AS TO THE ADMISSIBILITY OF

Application No. 30277/96
by Anthony BOULLEMIER
against the United Kingdom

The European Commission of Human Rights (First Chamber) sitting in private on 9 April 1997, the following members being present:

Mrs. J. LIDDY, President
MM. M.P. PELLONPÄÄ
E. BUSUTTIL
A. WEITZEL
C.L. ROZAKIS
L. LOUCAIDES
B. MARXER
B. CONFORTI
I. BÉKÉS
G. RESS
A. PERENIC
C. BÎRSAN
K. HERNDL
M. VILA AMIGÓ
Mrs. M. HION
Mr. R. NICOLINI

Mrs. M.F. BUQUICCHIO, Secretary to the Chamber

Having regard to Article 25 of the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms;

Having regard to the application introduced on 14 February 1996 by Anthony Boullemier against the United Kingdom and registered on 23 February 1996 under file No. 30277/96;

Having regard to the reports provided for in Rule 47 of the Rules of Procedure of the Commission and the respondent Government's indication that they have no observations on the admissibility of the applicant's complaints;

Having deliberated;

Decides as follows:

THE FACTS

The applicant is a British citizen, born in 1954 and resident in Wiltshire. He is represented before the Commission by Mr. Gilbert Blades, a solicitor practising in Lincoln. The facts as submitted by the applicant may be summarised as follows.

A. Particular circumstances of the case.

In September 1994 the applicant, who was a Flight Lieutenant and a commissioned officer in the Royal Air Force, was charged (pursuant to section 70 of the Air Force Act 1955) with the civilian criminal offence of theft (of a pocket survival tool from a United States air base) contrary to the Theft Act 1968.

The Convening Officer, by order dated 6 December 1994, convened a general court-martial to try the applicant on the charge. On 8 December 1994 the court-martial found the applicant guilty. He was sentenced to be dismissed from the air force.

On the 14 December 1994 the applicant petitioned the Confirming Officer in relation to his conviction. The applicant's conviction and sentence were confirmed and promulgated on 23 February 1995.

In March 1995 the applicant petitioned the Defence Council against conviction and sentence. By letter dated 25 May 1995 the applicant was informed of the decision, taken by the Air Force Board, to reject this petition.

The applicant applied to a single judge of the Courts-Martial Appeal Court for leave to appeal to that court against conviction. On 21 August 1995 this application was rejected, the decision being notified to the applicant on 31 August 1995.

On 13 September 1995 the applicant applied to the full Courts-Martial Appeal Court for leave to appeal against conviction. On 22 January 1996 this application for leave to appeal was dismissed.

B. Relevant domestic law and practice.

The Commission refers to the "Relevant domestic law and practice" contained in the judgment in the Findlay case (Eur. Court HR, Findlay v. the United Kingdom judgment of 25 February 1997, to be published in Reports of Judgments and Decisions for 1997) and in its report on the Coyne application (No. 25942/94, Comm. Report 25.6.96, unpublished).

COMPLAINTS

The applicant complains under Article 6 of the Convention that he was denied a fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal established by law.

PROCEEDINGS BEFORE THE COMMISSION

The application was introduced on 14 February 1996 and was registered on 23 February 1996.

On 12 April 1996 the Commission decided to communicate and adjourn the application.

On 2 July 1996 the Commission decided to request the Government's observations. In their letter received on 7 November 1996 the Government stated that they have no observations on the admissibility of the application.

THE LAW

The applicant complains under Article 6 (Art. 6) of the Convention that he was denied a fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal established by law. The Government have no observations on the admissibility of the applicant's complaints.

The Commission considers that the application raises complex and serious issues under Article 6 (Art. 6) of the Convention which require determination on the merits. It follows that these complaints of the applicant cannot be dismissed as manifestly ill-founded within the meaning of Article 27 para. 2 (Art. 27-2) of the Convention. No other ground for declaring them inadmissible has been established.

For these reasons, the Commission, unanimously,

DECLARES THE APPLICATION ADMISSIBLE, without prejudging the merits.

M.F. BUQUICCHIO
Secretary
to the First Chamber

J. LIDDY
President
of the First Chamber