

Just News

Bulletin of the Committee on the Administration of Justice

UN calls for public inquiries

The United Nations Human Rights Committee issued its concluding recommendations on the UK this month. Two days of hearings on 17th and 18th October were held into the UK's report under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. CAJ attended these hearings along with members of Amnesty, British Irish Rights Watch, Liberty and Justice.

The NGOs had organised a briefing for members of the Committee and nine members of the Committee attended.

Many of the issues we raised with Committee members at the briefing, and in our written submission, were reflected in the questions the Committee later put to the UK government representatives. In particular, CAJ focused on a number of individual cases in its briefing, including those of Robert Hamill, Billy Wright, Pat Finucane and Rosemary Nelson. In addition we raised the issue of what the government would now do in relation to the cases of Kelly, Shanaghan, McKerr and Jordan, given that the European Court of Human Rights had ruled that they were never properly investigated. We also raised the issue of the continuing protest at Holy Cross School, and the inadequate response to that protest.

Members of the Committee raised a number of these points, and the failure properly to investigate controversial deaths featured prominently in the questions asked of the UK government.

Many of these concerns were articulated in the final recommendations of the Committee. In particular the issue relating to controversial deaths was the subject of very strong language by the Committee. The Committee said it was deeply disturbed that a considerable time after murders of persons (including human rights defenders) in Northern Ireland have occurred, a significant number of such instances have yet to receive fully

independent and comprehensive investigations.

The Committee recommended that the UK should *"implement as a matter of particular urgency given the passage of time, the measures required to ensure a full, transparent and credible accounting of the circumstances surrounding violations of the right to life in Northern Ireland in these and other cases."*

The Committee, in its final recommendations, also articulated its concern over the continuing use of emergency legal measures in Northern Ireland, and their seepage into the ordinary criminal law. The Committee once again expressed concern about the drawing of inferences from a suspect's silence and recommended that the UK *"should reconsider, with a view to repeal, this aspect of criminal procedure."*

The Committee also criticised the provisions of the Terrorism Act which allow suspects to be held for up to 48 hours without access to a lawyer. It was felt that the state had not fully made out a case for this provision.

In addition to these concerns, the Committee was concerned that differences continued to exist between criminal procedure in Britain and Northern Ireland, particularly in relation to the issue of Diplock courts. The Committee called on the UK to *"carefully monitor, on an ongoing basis, whether the exigencies of the specific situation in Northern Ireland continue to justify any such distinctions."*

Although the Holy Cross dispute was not specifically mentioned in the recommendations of the Committee, those attending the hearings widely believe that one of the Committee's recommendations was informed by what they had heard and seen of the protest. The Committee said it was "disturbed that incidents of violence and intimidation on the basis of religious affiliation in Northern Ireland continue to recur." The UK was asked to "extend its criminal legislation to cover offences motivated by religious hatred, and should take other steps to ensure that all persons are protected from discrimination on account of their religious beliefs." While public order legislation exists in Northern Ireland to cover incitement offences, it has not been used in the context of the Holy Cross dispute, reflecting still further the failure of the authorities properly to protect the interests of the children at the school.

Looking back at the recommendations of the Human Rights Committee from 1995, it is clear that the UK has moved to comply with a number of the recommendations, although belatedly in many instances. Let's hope the government moves more quickly to immediately comply with the recommendations made on this occasion.

Paul Mageean

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CAJ's Annual General Meeting

A lively mixture of old faithfuls and new young blood gathered in the Law Centre recently for CAJ's Annual General Meeting for 2000-2001. Outgoing chairperson, Mary O'Rawe, chaired the early part of the meeting until the election of the new Executive Committee members, at which point Fiona Doherty took over the reins.

The formal business of the AGM was dealt with in the usual way – the auditor presented a report of the accounts, which were duly adopted and the new Executive members were elected.

It was agreed that there is a need to more actively recruit new members. The celebration of CAJ's 21st birthday next year could serve as a timely opportunity to make CAJ more visible in this regard.

