

THE FOUNDATION FOR A CIVIL SOCIETY

THE PROJECT ON JUSTICE IN TIMES OF TRANSITION

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MEMO

TO: Justice Project Advisory Board Members
and Other Interested Individuals

FROM: Sara Zucker

DATE: July 14, 1997

RE: Update on Project on Justice in Times of Transition

A great deal has happened with the Justice Project since the last board meeting in March. The following is a brief overview of our recent activities; I would be happy to provide further details to anyone who is interested.

Bosnia

We are finalizing arrangements for "The Dynamics of Building Trust," a series of workshops to strengthen dialogue in Bosnia, scheduled for July 31 through August 7. These workshops, which were requested by participants as a follow-up to the November program on Bosnia, will feature an Israeli parliamentarian, an official of the Palestinian Authority, a former guerrilla from El Salvador, and a representative of the Salvadoran government. The workshops -- which will be held in Banja Luka, Mostar, Sarajevo and Tuzla -- will be structured both to create an environment in which Bosnians can begin to open their minds to the possibility of working with former enemies, and, equally important, to particular questions of how they might work together to solve specific problems in their communities. Drawing on the experiences of the individuals from other countries will help the Bosnians to tackle their own unique challenges and increase the Bosnians' ability to devise and implement sustainable solutions.

The Bosnian workshops are being co-sponsored with the British Association for Central and Eastern Europe and my brief visit to London earlier this month afforded an opportunity to address some of the logistical concerns inherent to the program. To date, we have secured nearly 95% of The Project's share of the estimated expenses for the workshops. Decisions are pending on an additional six grant proposals and in the coming days we hope to obtain commitments for the \$5,000 still needed.

Last week the Deputy Director of the International Commission on Missing Persons (ICMP) met with me in New York to discuss the ICMP's work in Bosnia and the role The Project might play. Accordingly, I will be spending some time in Bosnia following the August workshops in order to travel with ICMP staff members and meet with families of the missing. Such a trip will provide The Project with the background we need to develop an appropriate program on the subject of missing persons. It is likely that The Project will plan a conference for the families of the missing, tentatively scheduled for the Fall, that would expose them to the experiences of individuals from other countries who have dealt with similar tragedies.

Northern Ireland

The exploration of cooperative work between the Northern Ireland Voluntary Trust (NIVT) and The Project at the community level in Northern Ireland is moving forward. At the request of the NIVT, I traveled to Northern Ireland at the end of June for a series of meetings with community leaders in Belfast and (London)Derry. The visit was very useful as it gave The Project a better understanding of the needs at the **community level in Northern Ireland** and will help us to design an appropriate program using The Project's methodology of bringing together individuals who have been in relevant situations elsewhere in the world to convey their experiences and insights.

In addition, I met with a number of individuals in Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland and Great Britain who provided analysis of the political situation in Northern Ireland and suggested possible roles for The Project. This information will be critical as we consider how The Project can expand upon its previous work by designing **additional programming for political leaders and other key individuals in Northern Ireland.**

Specific suggestions for work at the community and political levels include the following:

- work with ex-political prisoners in the Catholic Nationalist and Protestant Loyalist communities, a project that would most likely be co-sponsored with the NIVT
- additional programming that would bring together political leaders to address key issues facing Northern Ireland
- a mechanism to encourage cooperation between community leaders and political leaders

Some of the questions that must be addressed are whether The Project can and should create sustainable, long-term programming in Northern Ireland; how international models can be applied constructively in Northern Ireland; and whether The Project should focus its efforts on the community level, the political level, or try to combine the two. Further inquiries will be made by Project staff and Advisory Board members in the coming weeks and months, and we will decide exactly how to focus future work in Northern Ireland to ensure that we address an unmet need in a way that allows us to utilize The Project's strengths. It is expected that at least one program will be implemented on Northern Ireland before the end of 1997.

I am currently preparing a full report of my trip and possible directions for The Project's work in Northern Ireland. Copies will be available upon request.

