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Robin Eames: I share your pain

On the day the Troubles report is finally unveiled, Lord Eames tells of the 'extreme' personal cost behind its compilation

By Brian Rowan
Wednesday, 28 January 2009

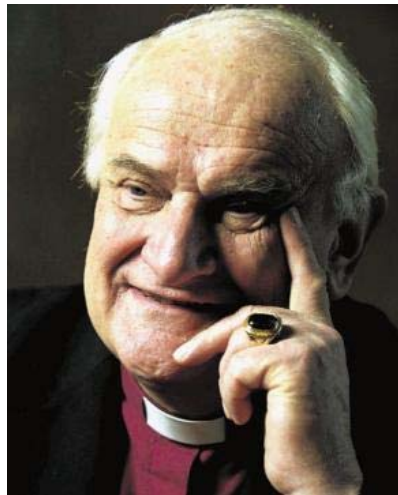
Lord Robin Eames told last night of the "extreme" personal pain he went through during his work with the Consultative Group on the Past.

Speaking to the Belfast Telegraph, Lord Eames talked about the "enormity of the task" faced by the group.

"Having lived through those years of darkness and been so closely associated with those families who suffered so much, I knew the enormity of the task we faced, but nothing could have prepared any human being for the mountain we had to climb as a group," he said. "I share the pain that is so obvious at the moment.

"The pain which I personally went through in the process was, and is, extreme".

Meanwhile, the blueprint for dealing with Northern Ireland's violent past will be officially revealed in Belfast this morning against the backdrop of a bitter row over plans to make payments to all families who lost someone in the conflict.



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Lord Eames and Denis Bradley — co-chairs of the Consultative Group on the Past — will unveil their 190-page plan with its 31 recommendations at an event in the Europa Hotel.

One of the group's international advisers, the South African Brian Currin, will also address an invited audience as the Eames-Bradley team attempts to steer the debate away from the payments controversy.

A senior security source dismissed that row as "a sideshow" — distracting from the bigger question of who will co-operate with any information or truth recovery process.

This morning, victims' groups, politicians, police officers and other interested parties will be in the Europa audience.

A senior loyalist paramilitary leader, commenting on the leaked plan to give the families of all who died in the conflict a 'recognition payment' of £12,000, said: "If they (Eames-Bradley) thought the public was going to take that and swallow that — never, never and never. I can understand people who were not involved (receiving a payment), but people who were involved — the public will never accept it."

Another source questioned the decision to leak the plan last Friday: "I can't work out the thinking," he said. "It's going to distort the whole thing."

This morning's launch event of the Report of the Consultative

Northern Ireland Troubles Gallery



IRA checkpoint

£26 m*
Too big to miss
*estimated

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Group on the Past will confirm a recommendation to form a Legacy Commission, headed by an international chairman.

If the Eames-Bradley proposals are accepted, two other commissioners will lead the work of new Investigations and Information Recovery Units.

There is no proposal for an amnesty and no recommendation in a 12-page chapter on Remembrance for a single memorial to remember all victims of the conflict.

Today's report will also confirm plans for a new Reconciliation Forum — including the international chairman of the Legacy Commission, the Victims' Commissioners and representatives of the Community Relations Council.

The legacy plan is expected to cost £300m — and if recommendations are accepted the British Government would fund it with a "significant contribution" from the Irish Government.

After this morning's launch event the Eames-Bradley team will melt away — its work done and its recommendations now left for others to consider.

Speaking ahead of the launch of the Report of the Consultative Group on the Past, co-chairs of the group, Lord Robin Eames and Denis Bradley, urged everyone to take time to reflect on the findings and recommendations.

On the £12,000 payment controversy, co-chair Denis Bradley said: "Over the past number of days we have heard some victims groups saying we don't want money, we want justice. Others have said we don't want money, we want truth. They are right to say that and our report will reflect both points of view.

"Equally they have to respect those who told us that they wanted neither justice nor truth. Others that we met want recognition by our society of their loss and suffering. This is not about compensation nor is it about financial reward. It is a small gesture by our society to acknowledge the grief of the families left devastated by the last forty years."

The former Church of Ireland Primate Lord Eames added: "I would therefore ask everyone to take time to read our report. We would urge everyone to take the weeks and months ahead to reflect on its recommendations. This is too important an issue for instant responses."

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Posts submitted in UPPERCASE letters will be rejected.

Eames - smart man, political fool. Bradley is the driving force behind all of this.

Posted by [Charlieboy](#) | 28.01.09, 20:52 GMT

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How much will it cost me, personally, to compensate for terrorism? The estimated cost of the legacy is £300 million. There are around 1759000 people in Northern Ireland. The number of tax payers is not immediately discernible. How much will each of the tax payers in NI have to pay to provide compensation for the "troubles" they have experienced? Or will the bill be extended to the whole of

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the UK?

Posted by *A Taylor* | 28.01.09, 19:58 GMT

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spend the money on cross community projects - 300 x £1m community centres etc or fund the salaries of 3000 staff at 20k per annum for five years.

Posted by *victim* | 28.01.09, 17:37 GMT

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Lord Eames and Denis Bradley are honourable gentlemen, let there be no doubt about that and probably the same goes for those who assisted them in their deliberations. The proposal of a blanket payout, however, is totally wrong and will, without doubt, cause further strife. Sadly they seem to have forgotten the one great problem that has plagued all of Ireland and Northern Ureland in particular for centuries. The cancer of religious bigotry is still rife and certainly some may claim it continues to expand. This group of noble men would have spent their time more profitably and to better cause by concentrating on how to eradicate this plague from the island of Ireland

Posted by *Ulsterman* | 28.01.09, 09:36 GMT

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What a waste of life and what a waste of money.

Posted by *David* | 28.01.09, 05:33 GMT

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