

Special edition of
IRISH ENTREPRENEUR
Available exclusively with
THE IRISH TIMES
this Friday 30th January



 [Find your ancestors](#)  [The Irish Times Dating Service](#)

- [« Prev](#)
- [Next »](#)

IRISHTIMES.com

Thursday, January 29, 2009

8 °C Dublin » 

- [RSS Feeds](#)
- [Site Map](#)
- [News](#)
- [Sport](#)
- [Business](#)
- [Comment](#)
- [Life & Culture](#)
- [Shop](#)
- [Classified](#)

Search 

- [Opinion & Analysis](#)
- [Letters](#)
- [Blogs](#)
- [Polls](#)
- [Sport](#)
- [Soccer](#)
- [GAA](#)
- [Rugby](#)
- [Golf](#)
- [Other](#)
- [irish-racing.com](#)
- [Business](#)
- [Latest](#)
- [Markets](#)
- [Exchange Rates](#)
- [Agenda](#)
- [Personal Finance](#)
- [The Economy](#)
- [Management](#)
- [Technology](#)
- [Innovation](#)
- [Diary](#)
- [Comment](#)
- [Opinion & Analysis](#)
- [Letters](#)
- [Blogs](#)
- [On the record](#)
- [Pricewatch](#)
- [Politics](#)
- [Business](#)
- [Outside In](#)
- [Pursued by a Bear](#)
- [Today's news poll](#)
- [Life & Culture](#)
- [Features](#)
- [Entertainment](#)
- [Weekend](#)
- [Magazine](#)
- [Travel](#)
- [Health](#)
- [Pricewatch](#)
- [Education](#)
- [Crossword Club](#)
- [Sudoku](#)

- [Competitions](#)
- [Events](#)
- [Weather](#)

- **Shop**
- [Page Sales](#)
- [Photo Sales](#)
- [DVD Club](#)
- [Readers' Offers](#)

- **Classified**
- [Homes](#)
- [Cars](#)
- [Jobs](#)
- [Dating](#)
- [Family Notices](#)

- **Other**
- [Search this site](#)
- [Premium Email](#)
- [Digital edition](#)
- [Print on demand](#)
- [Irish Ancestors](#)
- [Irish Times Training](#)
- [RSS feeds](#)

- **About us**
- [Company information](#)
- [Terms & conditions](#)
- [Advertise](#)
- [Contact us](#)
- [Copyright](#)
- [Privacy policy](#)
- [Help](#)

- [Comment »](#)
- [Opinion & Analysis »](#)

- [Email to a friend](#)
- [Email to Author](#)
- [Print](#)
- [RSS](#)
- Text Size:
-
-

Thursday, January 29, 2009

Anger and loud noises may not win out over Eames-Bradley vision

[In this section »](#)

- [Cowan's patience may finally pay off in his gamble on consensus](#)
- [The time to take hard decisions on public pay is now](#)
- [Trauma of the Troubles should stay in the past](#)
- [Our 'free' supply of drinking water encourages waste](#)
- [Tranquility is a classy family in the White House](#)
- [Answering the question of why Mars matters](#)

These proposals could mark a defining moment in the journey out of the Troubles, writes **Gerry Moriarty**

THE EAMES-BRADLEY proposals symbolically launched in the Europa Hotel in Belfast yesterday were a Patten moment in British-Irish politics, a point in time when, as Lord (Robin) Eames said, Northern Ireland was offered an opportunity to take the "final step out of conflict".

The Patten proposals on police reform of 1999 prefigured the radical overhaul of the RUC, which was hugely difficult for the unionist community, but they marked a transformative point in the peace process which secured SDLP, Catholic Church and GAA support for policing and prepared the ground for Sinn Féin to, much later, endorse the new policing regime.

The birth of Patten was accompanied by much turmoil and turbulence just as was the launch of the Eames-Bradley report yesterday. Lord Eames explained how the Europa was chosen because it was once dubbed the most bombed hotel in Europe but now sat "proudly as a landmark in the rejuvenated Belfast".

It was explosive nonetheless when Protestant victims' group representative Willie Frazer and former unionist MLA Cedric Wilson set about attempting to disrupt the opening of the presentation, the serene presence of Gerry Adams in the audience only inflaming their fire and ire.

Nationalist victims got stuck in too in response. It was raw, raw, raw, understandably so.

All that was little different to the hot-tempered presentation of the Patten reform package almost 10 years ago. Patten set the scene for powersharing politics to stumblingly, haltingly work. Without Patten there would have been no Northern Executive.

The last key elements of the Troubles are dealing with their legacy and tackling sectarianism in a serious, comprehensive way. All that is in the proposals of the Consultative Group on the Past.

Predictably, the proposed £12,000 payment to the families of all those who died in the conflict, regardless of whether they were involved in paramilitarism or British state collusion, generated the most fury. Eames-Bradley, conscious of that anger, provided a detailed rationale behind their proposal, saying they weren't offering compensation, rather acknowledging as Lord Eames said, quoting a senior unionist, that "there is no difference in a mother's tears".

They believe too that the proposals allow Northern Ireland move beyond the "hierarchy of victims" argument that has dogged this issue.

There are hundreds of people who could use that £12,000, even if, for their own dignity, they could not publicly admit such a need. For Eames-Bradley to award that sum selectively could not have worked. It was pay all or pay none.

The legacy commission proposed by Eames-Bradley is the key element of the report. It is the structure that can allow the past to be addressed in a comprehensive manner. The commission will deal with issues such as sectarianism, storytelling, addressing thematic matters such as collusion and paramilitary killings. It allows for prosecutions where that is possible while acknowledging that as time goes on that will become increasingly unlikely.