Mexico

At the initiative of Justice Advisory Board Members George Biddle, Leonel Gomez and Tim Phillips, The Project has begun **exploratory work in Mexico.** The three conducted an assessment mission to Mexico at the end of April in order to determine whether there is a role for The Project to play in bringing together leaders from political, labor and guerrilla groups. As a result of this trip, funding was sought for additional research on Mexico

under the auspices of the Institute for Central American Studies of which George Biddle is the president. The Winston Foundation has awarded \$31,000 to ICAS for this exploratory work and George will be taking another trip to Mexico at the end of this month. One particular way to address the challenges in Mexico is to open discussion about investment strategies and the connection between economic development and political stability. George's research will focus on how best to initiate such discussion and, if it is determined that The Project's methodology can be of use in Mexico, we will pursue work accordingly.

Publicity

The Project has produced an **updated brochure** that lists all members of its expanded Advisory Board as well as a summary of its past programs and accomplishments (a copy is enclosed).

As a result of its past work and long-term efforts to interest the New York Times magazine in publishing a piece on The Project, arrangements are currently being made for such an article. We hope that, if all goes according to plan, a journalist will accompany the group to Bosnia for the workshops at the end of this month. This first-hand exposure to The Project's methodology, in conjunction with a review of materials and interviews with key individuals, will enable him to write a piece about The Project's work in Bosnia and elsewhere. Such press coverage will significantly enhance The Project's image and can be used in efforts to strengthen The Project's funding base as well as to expand its programming.

In an unrelated but equally important development, The Project has been selected to be profiled on a **documentary television series called *The Visionaries***. The Project was one of 10 organizations chosen out of 4,000 on the basis of its application which was written by Program Assistant Nancy Luxon with input from staff and board members. This episode will be one of a six-part season aired on more than 185 public broadcasting stations throughout the country. In addition to gaining national exposure on a television show introduced by actor Sam Waterston, The Foundation will receive a shortened version of the segment for a PR video that it will develop in conjunction with *The Visionaries*.

Now that the selection has been made, The Foundation will work with *The Visionaries* in order to secure the necessary funding of an estimated \$125,000 to produce the half-hour show and PR video. Kirsten Munro has already spoken with *The Visionaries'* development director and The Foundation has drawn up a list of possible corporate sponsors and other funders. If it is possible to secure funding in the next month or so, the episode would be filmed in the Fall for airing in early 1998.

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Report of Trip to Belfast, Dublin and London June 30 – July 8, 1997

At the end of June I traveled to Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland and Great Britain in order to get a better sense of the political climate and to ascertain what sort of future programming on Northern Ireland would be appropriate for The Project. The trip was also undertaken at the invitation of the Northern Ireland Voluntary Trust (NIVT), an independent grant-making organization that invited us to explore cooperative work at the community level in Northern Ireland. The trip was planned on rather short notice and I was in Northern Ireland during the very tense period at the beginning of the "marching season." As a result, I was unable to arrange meetings with all of the individuals with whom I had hoped to speak. Nevertheless, in the time I was there I was able to meet with 35 people formally and to speak with another 15 or so informally.

My meetings in Northern Ireland included a number of representatives of community organizations involved with various aspects of the conflict as well as representatives of political parties (see attached list). I traveled to (London)Derry for one day and spent another two and a half days in Belfast. Virtually everyone I spoke with was enthusiastic about The Project's continued work on Northern Ireland and most had ideas about what sort of initiatives are needed. Not all of these suggestions were consistent with each other, and some of the proposed projects would not lend themselves to The Project's strengths and methodology. Nonetheless, there were several ideas that should be explored further as we decide how to structure our work on Northern Ireland.

Before examining the specific ideas for future work, it is important to look at the current context of Northern Ireland. Although I can not claim to have interviewed a large or representative sample of the population, several themes and dilemmas were mentioned repeatedly and should be taken into account as we plan our work on Northern Ireland.

The first of these issues is whether the Troubles are the result of the economic and social needs in Northern Ireland or whether the Troubles have, in fact, caused these problems. There are some in Northern Ireland who maintain that the sectarianism and violence stem from unemployment, lack of education and the like. These deprivations result in all sorts of anti-social behavior ranging from the sectarian violence particular to Northern Ireland to more universal manifestations such as wife-beating or drug abuse. On the other hand, it can be argued that the Troubles have been the source of the social problems that plague Northern Ireland, namely that the political conflict has had such a pervasive effect that it prevents people from living normal lives. Yet regardless of people's position on this chicken-and-egg conundrum, there seems to be broad acceptance of the fact that both the sectarianism that has bred the Troubles and the economic and social problems in Northern Ireland are issues that must be addressed, and many believe that one can not be addressed without the other. It should be noted, though, that a dissenting opinion was

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expressed; two people with whom I met felt that economic deprivation is not the issue it is made out to be in Northern Ireland.