The meeting was then addressed by Professor Paul Hunt, Professor of Law at Essex University, who made a late evening dash to Belfast. Professor Hunt also sits as the New Zealand member on the UN Committee for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and shared with members some extremely valuable insights into how social and economic rights have developed at the international level, and how other countries are making them real in their own jurisdictions.

Professor Hunt pointed out that while the notion of the inter-dependence of civil and political with economic, social and cultural rights has always been around, internationally, the last decade has seen this idea become central to international human rights discourse. The Vienna Declaration and Programme for Action in 1993 reaffirmed the importance of inter-dependence. The appointment of Mary Robinson, and her "mantra" on this issue, have also led to a change of face in international human rights law. There is now a series of mechanisms in place which guarantee greater recognition and protection of social and economic rights. We now have, for example, mechanisms such as Special Rapporteurs on the Right to Food, Education and Housing.

Professor Hunt admitted that there is still obviously a difference in adjudication between the two sets of rights, in that there are additional individual complaints mechanisms in



Professor Paul Hunt

place for civil and political rights, while economic and social rights are still monitored only by reporting procedure. However, this is indicative of the difficult nature of adjudicating social and economic rights internationally.

The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights sets universal standards which have to be meaningful in both Chad and Canada. That is precisely why the drafters of the Covenant introduced concepts such as progressive realisation which recognised that obligations were qualified by available resources. This makes monitoring and measuring at the international level somewhat difficult and vague. The advantage of implementing these rights at the national level is that you are able to tailor the obligations to fit the national situation. If more countries did this, it would make the Committee's life a lot easier!

Professor Hunt then went on to give some examples of how other countries have made economic and social rights enforceable:

India: their Bill of Rights articulated the classic enforceable civil and political rights, with socio-economic rights being non-justiciable. However, judicial activism in the 1980's – for example, in interpreting the right to live and earn a livelihood as incorporating the right to shelter – has led to a situation where case-law has made socio-economic rights enforceable, even though the constitution had not.

Norway: they have just incorporated the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and it will be interesting to see how judges and litigators will respond

South Africa: have incorporated both sets of rights on an equal basis in their constitution.

Finland: they constitutionalise one-line provisions on socio-economic rights which are then further elaborated in an Act of Parliament, and the courts must interpret the statute in the light of the one-line principle.

The discussion then progressed to what human rights are fundamentally about and the consequences that has for justiciability in general. To a philosopher, human rights are about dignity and the well-being of the individual and the community, but to a lawyer they are a normative framework of legal accountability. Thus, lawyers need norms, they need to know what a "right to shelter", or a "right to food" etc means, how they can be measured and what the processes are by which those in power are held to account. This is obviously easier to do with civil and political rights, which lend themselves well to accountability through judicial processes. But this does not mean social and economic rights cannot be adjudicated. The

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challenge is to look for other forms of accountability, such as integrating socio-economic rights into policy and changing the policy-making process itself, so that these rights shape policy from the outset. It also involves realising that one single method of accountability is not necessarily best, so the judicial and policy methods need to be combined with other activities such as training officials, initiating human rights impact assessments, and departmental reporting etc.

To conclude, members were urged to remember that economic and social rights derive from the same fundamentals as civil and political rights. The difficulty is that they do not have the same depth of legal traditions: we are not sure of their contours and content, and have fewer precedents to work from. This should not deter us however in our current Bill of Rights debate.

Professor Hunt stressed that Northern Ireland now had before it an unique opportunity to make a real contribution to deepening the understanding of socio-economic rights. By finding ways of formulating and measuring, and making such rights enforceable, we might provide lessons for a growing global movement.

A formidable challenge, but one we hope the NIHRC will accept with courage.

Aideen Gilmore

Bill of Rights Project Worker

Action Column

The deadline for submissions on "Making a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland" – the consultation document produced by the NIHRC on the Bill of Rights in September 2001 is 1st December. Anyone who has not already made a submission is urged to do so NOW. It is very important that the Commission receive many submissions to support them in presenting their advice to the Secretary of State.