Primarily, it provides a basis by which the bereaved, the tormented seekers after truth behind the deaths of their loved ones, can find that truth. That is through the proposed information recovery unit. Here, the republican and loyalist representatives such as Gerry Adams and Billy Hutchinson and Dawn Purvis and Jackie McDonald of the UDA must divvy up by ensuring the paramilitaries tell that truth. So must the covert police and British army units, and MI5 and the Garda and Irish intelligence services as well. The point here is that if one side of the equation falls short so will the other, and the anguished victims will be left with their pain.

Honeyed or weasel words from the paramilitary representatives and the agencies of the state who can provide some element of release for the bereaved won't wash and would be morally contemptible.

Northern Ireland politicians will be subject to all forms of selective pressure on Eames-Bradley, while unionists in particular will continue to play hard, especially ahead of European elections.

But, ultimately, just as it is for the British and Irish governments to supply the £300 million that this will cost, it is for the governments either to accept or reject the report because it is far too volatile for Stormont.

There were many loud noises yesterday but even at the end of the press conference Willie Frazer was shaking hands with nationalist victims he was earlier deprecating, which shows the value of the engagement Eames-Bradley are proposing.

It seems there just could be enough considered voices to prevail over the strident ones.

I was particularly struck by the comments of Dr Michael Patterson on the BBC's Stephen Nolan programme yesterday morning. He is a former RUC officer who lost both legs in an IRA bombing. He later became qualified as a psychologist with an expertise in trauma. He saw merit in Eames-Bradley and could live with the £12,000 proposal.

In summary, seize the moment, was his advice. Otherwise, he warned, for the next "40, 50, 60 or 400 years for that matter, we could just be repeating the same hatred and bigotry and brutalisation of each other".

This article appears in the print edition of the Irish Times

ADVERTISEMENT



Latest »

- [10:43WHO urges Government to tackle smoking](#)
- [10:43Euro zone sentiment hits record low in January](#)
- [10:37German unemployment rises to 3.27m in January](#)
- [10:31January the month for budding romance - survey](#)
- [10:30Education key to ending child poverty, seminar told](#)
- [10:26H&M profits beat estimates, to hire 6,000 staff](#)
- [10:21US House passes \\$825bn economic stimulus package](#)
- [10:19French workers strike over economic crisis](#)

Popular Stories

- [Most Read](#)
- [Most Emailed](#)

- [1Benitez hints at Keane offer](#)
- [2Irish economy 'particularly vulnerable' - EU](#)
- [3Cowen warns of 'financial storm' facing Ireland](#)
- [4Intel move seen as 'vote of confidence' in Ireland](#)
- [5Liverpool back to third](#)

- [1Internet users face shutdown over illegal music downloads](#)
- [2Downloaders face disconnection following Eircom settlement](#)
- [3Yeats would be pleased by tourist trail, says Heaney](#)
- [4Radical new agenda for universities considered](#)

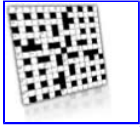
- [5 Shoppers in South pay 51% more for non-grocery goods](#)

Your Vote »

[« Yes](#)
[No »](#)
[Results](#)

Should Queen Elizabeth visit Ireland?

Crossword Club »



[Today's Interactive Irish Times Crosaire and Simplex crosswords, plus 10 years of crossword archive.](#)

ADVERTISEMENT

Ads by Google

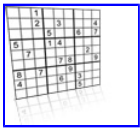
Cheap Dublin Hotels

Up to 70% Off Dublin Hotels. Prices Include
Breakfast & Tax!
www.GTAHotels.com/Dublin

Emerald Ancestors

Northern Ireland BMDs & Census Over 1 Million
Records Online
www.EmeraldAncestors.com

Sudoku »



[Download and print the daily Irish Times sudoku grid](#)



- [Living with the 'prodigy' tag](#) [Violinist Sarah Chang, who had played with major orchestras and made her first recording by age 10, tells Michael Dervan how she came through the difficult transition to adulthood](#)



- [A bright idea](#) [A NEW LOW-COST source of power is just around the corner: electricity from dirt.](#)



- [Homes in seaside suburbs](#) [Two houses for sale with good Sandycove and Dalkey addresses show how prices have fallen since the boom ended, writes Frances O'Rourke](#)



- [Global focus](#) [GLOOMY DOESN'T describe the mood at Davos this year. Funereal comes closer](#)



- [Fantasy Six Nations](#) [Sign up and be in with a chance in win a holiday worth €5000 in our free Six Nations fantasy game](#)

Travel Insurance from €9*

Quick quote

* Insurers' terms & conditions apply. Insurance is arranged by Chill.ie, Elstwell Ltd t/a Chill.ie is regulated by the financial regulator

irishtimes.com/insurance **Chill.ie**
We've got you covered

- ADVERTISEMENT
- CLASSIFIED

Homes



44 Abington, Malahide, Co. Dublin Price: €3,800,000

[Bedrooms: 7](#) [See More](#) »

Jobs

Select your categories

- Accountancy
- Architecture / Design
- Banking & Financial Services
- Construction
- Customer Service, Call Centres & Languages

[Next](#) »

Cars



[A one-size-fits-all Mercedes coupé that has some hatchback genes](#)

[Find](#) »

Dating

I am a Man Looking for a Woman Located All Only with photos: [Next](#) »

© 2009 [irishtimes.com](http://www.irishtimes.com)

- [Company information](#)
- [Privacy policy](#)
- [Help](#)
- [Contact us](#)
- [Advertise](#)
- [Terms & Conditions](#)