The recent influx of money to Northern Ireland, particularly the large sums provided by the European Union's Peace and Reconciliation Program, has certainly had an effect on Northern Ireland. Whether the effect has been unequivocally positive is debatable. Some people contend that, because of the short timeframe in which the funds were allocated and spent, questions of how best to spend the money or what sort of projects were most deserving were not considered adequately. The result is a series of community-based projects that do not always reflect long-term thinking. I heard criticism that some programs address symptoms rather than causes and that community groups have not thought how they will fund their programs when the EU money runs out. The issue of sustainability is one that has not been addressed at the community level in Northern Ireland and it is critical, though many community leaders are not sure how to do so. Despite this, there is no question that there is a tremendous amount of activity at the community level and much of the current programming is well-conceived and innovative. Whether this activity and its contribution toward reconciliation are widely-perceived is hard for me to say; community workers said they feel a difference but cab drivers said they do not, indicating that maybe the impact of the community work has not yet trickled down.

It is also clear that there is very little contact between community leaders and political leaders and this poses a number of problems. As Avila Kilmurray of the NIVT pointed out, there is a danger that if a political settlement is reached, the communities won't be ready for it and there will be a civil war. This observation was consistent with another comment I heard that the cease-fire brought out sectarianism in communities that previously had not been directly affected by the Troubles. Also, in the past there was a tendency to attribute societal problems to the Troubles, but when the cease-fire was in effect it became apparent that the problems still existed, a realization that, it was argued, resulted in increased sectarianism. I heard conflicting opinions about whether the freedom that came with the cease-fire was traumatic or liberating, or whether the cease-fire brought the expected results or was a disappointment.

Another topic on which opinion is split is whether to focus on single-identity work (i.e. Catholic or Protestant) or cross-community projects. While there is a strong feeling that reconciliation will never occur until each group is comfortable with its own identity and role in society, there is concern that too great a focus on single-identity programming will strengthen the sectarian divide. (It was suggested to me that Protestants in particular could benefit from single-identity programming in order to develop a non-defensive political culture that they can articulate.) However, people in both communities recognize that they have many common needs and that working to address these common needs can contribute toward reconciliation.

On the political level there is certainly a feeling of stalemate in Northern Ireland. Community leaders are dissatisfied with political leaders and members of the latter group themselves expressed a desire to be revived. Those who had attended The Project's workshop at the Kennedy School cited it as the type of program they desperately need and want. Such programming serves two purposes: it allows leaders from across the political spectrum to engage in dialogue they would not have under normal circumstances, and it affords them an opportunity to think critically about important issues. (It was pointed out

to me by two of the participants in the Kennedy School program that they had not had any contact with each other since they left Boston, though they had found their week together to be immensely helpful and were sorry that the official and unofficial bans on contact in Northern Ireland prevented them from having such open interaction at home. It was also noted that there is virtually no contact between politicians from the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland and that it is sorely missed.) Also, there is little to no cultivation of new political leaders either from the existing pool of community activists or elsewhere.

One of the largest problems in Northern Ireland seems to be the inability to envision the possibility of change in the society let alone what such change might look like, a shortcoming that constitutes a significant obstacle to progress. Many of the people with whom I spoke mentioned the country's tendency to suffer from insularity, both at the community level and at the political level. Some groups in Northern Ireland have examined models from elsewhere in the world, both through The Project's conferences and other programming, and have found them useful and would like more opportunities of this nature. (I was told on two occasions that President Havel would be welcome in Belfast!)

One population group that has benefited from this sort of international exchange is ex-prisoners in Northern Ireland who have engaged in dialogue with former combatants from Nicaragua. Ex-prisoners were suggested to us some time ago as a potential target group for Justice programming and it does seem that they could benefit from such efforts. Both Republican and Loyalist ex-prisoners' groups are rather well-organized yet are open to additional assistance. As well as dealing with all sorts of issues related to ex-prisoners' reintegration into society, some of these groups are making concerted efforts to use ex-prisoners as community workers and to focus on youth and break the cycle of violence. Although there is currently only limited interaction between Loyalist and Republican ex-prisoners, representatives of both groups said they would welcome more. The NIVT is extremely interested in working with us to develop a program for ex-prisoners and we should give this due consideration.

