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Addressing the past

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The report of the Bradley Eames group this week produced in many ways a predictable reaction with some groups welcoming it and others attacking it for various reasons.

Now one thing is clear what this report is doing, and it can be argued whether they got it right or wrong, is trying to find a way to address the past.

If we as a society both North and South, because the conflict here impacted upon communities ac

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oss the border, are ever to escape from our past then we have to find a way to address that.

Now a lot of attention had been focussed on the proposal to pay the families of all the dead £12,000 in as Denis Bradley called it 'a recognition payment.' This idea has been badly maligned and misunderstood. What the Commission would seem to be trying to do is to say to everyone who lost a loved one, regardless of the circumstances, that their death is as important as every other one. There can never be a hierarchy of victims. Every death left behind a grieving family and no matter what the circumstances of the death the families were always innocent.

Since the report was launched there have been some insulting comments implying that the families of republicans were somehow guilty simply because their son or daughter was a republican. This is both offensive and unhelpful.

There is no community that was not affected by the events of the 40 years and there is no purpose in the what aboutery that we have witnessed. In order to move forward we must all accept that there has been suffering and hurt on all sides. Once we accept that we can begin to look to the future.

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