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Typical DUP resolution offers nothing constructive

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By Brian Feeney The Wednesday Column

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The echoes of Eames/Bradley are still bouncing off the walls of the assembly this week.

The DUP put down a motion in the names of David Simpson and Lord Morrow which proposes: "That this

assembly recognises the importance of meeting the needs of victims; and condemns proposals from the Consultative Group on the Past which equate perpetrators of violence with innocent victims.”

It's a typical DUP resolution.

It offers nothing constructive, is entirely negative and will make matters worse.

Part of the politics behind the motion is to have a swing at the UUP and blame them for the definition of victim on which Eames/Bradley based their work.

That definition was laid down in the Victims and Survivors Order 2006.

It's worth reading. Here it is.

'An individual appearing to the Commissioner 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 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'.

You'll notice that it's also the basis on which the four powerless, pointless commissioners appointed by Peter Robinson and Martin McGuinness have to operate.

You'll also notice that it's far broader in its scope than the definition of people who would qualify for the recognition payment Eames-Bradley suggest.

The people defined in the Victims and Survivors Order would include IRA or UVF or UDA members affected by a 'conflict-related incident'.

Do you believe the DUP have only just noticed this detail despite the fact that Peter Robinson advocated appointing commissioners on

this basis?

It's clear the DUP would prefer a definition more in tune with their own prejudices, the sort of definition urged on Eames-Bradley but which they rejected because it 'would produce a hierarchy of victims that is broadly structured along sectarian lines'.

There's another political motive behind the DUP's entirely predictable hypocrisy.

They're trying to cover their political asses.

Perhaps there should be a moratorium on all pronouncements of a potentially controversial nature until

whoever the DUP finally select to stand for Europe has beaten the bejusus out of Jim Allister in June's election?

Until then the political cowardice of the DUP's leadership will ensure that anything Allister criticises will be cast into exterior darkness (Matt. 25.30).

At bottom the DUP just can't be seen to endorse the Eames-Bradley report because of the theatrical outrage engineered by the miniscule Tradition/Unionist Voice and their crazed fellow travellers.

The DUP haven't even the nerve to stand aside and say, "well, the British devised Eames/Bradley and it's up to them to decide to adopt it. Nothing to do with the executive. We can't stop the NIO".

Do you think the DUP didn't know the Irish government has already given "15,000 to the relatives of all victims killed in the Republic and that a similar payment was on the cards here?

Worse, we know that unionists encouraged the Eames-Bradley group to press ahead with proposals they knew to be controversial because it would be impossible for unionists to articulate them.

Lord Eames quoted one 'senior unionist' who told them "there is no difference in a mother's tears".

Yet some of those same unionists lay low until the report was published and then attacked the very proposals they agreed with in private.

As a result, one member of the Consultative Group has said some unionists were being "a bit dishonest and almost duplicitous, some comments from people who had actually told us

privately completely different things".

There's going to be a lot more of that after this week's debate when the DUP and UUP hit each other over the head with their respective versions of 'innocent victims'.

The end result? It's likely the British government will happily decide to save £300 million because the DUP will show they

will not accept any compromise on their own sectarian version of the last 40-odd years.

It's more evidence of the weakness of Peter Robinson as a party leader who lives in trepidation of unionism's right-wing nutters.

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