interests in Northern Ireland other than Government which would be likely to be affected by the proposal. Such interests would include Education Authorities, Church Authorities and Trade Unions.

3. It was generally agreed that Craigavon would be a suitable area for the proposed development but it was noted that there would be pressure to have a development of this kind established in an area like West Belfast and that indeed the Appeal of Conscience Foundation itself might be motivated to try for Belfast where the challenge was greater.

4. It was agreed that while there were difficulties in the proposal the concept was in itself desirable and the Appeal of Conscience Foundation should not be discouraged by Government. It was further agreed that the next step would be for the Departments concerned to attend a meeting in London with members of the Foundation which it was expected would be arranged in the near future. In the light of the information exchanged at that meeting the possibilities for development were likely to be clarified. In particular it was regarded as

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essential that while the Foundation should not be discouraged they should be made aware of the difficulties which they would face.

J B McALLISTER

28 JULY 1972