In the Headlines

CAJ holds newspaper clippings on more than 50 civil liberties and justice issues (from mid 1987- December 2000). Copies of these can be purchased from CAJ office.

The clippings are also available for consultation at the office.

Anyone interested in this service, should phone (028) 9096 1122.

Up to date with CAJ

Archbishop Desmond Tutu's visit to Belfast was very successful (report in next issue of Just News). Our thanks go to Aideen for all her hard work in making it happen.

Around 50 people attended the Annual General Meeting (see report opposite).

Paul attended the UNHRC hearings in Geneva (see front page).

Maggie attended the Equality Conference and also the Women's Conference organised by NIC-ICTU. There have been several meetings of the Bill of Rights, Policing and Equality subgroups.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank volunteers, Charlene, Ella, Gordon, Katie, Lisa, and Sarah for their support.

CAJ's additional submissions relating to the Bill of Rights debate may be seen on CAJ's website.

There have been several visitors to use the CAJ public library.

Maggie gave a presentation on Patten implementation, and Paul gave a presentation on Criminal Justice, at an event in London organised by the British Irish Rights Watch and the Institute of Commonwealth Studies.

Finally, we would like to extend our thanks to all outgoing members of the CAJ executive for all their work over the past year and to wish them all the best for the future.

Liz McAleer

The Spirit of Enniskillen Trust

In 2002, fifty young people will be offered the opportunity to travel to five international hosting destinations – including Croatia/Bosnia, Germany and USA to explore how other cultures are dealing with conflict and diversity.

The Spirit of Enniskillen Trust wishes to attract young people from a wide variety of backgrounds and the scheme is open to all between the ages of 16 and 19 and resident in Northern Ireland.

For further information, posters or application forms telephone 90381500 or visit the website on www.soetrust.co.uk. Closing date for applications is Friday, 21st December 2001.

Agenda for Policing Change?

CAJ has written to the new Policing Board with a view to securing an early meeting to discuss their future work programme. Several of their members are already in the United States, presumably as part of a general induction programme, and it will be interesting to learn how the Board intends to settle into its work and develop outreach efforts with the police and the policed right across Northern Ireland.

A key challenge the new Policing Board will face in the coming months is that of testing their powers to full effect, and deciding how they intend to address some of the most contentious policing issues.

Thankfully, the Holy Cross dispute seems to be over, but if the Policing Board had been in place a few months ago, the question arises as to what role ought they have played in discussing the police response to this situation?

Another problem will be the Board's attitude to plastic bullets. The Police Authority, in one of its last acts, reportedly purchased 50,000 plastic bullets. On the basis of usage in the last few years, such a quantity should keep the new Police Service of Northern Ireland supplied for well over 50 years! The timing of the purchase has clearly meant that the police would have easy access to this weapon for the foreseeable future and potentially undercuts any early policy review of the weapon by the new Board. It is interesting that at precisely the time that the government reassures the public that it is actively considering alternatives to plastic bullets (the Steering Group on Plastic Bullets has just issued phase two of its research findings), the public purse is paying out major sums of money to purchase advance stocks of the weapon.

Even if the Policing Board defers discussion about whether or not plastic bullets should be in the police armoury at all, they will be quickly obliged to address issues of accountability. In a recent incident in north Belfast, media coverage suggested that young children had been injured by the bullets, despite the fact that the government insists that the new weapon is much more accurate. Moreover, it seems that the bullets were fired by the army – if so, were they operating under the aegis of the police, and what role can the Policing Board play in asking questions? CAJ is currently in correspondence with a range of authorities about their claims that army guidelines on plastic bullets are “classified”. This fact, combined with the apparently increasing resort of the

army to the firing of plastic bullets, is obviously very worrying. The public cannot be left with the fear that once greater accountability for police firing of plastic bullets is instituted – via a Policing Board and an independent Police Ombudsman – the weapon comes to be increasingly used by the army, who are not subjected to equivalent scrutiny.

