

## CAJ continues to lobby internationally for public inquiries

**CAJ again attended the United Nations Commission on Human Rights in Geneva in April. Our primary purpose in attending was to continue to lobby internationally for the establishment of public inquiries into the cases of Pat Finucane and Rosemary Nelson.**

The Commission, primarily through the work of the UN Special Rapporteur on the Independence of Judges and Lawyers Dato' Param Cumaraswamy, has been tracking these cases for at least four years.

This year the Special Rapporteur once again took up the cases and he continued to insist that public inquiries were the only way to resolve the controversy surrounding the murder of the two lawyers. He said that he did not see "any merit" in the proposal to appoint an international judge to examine the cases and those of Hamill, Wright, Buchanan/Breen and Gibson.

Mr Cumaraswamy said "after so many years of multiple investigations, particularly in the Patrick Finucane murder, the resultant delays and the loss of key witnesses, **calling in an international judge to look into these outstanding murder investigations would only result in further delays, expense and public anguish...** The very strong suspicions of collusion by the RUC and/or security forces in those murders, particularly the Patrick Finucane and Rosemary Nelson murders, must be thoroughly examined by an independent public judicial commission."

The UK delegation chose to respond on the floor of the Commission saying that it was

*"determined that the truth should emerge concerning the terrible murders and associated allegations of collusion with the security forces in Northern Ireland. Priority must be to bring to justice those responsible for the murders. The Government remains committed to the package agreed at Weston Park to appoint, in conjunction with the Irish Government, an independent*

*international judge to investigate certain cases of concern including those of Finucane and Nelson."*

The UK delegation added that they stood by the "commitment that should the judge recommend public inquiries into any of the cases the relevant Government will implement that recommendation."

The Irish government restated its support for public inquiries into the Finucane, Nelson and Hamill cases. They said that "these cases are a source of grave public concern in themselves and in terms of maintaining the necessary confidence in the administration of justice." The Irish government said they had agreed the Weston Park proposal for the international judge in order "to help advance consideration" of the six cases.

The work of the Special Rapporteur highlights how vital it is that these issues continue to be raised at the most important international human rights fora in order that these cases can be successfully resolved.

**Paul Mageean**



## Contents

<b>Committee of Ministers to consider judgement in European cases</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Participation and the Practice of Rights:.... report launch</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Chill Factor/Kill Factor - review</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Policing raids and Castlereagh</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Refugees (NICEM's approach)</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Beyond Civil Rights - Development Econ, Social &amp; Cultural Rights in the UK</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Civil Liberties Diary</b>	<b>8</b>

## ***Committee of Ministers to consider judgement in European cases***

**The Committee of Ministers at the Council of Europe recently considered the response of the United Kingdom to the decisions in the case of Jordan, McKerr, Shanaghan and Kelly v UK. CAJ sent a written submission to the Committee expressing its concern at the failure of the UK to implement the reforms required by the decisions.**

The ECHR found that the UK had violated Article 2 of the Convention because it had not properly investigated the killings of twelve individuals, some of them killed by the police, some by the army and one killed by loyalist paramilitaries in circumstances suggesting collusion.

The judgement, in our view, required a number of changes to investigative practices in Northern Ireland. Such changes would radically change the way in which any lethal force deaths would currently be dealt with as well as reopening review of these four particular cases.

On 14<sup>th</sup> January 2002 during a judicial review pertaining to the Jordan case, counsel for the Lord Chancellor gave perhaps the fullest explanation to date of the government's response to the Jordan et al judgements from Strasbourg.

He said that in order to comply with the judgements the government had taken a number of steps. Some of these steps were administrative and included the appointment of a second full time Coroner, the appointment of another part time Coroner and the establishment of additional courtroom space. These steps seem to constitute a response to the criticism of the Strasbourg Court in relation to a lack of promptness in inquest proceedings.

Dealing with the matter of substantive changes to the inquest system, he said that the change to rule 9(2) was the only change envisaged to the inquest rules. This will allow the Coroner to compel the attendance of those suspected of causing the death under investigation.

