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## Pain and anger evident at launch



and report author Lord Eames speaking at the launch.  
 Photograph: Peter Morrison/AP; Niall Carson/PA

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DAN KEENAN

**VICTIMS' PROTESTS:** The protesters were there early, taking up the best positions outside the Europa hotel. Fired by their collective anger and disbelief at the offer of £12,000 to each family bereaved by the Troubles, they argued long and hard against the “moral equivalence” of the terrorists and the terrorised.

Inside the packed and quite tense hall, they lined up before the platform for the benefit of camera crews.

As if to illustrate the scale of problems still to be surmounted, victims clashed with victims. It was raw, bitter and not a little disturbing.

A vociferous handful shouted and stabbed their fingers, others cited the Old Testament, still others called loudly and forlornly for peace.

Calling for justice for British army victims, some shouted: “We’ve been waiting 34 years.”

"What about Teebane? What about Kingsmill?" loyalist protesters retorted. Appeals rang out from the platform for some semblance of order.

Cedric Wilson, a former unionist Assembly member, singled out Gerry Adams sitting midway in the body of the hall and began an almost breathless condemnation, characterising him as chief protagonist with much blood on his hands.

"This is the man who commanded the IRA in Belfast on Bloody Friday," he roared.

The Sinn Féin president sat calmly.

The eight-member team which had drafted the report took their seats – clergy members, sports people, community workers and others.

Eames and Bradley took their places to deliver their thoughtful statement.

The former archbishop and the former priest explained themselves and their work, pleaded their case and implored those opposed to them already on their feet to allow space for reflection.

At times the sheer reasonableness of the two men calmed the atmosphere but there were occasional spontaneous eruptions. Eames was the focus of much barracking, more so than Bradley.

The large crowd was dotted with key figures from the Troubles era and the peace process.

Sir Hugh Orde, chief of the PSNI, sat alongside Sir John Stevens who investigated the Finucane murder and the state's collusion with his killers.

There were journalists, writers, analysts and lawyers, members of justice groups, watchdogs and quangos. Politicians from across the North mingled with relatives of victims.

Eames and Bradley spoke for nearly an hour, interruptions and heckling included, finishing with a calm expression of optimism.

This article appears in the print edition of the Irish Times

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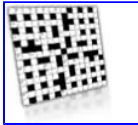
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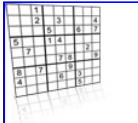
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