There are many possible topics it was suggested on which we could focus in Northern Ireland, some of which are too large for us to try to address. They include, but are not limited to:

- school integration
- a bill of rights and, particularly, first amendment rights
- policing
- parades or marches
- identity
- diversity as strength not weakness / pluralism
- teaching tolerance
- women
- youth
- role of the church
- mechanisms for managing small entities (such as state governments)

It seems, though, that **the key is to select a target group or groups and create a program that will expose the participants to new ideas and ways of thinking.** Since the people I met in Northern Ireland from different sectors all expressed a keen desire to participate in this

sort of programming, we will need to decide who could benefit the most and/or with which group would we be best able to work. In my opinion, the best options are:

- "second-tier" political leaders, namely the type of individuals who participated in the Kennedy School workshop
- community leaders
- political leaders and community leaders together
- ex-prisoners

Programming for any of these groups could be similar in structure to The Project's past work on Northern Ireland. Whether it is wiser to take a group away from the pressures of Northern Ireland and run the program elsewhere is something to be considered. It is also important to think about the issue of sustainability; though political and community leaders in Northern Ireland would benefit from a conference, they need ongoing mechanisms to help them address the challenges they are facing. One idea might be to create a two-year program that combines periodic conferences (maybe even outside of Northern Ireland) with regular meetings in Northern Ireland. Such a program could include contact with community and/or political leaders in other countries (via computer or other means) or specially assigned task forces of people working on particular issues in Northern Ireland. In addition to being eager to hear about the experiences of other countries, people in Northern Ireland are eager to share their own knowledge and would feel empowered by being able to tell their stories.

During my trip I collected materials from a variety of organizations and the names of many more individuals to contact. As we decide what sort of programming to plan we must be very careful not to duplicate work as well as to engage in efforts that will have an effect on the situation in Northern Ireland. Many of the topics that were suggested as important to address are critical, but they are too broad or complicated for us to tackle effectively. As we move ahead with our programming on Northern Ireland it will, of course, be important for us to consult with well-placed individuals there who are familiar both with Northern Ireland and The Project. It should be noted also that the Northern Ireland Voluntary Trust seems to have an excellent reputation, both among community groups and funders in the region; they would make a very good co-sponsoring organization and are eager to work with us on the subject of ex-prisoners.

Sara Zucker
July 18, 1997

**Trip to Belfast, Dublin and London
June 30 – July 8, 1997**

List of Meetings

Northern Ireland

Alex Attwood, Social Democratic and Labour Party
 Fergus Cooper, media consultant
 Eamonn Deane, Holywell Trust
 Mari Fitzduff, Director, Initiative on Conflict Resolution and Ethnicity (INCORE)
 Tanya Gallagher, Peace and Reconciliation Group
 Mary Glass, Women Against Violence Empowered (WAVE)
 Tish Holland, Upper Anderstown Community Forum
 Avila Kilmurray, Northern Ireland Voluntary Trust
 Ciaran McAvoy, criminologist
 Felicity McCartney, Northern Ireland Voluntary Trust
 Raymond McCartney and Patrick Coyle, Tar Abhaile / Tar Anall
 Dodie McGuinness and Tom Hartley, Sinn Fein
 Monica McWilliams, Northern Ireland Women's Coalition
 David Mitchell and others, LINC Resource Center
 Pamela Montgomery, consultant
 David Nicholl, Ulster Community Action Network (UCAN)
 Martin O'Brien, Committee for the Administration of Justice
 Martha Pope and David Pazorski, Advisors to Senator George Mitchell
 William "Plum" Smith, Progressive Unionist Party
 Martin Snoddon, Ex-Prisoners Interpretive Centre (EPIC)
 Kathy Stevens, US Consul General
 visit to Community Development Center, North Belfast

Republic of Ireland

Frances Fitzgerald, TD (Fine Gael, Dublin)
 Cecilia Keaveney, TD (Fianna Fail, Donnegal)
 Eamon McKee, Anglo-Irish Division, Foreign Ministry
 Dick Norland and Amy Seigenthaler, American Embassy

London

Sir John Birch, British Association for Central and Eastern Europe
 Nik Gowing, Channel 4 News
 Stephen Pittam, Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust
 Trix Smalley, consultant
 Jon Snow, Channel 4 News