He outlined that the criticism of the ECHR in relation to the issue of independent investigations was dealt with by way of the establishment of the Police Ombudsman. He indicated that the criticism in relation to the refusal of the DPP to give reasons for refusing to prosecute would have to be considered by the Attorney General. There was no intention to change the rules relating to verdicts at inquests in Northern Ireland. Nonetheless, the government accepted there was a need to have an effective process which could assist in identifying and prosecuting those responsible. However, it was stated that this requirement could be provided by some mechanism other than an inquest. He speculated that this might include a reconsideration by the DPP following the inquest. Issues of legal aid and disclosure were being or had been dealt with.

Counsel for the Lord Chancellor confirmed that there is no prospect of changes to the scope of the inquest proceeding despite the fact that this aspect was severely criticised in the Shanaghan case.

Apparently there will be no policy change in relation to the giving of reasons by the DPP where that office refuses to prosecute an individual for using lethal force. This approach is confirmed in the government's recent Implementation Plan in relation to the recommendations of the Criminal Justice Review in Northern Ireland which undermined a recommendation from the Review that the DPP should generally give reasons.

While the Ombudsman may satisfy the concern of the Court that the investigations were not independent, she can only investigate cases involving the police. She would not therefore be able to investigate killings by the army in Northern Ireland or indeed investigate deaths involving collusion between paramilitary actors and a variety of state officials.

There is however a more immediate concern. The judgements in the cases of Jordan, Kelly, Shanaghan and McKerr found that the investigations in those cases were so poor that they violated the procedural aspect of the right to life. In other words twelve deaths caused in the most controversial circumstances in Northern Ireland have not been properly investigated. In the absence of such investigations, it is clear that the government has a responsibility to now conduct investigations which do meet the requirements of article 2. We, as lawyers representing the families in Kelly and Shanaghan, have written to the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, the DPP and the police seeking information about their intentions in light of the judgements. We are aware that the lawyers acting for the Jordans and the McKerrs have done likewise. To date we have received no substantive response except from the police who have effectively indicated they do not intend to do anything in response to the judgements.

In our view the government, through a lead department or official should respond comprehensively to the European judgements. Each major criticism identified by the Strasbourg Court should be met in the course of this response. As noted above, this would entail changes to the policy and practice of the inquest system, the DPP, the police and Police Ombudsman, and the Ministry of Defence.

In addition the government should immediately establish inquiries into the four cases subject to the judgements, which are compliant with article 2.

***Fionnuala ni Aolain***

## “Participation and the Practice of Rights: Insider/Outsider – Changing Relationships”: Launch of conference report

Readers of Just News may remember reading last year about an exciting and innovative north/south conference CAJ was involved in on the issue of participation and the practice of rights (see September 2001 edition). The conference was a groundbreaking event, and began a dialogue among community workers, human rights groups, trade union activists, academics and equality campaigners from the north and south of the island about how we can begin to challenge marginalisation by using the national and international tools of human rights.

Such was the thirst for continuing this debate that a series of regional follow-up meetings were held in the autumn in Belfast, Dublin, Galway and Derry. At each of these meetings, there was a real desire to begin educating and building awareness around these issues, and in this way building confidence so that the most marginalised can begin to assert rights for themselves.

The proceedings of the June conference and the conclusions of the regional fora were brought together into a report which was launched recently in the Carrickdale Hotel, Co. Louth. Also keen to add her voice to the debate and stress its importance was the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mary Robinson, who in a foreword to the report said that:

*“This work has an importance way beyond the shores of Ireland, though I can say that I am not particularly surprised that this kind of innovative work is being done in Ireland north and south.”*

The launch of the report was again attended by a lively mixture of people who were keen to discuss and learn about possible next steps, as well as hear from the guest speaker Ramona Ortega.

Ms Ortega works for the Human Rights Project of the Urban Justice Centre in New York which works with community groups to operationalise human rights at a local level by providing technical assistance and documenting human rights violations in the implementation of anti-poverty programmes and education. Ms Ortega spoke to the audience about their latest report, “Hunger is no Accident” which involved studying the actual affects of welfare reform in New York City. This study found that while the city was claiming that the reform programme was a success, success only existed in terms of caseload reduction as opposed to actual poverty reduction. When the problem was examined in more detail by the Human

Rights Project, they found that the reduction in caseload was largely due to maladministration and misinformation on the part of the welfare outlets which led to welfare payments being cut, as opposed to getting people out of poverty and into work. They also found that the non-white community was worse affected, and were generally worst-off in terms of poverty, homelessness, unemployment, ill-health and reliance on community services.