The Board will also have to engage with the many contentious issues raised in the Finucane, Nelson and other individual cases where police action and/or inaction leaves a lot of unanswered questions.

But perhaps the biggest challenge of all facing the Policing Board is that of developing policing into a shared project with a broad sense of ownership. The Board has a certain initial difficulty in that its own composition lacks the diversity and pluralism one might have hoped for. There are

- 2 women out of 19 members;
- 3 nationalists;
- 7 unionists,
- "independent's" who have clear party political affiliations;
- the majority of non-political appointments having a business background;
- only one member having an obvious local community background.

The group appears to lack human rights expertise, legal expertise, and representation from some key social sectors - such as the churches, media or trade unions.

Patten called for a Policing Board to be "representative of the community as a whole" and also noted "*The title 'Policing Board' is deliberate. We see the role of the new body going beyond supervision of the police service itself, extending to the wider issues of policing and the contributions that people and organisations other than the police can make towards public safety*". They went on to recommend that the Board work closely with others in all aspects of its work. It is vital that the Board closely study police reports, but that it also develop complementary and alternative information sources. When in the near future they discuss the Code of Ethics, symbols, police recruitment and training programmes, they should draw not only on their own expertise, but find ways in which to involve the wider community.

Policing, if it is to be successful, must become a shared project, and the Board has a pivotal role in ensuring that sense of broad ownership.

Maggie Beirne

A Commissioner for Children in Northern Ireland

CAJ has welcomed the recent Office of the First Minister/Deputy First Minister's (OFM/DFM) consultation paper on the creation of the new post of Commissioner for Children.

The consultation paper acknowledges that children as citizens require special measures such as the creation of this post given that they have *"no right to vote... (have) very limited economic or social power... (and)... are particularly vulnerable to manipulation, ill treatment or abuse."* (pg 9)

The paper also recognises that the bedrock for children's rights should be the international standards, in particular the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. OFM/DFM propose that the Commissioner should be an independent impartial and influential champion for children outside of government.

These are all very laudable statements and aims. As with most laudable projects the "devil will be in the detail". It will be important for the Commissioner to have the right powers, access, and remit to achieve the commendable goals identified in the paper.

Many of the proposals in the consultation paper would appear to be very straightforward. For example that the Commissioner should "be given access to all public and private institutions for children... power to assist children, including financially, in connection with legal proceedings in respect of alleged breaches of their rights... power to intervene as a third party in legal proceedings... (and) power to act as an amicus curiae..."

These powers are not, however, guaranteed as the consultation paper sets a range of fundamental questions on what the Commissioner's role, functions and powers should be. One of the most important questions is "Should the Commissioner for Children have a role in promoting rights generally and also in acting as an ombudsman or should it be one or the other." If the Commissioner is to have both sets of functions, what should the balance be between them?" Clearly this is a matter for the Commissioner and he/she should have the necessary powers and resources to carry out both aspects of the job. One might expect that in the early stages of the job there would need to be an emphasis on its promotional aspects.

It is essential that the Commissioner have a strong focus on promoting children's rights and particularly children's participation in the life of their communities. This will be especially important in the beginning as most children are unaware of their rights. Some even believe that adults are just going to tell them to act more "responsibly", when

talking about "rights". The Commissioner should be able to publicise and promote a children's rights culture.

Recommendations

CAJ has recommended that the Commissioner be given more explicit obligations to: a) promote the appropriate participation of children in the social, cultural and economic life of their communities; and b) explore ways in which children's views and opinions can be given due weight in all matters affecting them, given their age and maturity.

We have argued that the Commissioner for Children should be able to investigate complaints. Children should, however, access services including services providing remedy for complaints, on an equal basis with adults. The

Commissioner should have appropriate powers to monitor this and recommend remedial action when necessary. The Commissioner should have all the necessary powers to investigate complaints.

