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Troubles' secret records now online

Published Date: 14 October 2010

By Staff Reporter

A NEW online resource offering public access to recently declassified secret records from the early years of the 'Troubles' has been launched at Magee by the University of Ulster and the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland.

Staff from Ulster and the the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland have worked together to make the records freely available on the the University of Ulster's Conflict Archive on the Internet, known as CAIN, website <http://cain.ulster.ac.uk/proni>.

The records can cover a broad range of issues including security, politics and education. They comprise a selection of material for the period 1968-79 which is already in the public domain, having been published under the '30-year-rule' - the time frame within which official documents are kept hidden from the public gaze.

The records provide a valuable online digital resource for researchers looking for information on the 'Troubles' and politics of Northern Ireland during this period.

The new archive was officially launched by Sir Kenneth Bloomfield, a former head of the Northern Ireland Civil Service, at an event in the Great Hall, Magee. The records include part of the period when he was a senior government official.

Dr Brendan Lynn, Deputy Director of CAIN, which is based at the Magee campus, said: "We have been delighted to cooperate with PRONI in order to add and supplement the existing resources on CAIN. It has also allowed CAIN to pursue one of its long-term objectives of working with individuals, groups or organisations with relevant material to make digital versions of their materials more accessible to a wider audience.

"The information is easily available and free of charge. It will be of great use to students, researchers,

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teachers and lecturers or to anyone with an interest in the political and social history of Northern Ireland." Aileen McClintock, Director of PRONI, said: "This resource provides researchers based anywhere in the world with direct access to some of the key documents held by PRONI relating to the Troubles. "These records are the raw material of the history and will let students evaluate important events and personalities for themselves. PRONI is keen to work in partnership and this has been a particularly successful collaboration with CAIN, which will be of real benefit to researchers." The aim of this pilot project, called 'PRONI Records on CAIN', was to make a limited selection of material released by PRONI under its 'Annual Release Scheme', available to a wider audience. This collection is the latest resource to be added to the continually expanding materials available on CAIN - the internationally recognised resource on the Northern Ireland 'Troubles'.

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