The Project strongly highlighted that poverty was a violation of fundamental human rights and drew on international legal instruments as a way of asserting these rights and putting pressure on the state. As the USA has not ratified the UN Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Project had to rely heavily on the socio-economic provisions of the UN Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. Their story provided a useful case-study for those in attendance at the report launch and sparked many ideas as to the possibility of similar studies on this island.

In the workshops that followed this presentation, there was much discussion about steps that we can take here to bring this debate on participation and rights forward. An immediate step which was endorsed was of making submissions to the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, which will be examining the periodic reports of both Ireland and the UK on their compliance with the Covenant in May.

It was clear, however, that this is a debate whose time has come and that we are still very much exploring the edges. It is likely that this work will continue for a long time, either through regional fora or whatever format proves to be most effective.

### **Aideen Gilmore**

Copies of the report (at a cost of £6/10Euro) are available from the CAJ office.

## **ACTION COLUMN**

**CAJ is appearing before the United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in Geneva in May.**

**Full report in next month's issue.**

**For copies of the submission contact the CAJ office on (028) 9096 1122. quoting ref. S.128.**

**Price: £1.00**

## **Chill Factor/Kill Factor**

### *Understanding (Safe) Unemployment in W. Belfast*

**In commenting on an employment survey, a major study several years ago noted: "The key barrier specific to Northern Ireland was a 'chill factor' that discouraged people from working in areas identified with the opposite religion. A third of the respondents stated that they would not be prepared to travel through an area of the opposite religion and 55% that they would not work in a place predominantly of the opposite religion." (SACHR, 1997)**

Given this finding, it is surprising that so little research has been undertaken since into the issue of the "chill factor". This gap has been in part remedied by the recent publication of a paper by Robbie McVeigh and Charlie Fisher for the West Belfast Economic Forum. Their research concludes that this issue cannot simply be disregarded as a residue of the conflict, but must be viewed as a problem that persists in distorting labour practices and perpetuating inequality and social disadvantage. The 'chill factor' derives from both the reality and the threat of violence, not simply a community misconception of 'the other.' The authors argue that the term 'chill factor' downplays the seriousness of this problem, and therefore undermines effective responses.

Even in the limited research done, there is strong disagreement about definitions. In 1996, Borooah suggested that the chill factor was a phenomenon that mainly affected Catholics, and resulted in many Catholic men opting for 'safe' unemployment over 'dangerous' work. A government report issued soon afterwards assumed that equal numbers of Catholics and Protestants suffered from the chill factor and blamed the phenomenon on republican violence. Though it is true that the chill factor has an impact on both communities, there is strong evidence to suggest that Catholics, especially in West Belfast, are most heavily affected by it.

The three main types of chill factor discussed in the report are harassment, violent harassment, and 'seasonal' harassment.

Harassment can include almost any non-physical action against an individual. Examples of this can include, but are not limited to - verbal abuse, ignoring a person's opinion/advice, the display of flags or other material intended to intimidate. Violent harassment can include anything from death threats, to assault, to attempted or successful murder. People have been stoned on the way to work, shot at, and been told they would be killed if they returned to work. The final type of harassment is that of 'seasonal' harassment. This type of harassment includes elements

of non-violent and violent harassment, but it always happens at certain times of the year, such as the marching season. While the other two types of harassment are fairly consistent, with the same people being abusive, seasonal harassment can be practised by people who are pleasant throughout the rest of the year. It is clear from the many personal and disturbing anecdotes which figure in this report that 'chilling' is a real and concrete problem in Belfast. It is not enough, however, to identify the problem. The real question is, what can be done about it?