We have suggested that it would be useful to include a positive obligation on public authorities to assist the

Commissioner in the exercise of his or her functions to the extent that this is compatible with the authority's own remit. This has potential to protect the Commission's budget and ensure that authorities do not oblige the Commissioner to incur unnecessary expense or difficulty in the exercise of his/her functions. Similarly in relation to confidential information CAJ has recommended that all public authorities should routinely ask adults and children using their services to indicate if they would object to the Commissioner obtaining anonymised information for the purposes of researching any children's rights issue. This would ensure that the Commissioner was not unnecessarily obstructed in obtaining information by having to trace and consult each child and family after an issue arises.

Given our serious concerns about the treatment of children in the criminal justice system generally, and in custody in particular, we have insisted that the criminal justice system should be amenable to investigation by the Commissioner, despite being a "reserved matter" at present.

It remains to be seen what shape the impending legislation gives to the new Commissioner's role, functions and powers. Nevertheless the consultation paper is a good start and potentially a genuine beginning to developing a children's rights culture in Northern Ireland for the first time.

Anne McKeown

*Crisis and Terror in the Horn of Africa:
Autopsy of Democracy, Human Rights and Freedom*

As part of the new publication series 'Law, Social Change and Development', this edited volume of scholarly essays forms a solid bedrock of critique and analysis examining the perpetual and pervasive state of crisis facing those living in the Horn of Africa. This crisis has existed for decades but has been exacerbated over the past ten or so years by both inter-state and intra-state conflicts. The critical features of the crisis are multi-faceted and include "civil wars, planned genocide, violation of human rights, the suppression of civil liberties, abject poverty, famine, epidemics, debt problems, population displacement, ecological disaster and disenfranchisement." The experience of life in the Horn of Africa for marginalised groups (who together constitute a massive majority of the population) is characterised as being one of constant terror and uncertainty.

This collection focuses on the critical role of the state in both orchestrating and sustaining such terror, which is made manifest in the "violation of human rights, democracy, justice and freedom." The main questions addressed in this volume (but not necessarily answered definitively) are: is the state the problem, or is it the lack of the state, or the way in which the state is constructed? And how do issues of privatisation and globalisation, set against the backdrop of the negative legacies of colonialism, fuel the abuses of the state and the crisis in general?

In their essay 'The Horn of Africa, Local Conflict, Global Order?', Pat Lauderdale and Randall Amster explore the complex relationship that exists between external pressures in the form of globalisation and internal conflict in the region. They draw links between past colonialism and present-day globalisation to clearly demonstrate that authoritarian statism has ruled in the Horn of Africa since the early days of post-colonial independence. This chapter serves as an insightful introduction to both the countries of the region, which are each examined in turn, and the main themes that are picked up by other authors and dealt with more comprehensively in subsequent

chapters. Annamarie Oliverio's contribution, 'Terrorism, the Art of Statecraft and the Horn of Africa', puts forward the argument that even though a government may call itself democratic, and perhaps even display some of the ostensible characteristics associated with democratic rule, this alone does not make for a healthy democracy. She goes on to illustrate how democratic rhetoric can be manipulated to mask state authoritarianism and exclusionary practices which privilege hierarchy, control and domination over democratic norms.

There are four essays that examine aspects of Ethiopia's political development. In the chapter, '*The State, Ethnicity and Human Rights in Ethiopia*', John Sorenson focuses on how ethnicity and nationalism is played out in the country. He uses the case of the Oromo to illustrate the implications of ethnicity for the state and human rights. The role of the United States as an influential external actor in Ethiopia is scrutinized by Asafa Jalata. In his essay, '*US-Sponsored Ethiopian Democracy and State Terrorism*' he makes clear that any claims made by the US regarding the importance of fostering and shoring up fledgling democracies in lesser-developed countries, belies a rather

different reality in the case of Ethiopia. The first of the remaining two essays critiques the poor human rights record of the Meles regime in '*Promises to keep: Human Rights in the Post-Derg Ethiopia*' and the second explores the difficulties associated with state-building in both Eritrea and Ethiopia after their twin experiences of a "peoples' war". Author, Mesfin Araya argues that due to the legacy of the two liberation fronts who led the peoples' war in both countries, the process of state-building is reminiscent of that under Haile Selassie and Mengistu Haile Mariam.

