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Editorial

Truth and justice are more important than cash sums



Andersonstown News Monday

MARK Thompson of Relatives for Justice is right when he says on our front page this week that there is too much of a focus on money in the suggestion that relatives of all the victims of the Troubles be made a payment of £12,000.



The idea of making cash payments to relatives is not an idea that is to be rejected out of hand however – but as Mr Thompson says, other issues of truth and justice must be realistically addressed before the question of reparations arises.



The loss of a family member is first and foremost a devastating emotional blow – one from which many people struggle for years to recover, with many failing. But it has to be recognised that in countless cases the loss of a loved one has put families in serious financial difficulties. Why anyone would suppose that the sum of £12,000 is an adequate sum is not entirely clear – it seems at once so arbitrary and paltry. If and when the idea of reparations is addressed in the future, then a much more realistic suggestion is going to have to be put on the table.



In the meantime, it is vital that the report of the Consultative Group on the Past due to be published on Wednesday is serious about giving families what they need in order finally to move on with their lives. Robin Eames and Denis Bradley are men held in high esteem across the community and it is to be hoped that they will come up with a formula that will be both effective and practical.



We have heard much in recent days from unionists about why it is that members of paramilitary groups do not deserve equivalency with members of the British security services. They turn a blind eye, of course, to what everyone knows to be the truth – that the British government and its various servants in whatever uniform were engaged in a widespread campaign of collusion with loyalist paramilitaries, the full extent of which we will in all probability never know.



The Eames/Bradley body was set up by the British government, but it is imperative that the British be classed as active participants and not impartial observers.



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