McVeigh and Fisher offer several suggestions for the reduction of the chill factor in West Belfast. The first step is to address harassment and intimidation as legitimate problems. At present, these problems are viewed as subsets of the problem of discrimination, but they are distinct and need to be treated as such. Secondly, the occurrence of the chill factor plays a crucial part in the continuation of the conflict and in order to change this, there needs to be the continuation of dialogue and remembrance to engage with the legacy of violence directly. Thirdly, there is clearly a need to address harassment in West Belfast by addressing the issue of policing. Until there is a security force in Belfast that is supported by the people there, the issue of the chill factor cannot, in the opinion of the authors, be adequately dealt with. The report finally argues that the last, and possibly most important, way to reduce the chill factor is to address the specific experiences of 'Protestant Chilling' and 'Catholic Chilling'. There is need for more research into these different community experiences, as well as more investigation into the chill factor itself.

In my opinion, the chill factor is not unique to West Belfast. In the United States, similar problems are experienced on grounds of one's race or sexual orientation. The victims of this phenomenon share one thing in common - they are discriminated against because of a personal characteristic they cannot change. We cannot believe that it is an isolated occurrence that only affects Catholics. It is clear that there is a history that led up to the practice of the chill factor, and there is a present mentality that keeps it going. Both Catholics and Protestants are victims of this abuse, and it will take both parties to solve this problem.

***Justin Anderson***

The report of the West Belfast and Greater Shankill Task Forces (February 2002) is available on:

Dept. of Enterprise Trade & Investment	<a href="http://www.detini.gov.uk">www.detini.gov.uk</a>
Dept. of Social Development:	<a href="http://www.dsdni.gov.uk">www.dsdni.gov.uk</a>

## *Policing raids and Castlereagh*

**Much publicity has been devoted to the recent raids by the PSNI - raids carried out, the police spin doctors tell us, in relation to the recent Castlereagh break-in (or as local wags have dubbed it, the 'walk-in'). Most of that publicity has focussed upon speculation about who was responsible for the break in. Much less attention has been paid to the effect of those raids, the manner in which they were carried out and their particular significance for human rights activists.**

One of those raids, on Easter Saturday, involved a search of the premises of **Tar Abhaile**, an ex-prisoners project, which is based on the top floor of 1 Westend Park, a tall building on the edge of the Bogside. For those not familiar with the physical or political geography of Derry, the building houses a number of other organisations, amongst them the human rights group, the Pat Finucane Centre (PFC). It is named for murdered solicitor and human rights lawyer Pat Finucane. The work of the PFC is varied, but a large focus of that work is the facilitation and support of victims of human rights abuses. Its offices contain records of its work, including files relating to those victims, many of them killed by the state. Most reasonable people would therefore appreciate the concern an early morning search of the building by armed members of the police would generate amongst the relatives of those victims and with those who work on their behalf. The validity of such concerns would be graphically illustrated later in the day when files relating to the Bloody Sunday families and others were seized from trauma centre **Cunamh**. One would also expect that police officers would be alive to these concerns and would be keen to explain their actions and to reassure people as to their actions. One might at least expect that police officers would be courteous in their dealings with the public and in particular with human rights activists. That is, after all, what Patten leads us to expect. The reality was, of course, very different.

By the time I and other members of the PFC management committee arrived, the police appeared to have been in the building for some time and no-one had any idea what was going on. The rumour circulating amongst neighbours was that it was the Pat Finucane Centre that was being raided - some years ago the Centre was searched and a number of those associated with it arrested and subsequently released without charge. After a series of attempts to get information from hostile and downright rude police officers, we were informed that that the PFC was not being searched. Nonetheless, we would not be allowed into our offices. Using powers apparently conferred by the Terrorism Act 2000, the police denied us access to the building and to the PFC offices, in a manner which left one wondering about just how much of the greatly advertised 'human rights

approach' to policing has permeated down the ranks. Complaints have gone to the Ombudsman and material has been sent to the UN, amongst others.

The distress and the damage caused by the raid on **Cunamh** was graphically put by John Kelly, whose brother Michael was murdered on Bloody Sunday, "The PSNI have intervened to destroy our confidence and, in one despicable act, have further increased the pain and trauma associated with Bloody Sunday." The raid can also be seen as a further attack on the Inquiry itself, and the families have asked the Inquiry and others to look into the matter.