The three essays covering Somalia look at a broad range of issues associated with the conflict of the early 1990s. The first examines the impact of global intervention on the difficult process of state-building, and how international norms of sovereignty and state boundaries contradict the Somali situation, where segmented clans are in conflict for power over the singular state. The second looks at the impact of the conflict on minority groups and the third examines how, despite the complete collapse of the central state, civil society in Somalia continues to thrive. This points ultimately to the need for decentralization of state power in order for politics to work. The last essay in the volume is the only one to focus on the Sudan. It looks at the process of Islamisation that is going on, particularly in the South of the country.

This volume of work is most useful for those interested in the states of Ethiopia and Somalia. The deep level of analysis is made possible by the well-constructed framework of issues relating to the relative health of the state in each case study country. In addition, those who are unfamiliar with the region of the Horn of Africa would also find the initial comparative chapters useful as a solid introduction to the politics of this area.

Roisin McLaughlin, QUB

Toggia, Lauderdale, & Zegeye (eds.), *Crisis and Terror in the Horn of Africa: Autopsy of Democracy, Human Rights and Freedom*, Ashgate and Dartmouth Publishers: Aldershot and Burlington USA, 2000, ISBN 0-7546-2135-9.

Garda Síochana Complaints Board to be replaced by Inspectorate

The recent announcement of a new Garda Inspectorate to replace the Garda Síochana Complaints Board by the Irish Minister for Justice, Equality & Law Reform, John O'Donoghue, sounds a welcome note of reform for the investigation of complaints against members of police in the Republic of Ireland.

The current system under the Garda Síochana Complaints Board has been heavily criticised domestically and internationally and its demise was widely felt to be long overdue. The rulings of the European Court of Human Rights in the cases of Jordan & Others probably hammered the final nail in the coffin of the Complaints Board, since it could not hope to be compatible with the standards of independence that the Court placed such emphasis on. Indeed, the Board stated repeatedly in its own annual reports that it was inadequate to its own task. The 1998 Annual Report stated, "the existing machinery and procedures of the Board are not satisfactory." The Board stated in its 1999 Report that, "the inadequacies of the current system [have] seriously damaged its standing with members of the public, community groups, members of the Garda Síochana and members of the legal profession." The Government, therefore, had little choice but to scrap the Board in favour of something that at least measured up to minimum standards.

Revealing the plans for the new Inspectorate at a Graduation Ceremony for Garda recruits in October of this year, the Minister stated that bringing in the new measures would "contribute in a very positive and significant way towards strengthening public confidence in the Garda Síochana and how it carries out its many tasks." He went on to explain that the new Inspectorate would operate independently of the force itself, with staff "appointed by and responsible to the Inspectorate." He said he had concluded that "radical change" was what was needed and stated that the Inspectorate would have the power to conduct research and initiate inspections, either of its own motion, or at the request of the Minister for Justice.

Not much else is known about the exact nature of the new Inspectorate, and enabling legislation is not expected until next year. This delay has been criticised by the Director of the Irish Council for Civil Liberties Donncha O'Connell, who stated at the time that, "[t]he arguments for greater police accountability stand on their own merits and should be given no less priority than other criminal justice matters." Mr. O'Connell made an unfavourable comparison between the swift publication of legislation extending Garda powers and the much more tardy pace at which the Inspectorate legislation was proceeding.

Michael Finucane

Young people speaking out.....

Following on from the conference "Inside - Out" on young people and the criminal justice system held in February 1999 (hosted by the CAJ, the Children's Law Centre, NIACRO, and the Nucleus) the video "inside OUT - Young people speaking OUT on policing the future" was successfully launched on 27th November 2001 in the Warner Bros Cinemas, in Belfast.

The video was excellent and demonstrated clearly how young people in ordinary day-to-day contact

with the police are often thought of, and generally treated as, potential troublemakers. They are not treated as individuals with individual histories and backgrounds. The video emphasised the crucial importance of being treated with respect and understanding of young people's situation and lifestyle.

