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DUP failed to define victim



Ulster Unionist MLA Tom Elliott has criticised any suggestion that those who were perpetrators of violence in Northern Ireland could be given equal treatment to the real victims who have suffered in this province.

Mr Elliott said: "My party has made it clear that it considers the current definition of the word "victim" to be morally wrong. It allows those who perpetrated acts of terrorism to be given the same status as those who suffered at their hands. Despite all its claims, the DUP has failed to address that issue, and the reason for that is that Sinn Féin would not let it do so."

The DUP and Sinn Féin agreed to keep the definition of "victim" as set out in the Bill, so it strikes us as an act of orchestrated hypocrisy for the DUP to now pretend to be outraged.

Eames-Bradley are totally wrong to propose £12,000 to what they term "victims", but it is largely thanks to the DUP and Sinn Féin that they have that particular definition to work from.

But as with the Financial Assistance Bill and Policing and Justice legislation last week, this is just another example of the "Themselves Alone" approach that the DUP and Sinn Féin has adopted since Martin McGuinness allowed Peter Robinson to start convening Executive meetings after 155 days.

The briefing which the Eames-Bradley Commission gave to the media on Friday, January 23rd, makes it quite clear that the definition of victim remains morally wrong from our perspective.

It is wrong, fundamentally wrong, to equate the victims of terrorism with the terrorists who carried out the attacks.

It is wrong, fundamentally wrong, to offer any sum of money---irrespective of the amount involved---to the families of killers, bombers and torturers. These people attempted to destroy our country and our people.

It may well be the case that when the Report is formally published on Wednesday that there will be aspects of it which the Ulster Unionist Party will view favourably.

That said, it remains our contention that the presence of something so thoroughly immoral and rotten will contaminate the whole Report and make it utterly unacceptable.

The reaction from the media and from the general public would suggest that they share UUP concerns about the definition of "victim" and the granting of money to terrorist families.

"The immoral, offensive suggestion that financial compensation should be given for those killed while undertaking terrorist acts will overshadow the entire Eames-Bradley report. Northern Ireland society will not accept a proposal which equates terrorists with those who killed while serving the entire community in the security forces or who were innocent civilians. We repeat our call for Lord Eames and Denis Bradley to withdraw the compensation proposal."

ENDS...

On April 2nd, 2008, the following amendment in the name of the Ulster Unionist Party was tabled to the Commission for Victims and Survivors Bill:

Interpretation "victim and survivor"

1A. In Article 3 of the Victims and Survivors (Northern Ireland) Order 2006 insert -

"(3) In this Order references to "victim and survivor" shall not include an individual appearing to the Commission to be any of the following -
 (a) someone who is or has been physically or psychologically injured as a result of or in consequence of their undertaking a criminal act in a conflict-related incident;
 (b) someone who provides a substantial amount of care on a regular basis for an individual mentioned in paragraph (a); or
 (c) someone who has been bereaved as a result of or in consequence of a conflict-related incident where the deceased was undertaking a criminal act in that incident."

Mr Danny Kennedy

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