All of these experiences directly contradict those who tell us that there has been a new beginning to policing in Northern Ireland. They are also a very specific challenge to them to do something about those experiences. The Policing Board, for example, could do as the Bloody Sunday relatives have demanded, and insist that all of the files taken from **Cunamh's** offices be returned. It could investigate why they were taken in the first place; It could express concern and ask hard questions; it could insist that measures are taken to ensure that a human rights culture suffuses the police. It could apologise to the human rights groups and the individuals involved.

There are many people in Northern Ireland who question whether a proper foundation has been laid for a police service that protects human rights and is accountable for its actions. Those who argue that a new beginning has been made must now demonstrate how their involvement in the new policing structures can make a difference.

*Angela Hegarty*

### *Up to date with CAJ*

Tim attended a Housing Executive Forum on equality. There was a meeting of the Equality Coalition.

Maggie attended the AGM of the Old Warren Prisoners Project.

A meeting took place of the Ad Hoc Human Rights Consortium.

Paul attended the UN Commission on Human Rights in Geneva on Patrick Finucane and Rosemary Nelson's cases (see front page)

Tim attended an event hosted by the NI Human Rights Commission on the Burns report on the 11 plus.

Paul gave a lecture on the Human Rights Act and the Criminal Justice System at the Institute of Professional Legal Studies.

Martin attended the opening of the Northern Ireland Voluntary Trust's new offices in Belfast.

Please accept our apologies for the delay in this month's issue.

Finally, congratulations from everyone at CAJ to Paul and Barbara on the recent birth of their daughter Emer.

*Liz McAleer*

## Refugees

*A growing area of concern in Northern Ireland is our treatment of refugees. The following is an account of NICEM's work in this area.*

**As unbelievable as it may seem, given its own turbulent history, Northern Ireland has been a place of sanctuary and safety for refugees for many years, and as more and more people are displaced throughout the world and are forced to leave their homes as a result of war and civil and political unrest, Northern Ireland will continue to be a place of refuge.**

However, for most the battle to pursue their lives with dignity and respect is fraught with difficulty, as a result of the failure of statutory and government services meeting their needs. The lack of an organised refugee support group and the general lack of services to meet the specific needs of refugees in Northern Ireland has resulted in refugees being isolated and unable to access basic services without facing enormous difficulties.

NICEM campaigned on this issue for several years and finally in September 2000, secured funding from the Home Office to develop a "One Stop" Asylum and Refugee Service. Through this "One Stop" Service, destitute asylum seekers are given advice and assistance in accessing financial support and accommodation, in accordance with the provisions of the National Asylum Support Services, as established under the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999.

In August 2001 NICEM secured funding from European Refugee Fund for a Refugee Integration and Resettlement

Service. This ensures immediate access to services for individuals and smoothness of transition to mainstream services following the grant of ILR (Indefinite Leave to Remain) and ELR (Exceptional Leave to Remain). The service provides information to assist refugees and people granted leave to remain in accessing essential services such as health care, English language, training and education opportunities, welfare benefits, housing and advice, volunteering and basic orientation about Belfast and Northern Ireland. This service works with NICEM's Capacity Building and Community Development projects in developing a refugee community organisation, which is able to advocate on behalf of the refugee community in the North of Ireland.

The aim is to ensure that refugees do not continue to experience isolation and exclusion and can access, at the earliest possible stages, opportunities to integrate participate and contribute to society in the North of Ireland.

### Contacts:

Refugee Integration & Resettlement Worker – **Lumturi Podrimaj**

Asylum Advice & Support Workers – **Moira Mc Combe, Glen Phillips**

Immigration, Refugee & Asylum Service Co-ordinator – **Sharon Dillon**

Tel: 028 9023 8645/028 9031 9666

Fax: 028 9031 9485

Email: [NICEM@n-ireland.freeserve.co.uk](mailto:NICEM@n-ireland.freeserve.co.uk)

## East Belfast school triumphs in Bill of Rights debate

**Pupils from Our Lady and St Patrick's Grammar School, Knock have come out on top in Amnesty International's Bill of Rights school debating competition. Students from the east Belfast school triumphed at the finals of the Northern Ireland-wide debating competition, which were held on Thursday (21 March) in the prestigious Senate chamber at Stormont. The winning team was David Semple, Bronagh Kealey, Joseph Wilkinson and captain Brian Sloan, ably supported by their colleagues Martin George, Fiona Fee, Garret McCann and their teacher Damien O'Hare.**

Division one winners were Assumption Grammar School, Ballynahinch who won a narrow victory over St Rose's High School, Belfast.

