

APPENDIX I

**STANDING COMMITTEE GROUP'S REPORT ON A MEETING
WITH THE CONSULTATIVE GROUP ON THE PAST**

**TUESDAY 27 NOVEMBER 2007
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH HOUSE, BELFAST**

1. The following represented the Church of Ireland: The Bishop of Clogher, the Dean of Armagh, the Archdeacon of Belfast, the Archdeacon of Cork, Canon I.M. Ellis and Canon T.R. Williams. No other members of the group appointed by the Standing Committee were able to attend.
2. The Consultative Group members who met us were: Denis Bradley, Lord Eames, David Porter, The Revd Lesley Carroll and Willie John McBride (with two staff members). Following brief introductory comments by Lord Eames, Denis Bradley chaired the meeting. We were thanked for our written submission, which we then introduced, each of us speaking to different sections.
3. The question of segregated education was raised by Willie John McBride. We explained that in Northern Ireland we had transferred our schools to the State and that these were now State schools, with Church involvement. On being challenged as to whether or not the Church of Ireland supported integrated education, we pointed out that a main question in this is the nature of the arrangements for Church involvement. Accounts were given by us of good working relationships between the Church of Ireland and local integrated schools.
4. In terms of challenging sectarianism, Mr Bradley indicated that he was familiar with the Hard Gospel Project and had read its materials. He said he was impressed by the Project.
5. We were asked by Mr Bradley if the Church of Ireland would be prepared to reject the concept a 'hierarchy of victims'. When asked for clarification of this term, David Porter explained that it meant that some victims were to be regarded as more important than others. Our response was that the Church regarded every death and injury as equally tragic. It did not follow from this, however, that we would agree that during the Troubles there was an equivalent legitimacy of role as between terrorists and the constituted forces of the State in Northern Ireland or the Republic of Ireland.
6. Mr Bradley suggested that republicans regarded themselves as having acted properly in attempting to bring about the departure of a foreign, colonizing power. We indicated that, throughout the Troubles, the actions of the Provisional IRA had been consistently rejected by both governments on the island of Ireland, by the electorate (Sinn Fein's

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electoral mandate growing as it left violence behind) and by the Churches, not least by Pope John Paul II in Drogheda in 1979. We indicated that in the circumstances people had not had the right to take the law into their own hands, as republicans and loyalist groups had done. We pointed out that the aspiration of future prosperity or equality alone would not be sufficient to tackle the root of Northern Ireland's problems in dealing with the past, and that the aspiration and progress towards a 'shared future' was essential to the well being of our communities.

7. The Consultative Group indicated that there would be considerable implications following the revelation of forthcoming cases of collusion and other illegal activities of the agencies of the State in Northern Ireland during the Troubles. Our response to this was that all acts committed during the Troubles that were illegal had to be treated as such, whether the acts were committed by terrorists or agencies of the State.
8. We met briefly and informally as a group after the encounter with the Consultative Group, to discuss impressions and reporting. This report was subsequently compiled in consultation with all the members who attended on 27th November.

Revd Canon Dr Ian M Ellis
6.12.07