Inside Out and Youth@CLC took the opportunity to give their recommendations on future policing.

- All police officers should be trained on children's rights, and receive anti-racism and prejudice-reduction training. This training should be developed and delivered in co-operation with young people.

- The police must ensure that

children and young people have access to all information and have this explained in an understandable way.

- There should be a separate independent police complaints department within "the Office of Police Ombudsman" for children and young people.

- Community partnerships which include young people should be developed.

- Young people should be consulted in the development of policy

- There should be a Minister representing children and young people in the Northern Ireland Executive.

- There should be an independent Commissioner for Children with all powers and resources necessary to promote and protect children's rights

Clemens Stolzenberg

Volunteer from Eirene Project, Germany

Inside Out - the video is available from the Children's Law Centre, tel: (028) 90245704. Price £5.00.

Civil Liberties Diary

Oct 5 More than 3000 people have lodged complaints against the RUC since the Police Ombudsman began her work. Figures revealed by Nuala O'Loan mark a 10% rise in allegations of police misdemeanours since her office was set up.

Oct 6 Health Minister de Brun has launched a project aimed at helping ethnic minority groups gain better access to health services and equality of opportunities.

Oct 7 The Police Ombudsman has presented the Devenny family with the previously withheld contents of the 1970 Drury Report on the death of Sammy Devenny in July 1969. Mr Devenny had been beaten in his home by a number of RUC officers.

Oct 8 Chairman of the Civic Forum, Chris Gibson has reviewed the year's work of the Forum and the Programme for Government of the Assembly. He believes the primary challenge in NI is the need to tackle sectarian polarisation.

Oct 9 Professor Roy McClelland says that he believes an essential part of the healing process for all of us in NI is to acknowledge, remember, and to address the hurt and pain experienced by so many in the conflict. He was inviting responses to the "Healing Through Remembering" project.

Oct 10 The chairman of the Board of Governors of Holy Cross School indicated that he is considering a legal challenge to end the dispute.

Oct 15 A QUB researcher project has raised alarms about the lifestyle of teenagers in NI. The report uncovered a trend of drink

and drugs use by 14 – 18 year olds, as well as pressures on them as a result of living with overt sectarianism and victimisation in their every day lives.

Oct 16 Head of the Human Rights Commission in NI, Professor Brice Dickson has called for an immediate end to the Holy Cross Girls school protest. He said the treatment meted out to the children was inhumane and that their right to an effective education was being effected.

Oct 17 David Blunkett has outlined a package on new anti-terrorism measures. He admits the Government was prepared to waive human rights legislation to crack down on terrorism.

Oct 18 The Police Service of Northern Ireland will be introduced as the new title for the police here on the same day as the 19 member Policing Board is established. Also on November 4th, about 300 new recruits will commence training under the 50/50 cross community drive.

Oct 20 Andrea Hopkins has been appointed legal adviser on human rights to the PSNI. She will advise the police service on matters involving human rights issues to ensure police practice and procedures comply with both domestic and international human rights.

Oct 22 The UK government delegation in Geneva has been questioned about its recent record of human rights by the UN Human Rights Committee. In its submission to the Committee, Paul Mageean of CAJ focussed on NI issues such

as collusion in the Pat Finucane and Rosemary Nelson cases and asked questions about the deaths of Robert Hamill and Billy Wright, and the dispute of Holy Cross girls school. He pointed out that the continued use of Diplock Courts in NI was also a cause of great concern.

Oct 23 "Priority should be given to the enhanced protection to the right of children, women, the disabled, ethnic minorities, the gay community and others" said Alliance Deputy Leader, Eileen Bell.

Oct 24 The Assembly Committee on education has recommended that the controversial 11+ exam should be scrapped as soon as possible. It is becoming increasingly apparent that the change was both necessary and appropriate.

Compiled by Peter Gahan from various newspaper sources.

Just News

Just News welcomes readers' news, views and comments.

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