The Our Lady and St Patrick's team, who have competed over the last six months for a place in the finals, beat Antrim Grammar School in a close-fought display of public speaking and debating prowess. The schools debated whether or not the Bill of Rights is needed for a peaceful society in Northern Ireland.

Expert judges who awarded trophies to the winners' team were Deputy Speaker at the Assembly Jane Morrice MLA; Amnesty International Director, Kate Allen; and Human Rights Commissioner, Prof Brice Dickson.

*"The aim of the schools debating competition has been to promote awareness of human rights, and in particular the proposed Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland," says Fiona Murphy of Amnesty International, who organised the debating competition.*

*"Dozens of debates have taken place in schools throughout Northern Ireland in the run-up to the final. Students have debated motions on subjects such as marching, free education and lowering the voting age. The standard of debate has been fantastically high and all of the young people have been winners," says Ms Murphy, a local campaigner for the worldwide human rights organisation.*

The competition was financially supported by the Northern Ireland Voluntary Trust.

## *Beyond Civil Rights - Development Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in the United Kingdom*

**“The reality of poverty is that the poor are denied almost all of their human rights”**

Mary Robinson, Commission on Human Rights  
56th Session, 12 April 2002.

The above quote opens the preface to this working paper from Oxfam GB and JUSTICE. *Beyond Civil Rights* represents one outcome of work which followed on from the preparation of a joint NGO submission called “**Poverty undermines rights in the UK**”. The submission was made to the UN in response to the UK Government’s 1997 periodic report on implementing the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural (ESC) Rights. As the title suggests, the paper aims to sketch out an agenda that will further the development of ESC rights - such as access to housing, healthcare and education, across the UK.

With the enactment of the 1998 Human Rights Act as a point of reference the timing of this publication is apt. This is perhaps more so in Northern Ireland given the ongoing debates about the implementation of the statutory duty, the consultation on the proposed Bill of Rights and the on-off momentum surrounding the Single Equality Bill. The level of expertise on these issues within the voluntary and community sector here is considerable. However, for many, the need to develop capacity to exploit European and international tools to further the equality agenda is just one step too far amid the daily workload of domestic consultations and funding applications.

**Beyond Civil Rights** presents an opportunity to redress this by providing a framework for making sense of the legal and policy context that originates outside of NI and the UK. The text directs its way through the roles of a range of key institutions and bodies and negotiates well through the major covenants, treaties and directives. While the report is concerned with ESC rights, the principles of how to use European and international standards effectively and the examples of actions to take are transferable to other areas of rights.

The report has clear terms of reference and is divided into short chapters that make good use of quotes, statistics and illustrative examples usually contained in handy boxes. Generally, the information is made accessible and relevant. The themes of the report are progressive with chapters in turn providing a historical background to the debate, analysing the current UK situation and then examining this in an EU and international context. The recommended action groupings for NGOs are a valuable tool, as is the appendix of UN procedures and glossary of terms.

Points to highlight from the document include the potted version of arguments that are frequently used to question the validity of promoting ESC rights, complete with rebuffs and examples from South Africa and India. While perhaps too much to be covered in one document, it would be

interesting if the authors explored how building and promoting partnerships across national boundaries could be another vehicle to promote ESC rights. The reference to the devolved environment, and particularly developments in NI, is welcome although this could be drawn on more throughout the body of the report.

A good overview of the strengths and weaknesses of respective EU legislation and summary of the responsibilities of the various institutions is given. While the presentation of information could have been simplified, the document does demonstrate that there are points of access for NGOs, such as through the Westminster Parliamentary Committees which have an EU policy scrutiny role. It is a little disappointing though that the report fails to signpost developments that could be capitalised upon, such as, the enlargement process or the new Gender Equality Directive, to further ESC rights. As to the UN, the paper does well in its explanation of the layers processes and procedures, such as, where complaints and communications procedures are in place and where they are absent. The basic overview of key treaties in relation to ESC rights is particularly useful for NGOs who are either not familiar with UN instruments or who specialise in only one area, such as, gender and so focus only on this. The information on UK reports and key points highlighted by the different committees is a helpful starting point for organisations to assess where they can make effective interventions.

