

M. Gault  
I believe would  
best be done by  
each of the speaking  
bodies voluntarily  
inform rather than having  
M.S.W. targeted - Do you  
agree?  
3.3

M. McConnell  
I agree. We could run the risk of  
MSW being interpreted as a Catholic area  
directed investment. Depts should be  
asked to provide details of all funding  
including MSW

ASST  
SEC - 2  
CENT JMcC 21/3  
MAR 1993  
SEC

Balle  
3/3/93.  
cc: Mr Watkins  
Mr Bell  
Mr Cooke  
Mr McAuley, BDO  
Mr Carson, DED

From: Mr T McCusker  
2 March 1993  
To: Mr J McConnell

**"THE COOK REPORT" - LIBEL ACTION AGAINST CENTRAL TV**

1. I attach a note which David Brooker sent to me recently about a commitment given by the Secretary of State during a meeting with Central TV officials. The Secretary of State suggested that one way of rebutting allegations of bias against the nationalist community would be to point to the long list of nationalist groups which receive funding.
2. I have discussed this matter further with David Brooker and we agree that it would be inappropriate to provide Central TV with a list of groups defined as being "nationalist". We did agree, however, that an alternative would be to provide Central TV with some indication of the scale of funding going to community organisations in nationalist areas and that for the purposes of this debate we should interpret that as catholic West Belfast.
3. I should be grateful for your advice and that of Mr McAuley, DOE, and Mr Carson, T&EA, about the scale of

TR:53256/3/93

Spoke  
to Mike Maxwell  
10/5/83

funding going to community organisations in catholic West Belfast.

4. A reply by 8 March would be helpful.

"THE COOK REPORT": LEGAL ACTION AGAINST CENTRAL TV

You may recall that, back in June 1983, Central TV programme "Blood Money" in the "Cook Report" series. Among other things, the programme alleged that the Conway Mill in Belfast was the financial nerve centre of PIRA. A number of persons resident in Northern Ireland were named in the programme and directly linked to the financing of PIRA. The veracity of the programme was contested in Great Britain - but not Northern Ireland - named Derek Cahill as an IRA financial controller. Cahill and nine other individuals connected with Conway Mill, as well as two other persons who premises are separate from it but who alleged that they were also named by the programme, have brought an action against Central TV seeking damages in respect of these allegations.

Per: T MCCUSKER

2. Central TV approached the Secretary of State in 1981 to see whether Government could provide them with material to defend the legal actions. They have argued that, if they lose, the plaintiffs stand to receive substantial damages much of which would find its way into PIRA coffers. They have therefore been hoping for some form of Government statement, or RUC witness, to demonstrate a direct link between PIRA and financial activities at the Mill.

3. The Secretary of State, like Mr Brooke before him, has explained to Central TV that it would be impossible for Government to provide this type of assistance. They are getting such help, however; we understand that the Gardaí will testify about the

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C O N F I D E N T I A L

Speak  
to Mike Maxwell  
10512

note  
attached

FROM: D BROOKER  
SIL DIVISION  
8 FEBRUARY 1993  
(X 6828 OAB)

MR McCUSKER, CCRU - B

cc Mr Watkins - B  
Mr Bell - B

You have a note to  
use. We need  
a file

"THE COOK REPORT": LIBEL ACTION AGAINST CENTRAL TV

You may recall that, back in June 1989, Central TV broadcast a programme "Blood Money" in the "Cook Report" series. Among other things, the programme alleged that the Conway Mill in Belfast was the financial nerve centre of PIRA. A number of persons resident in Northern Ireland were named in the programme and directly linked to the financing of PIRA. The version of the programme transmitted in Great Britain - but not Northern Ireland - named Thomas Cahill as an IRA financial controller. Cahill and nine other individuals connected with Conway Mill, as well as two other persons whose premises are separate from it but who alleged that they were also smeared by the programme, have brought an action against Central TV seeking damages in respect of these allegations.

2. Central TV approached the Secretary of State in 1991 to see whether Government could provide them with material to defend the legal actions. They have argued that, if they lose, the plaintiffs stand to receive substantial damages much of which would find its way into PIRA coffers. They have therefore been hoping for some form of Government statement, or RUC witness, to demonstrate a direct link between PIRA and financial activities at the Mill.

3. The Secretary of State, like Mr Brooke before him, has explained to Central TV that it would be impossible for Government to provide this type of assistance. They are getting some help, however; we understand that the Gardai might testify about the

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character of some of the individuals concerned and that Lord Merlyn-Rees might also give evidence (based on the internment records) about some of the individuals. At a recent meeting with the Director of Corporate Strategy, the Secretary of State offered further assistance. As you will see from Mr Rodell's note of the meeting (attached) Central are concerned that Father Wilson will claim that the Government's decision to withdraw funding from Conway Mill has nothing to do with terrorism and simply reflects a bias against Nationalists. The Secretary of State said that one way of rebutting such a suggestion would be to point to the long list of Nationalist groups who do receive funding. He undertook that we would provide a list to Central. They were greatly encouraged by this offer.

4. I should be grateful to know whether this is something which the CCRU could provide. I suspect that the list could be very lengthy. It need not be exhaustive, however, provided we can demonstrate the Government's commitment to the Nationalist community. Perhaps we might have a word on the telephone, including about whether there are other Departments whom I need to consult.

(SIGNED)

D BROOKER

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