*Beyond Civil Rights* is an excellent point of reference for NGOs keen to use EU and international instruments to promote human rights and equality. On a different note however, many of the recommendations raise questions about the level of additional support and training that NGOs may require in order to make interventions that will be most effective, targeted and co-ordinated. The voluntary and community sector needs to acknowledge that resources to provide ongoing support to NGOs to do this work must be made available.

**Jacqueline Melville**

Northern Ireland Women’s European Platform

*Beyond Civil Rights -Developing Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in the United Kingdom* Sandy Ruxton and Razia Karim ISBN 085598 4740. Oxford. Oxfam GB 2001.

## Civil Liberties Diary

**March 1** Concerns were expressed in the Assembly that the draft Housing Bill announced today, deals with neither the growing problem of homelessness nor outlines any new or innovative approach to the problem.

**March 3** "Post Mortem", a new report compiled by retired education lecturer Michael McKeown, claimed that nearly as many people were killed as a result of pure sectarianism in the troubles, as for any political cause. It found that while 1756 people were killed in actions that were deemed as being military or political, 1645 were killed as a result of sectarianism.

**March 7** The offer of ten thousand pounds by the British Government to the widow of Pat Finucane by way of friendly settlement was dismissed by the family as a cynical move and an insult. Progress in the European case, launched by Geraldine Finucane in 1995 has been delayed by the continuing police investigation into the Pat Finucane's murder.

**March 11** The father of loyalist Billy Wright will discover whether or not he can have access to police and coroners office files on his son's controversial killing. The Belfast High Court is to rule on two judicial reviews in which David Wright has asked to see evidence that has not been made public.

**March 12** The Northern Ireland Human Rights commission went to

the House of Lords to appeal against a decision by the Court of Appeal in Belfast to the effect that the Commission does not have the power to appear before the courts and present arguments on human rights principles that are of public interest. Three non governmental organisations active in the human rights field, Amnesty International, British Irish Rights Watch and the CAJ have also been permitted to make a joint written submission to the Lords.

**March 14** It was reported that almost 20,000 complaints have been made against the police in the last 6 years, but just 9 officers have been successfully prosecuted. More than 6,000 files were sent to the DPP arising out of the complaints with 24 recommended for prosecution.

**March 15** British Irish Rights Watch has issued a fresh call for a full public inquiry into the murder of solicitor Rosemary Nelson, on the anniversary of her death. The police investigation into her murder, headed by Colin Port is continuing. It is understood a separate investigation by the police ombudsman is near completion. An international judge is due to be appointed to investigate a number of controversial killings including Mrs Nelson's.

**March 19** Statistics from the police and Base 2, (a non political charity providing support to victims of paramilitary assaults) show that

all terrorist groups are extremely active in attacking or driving out of their communities, those they deem to be undesirable. They have shot and beaten up, around 60 people in NI, in the past thirty months and last year ordered nearly 700 people to leave their homes.

**March 21** To mark the International Day Against Racism a series of events took place. A poster campaign was launched. The University of Ulster also issued a survey showing that racist attitudes and prejudice in NI were twice as widespread as sectarianism. Over 260 racist incidents were recorded in 2000/2001. Citizen's Advice Bureaux across NI dealt with 1000 discrimination problems in 2000/2001 and have witnessed a steady increase each year.

**March 27** Trends outlined in a draft strategy for the Belfast Regeneration Office showed that residents of Belfast's most deprived areas are less likely to have a job, more likely to have an illness and are greater targets for criminals.

*Compiled by Peter and Moya Gahan from various newspaper sources.*

## Just News

### 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.**

**Just News** welcomes readers' news, views and comments.

**Just News** is published by the Committee on the Administration of Justice Ltd. Correspondence should be addressed to the Editor, **Fionnuala Ni Aolain, CAJ Ltd.**

45/47 Donegall Street, Belfast  
BT1 2BR Phone (028) 9096 1122  
Fax: (028) 9024 6706

The views expressed in **Just News** are not necessarily those of CAJ.