

PAST HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS: TRUTH COMMISSIONS AND AMNESTIES OR PROSECUTIONS

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It is a great honour to have been invited to deliver this 1999 Annual MacDermott Lecture. It is a particular privilege because of the eminence of Lord MacDermott, not only in this country, but internationally. And it is a particular pleasure because it has brought my wife and me to Belfast for the first time, and it has enabled us to meet Lord Justice MacDermott and Lady MacDermott and members of the MacDermott family.

I was going to begin by saying that I was not coming here to suggest that you could learn something from South Africa. But I decided not to because of the memory it immediately evoked of the many people who came from abroad to South Africa during our dark days of apartheid and assured us that they were not coming to tell us that we could learn from their experience. Of course they meant the very opposite. And I am sure many people come here, and have been doing so for many years, telling you that they are not here to tell you anything that you should learn about their condition or about their solutions. But I do think we can all learn some things from each other. Certainly I am happy and proud to say as a South African that, countries that have the sorts of difficulties we experienced, and unfortunately, there are too many of those countries, can at least learn that solutions can be found even for situations that appeared as intractable as bringing apartheid to a relatively peaceful end.

The broader problem, contained in the title of this lecture, that is, what is to be done about past human rights violations, has become fairly common. We should rejoice in this as it is a problem which presents itself as countries move out of oppression, whether they are communist societies, military dictatorships in Latin America or apartheid in South Africa. These are countries which have moved from oppression to some form of democracy, and the question facing those societies is what they should do about past criminality, past human rights abuses.¹ Generally the countries concerned

* My thanks to Ms Imelda McAuley of the School of Law, Queen's University, Belfast for providing footnote references to accompany the text of this lecture.

¹ On this question, see for example, N Roht-Arriaza, "State Responsibility to Investigate and Prosecute Grave Human Rights Violations in International Law", 78 *Calif LR* (1990) 449; D. Orentlicher, "Settling Accounts: The Duty to Prosecute Human Rights Violations of a Prior Regime", 100 *Yale LJ* (1991) 2537; J. Benomar, "Confronting the Past: Justice After Transitions", 4 *Jnl of Democracy* (1993) 3; N. Kritz (ed), *Transitional Justice: How Emerging Democracies Reckon with Former Regimes* (1995, United States Institute of Peace, Washington D C); M. Scharf, "The Letter of the Law: The Scope of the International Legal Obligation to Prosecute Human Rights Crimes", 59 *L & Contemp Probs* (1996) 41; J. Mendez, "Accountability for Past Abuses", 19 *Hum Rts Q* (1997) 255; Osiel, "Why Prosecute? Critics of Punishment for Mass Atrocity", 22 *Hum Rts Q* (2000) 118.

have been faced with three broad choices. First, they can forget about the past and enter into a period of national amnesia. Secondly, they can systematically prosecute perpetrators of criminality. Thirdly, they can establish a truth commission process which is really a compromise between doing nothing on the one hand and prosecuting on the other. Now, the choice of doing nothing has appealed to some countries. It was very appealing to many in South Africa and particularly for the former leaders of the apartheid government and leaders of the security forces. And of course they made a very beguiling case. They said: “we have got so much to do for our future, we have so much to make up for, we have to redistribute wealth, we have to get rid of all of the evils of the apartheid system, why waste our time looking over our shoulders to the past. Let us forget about that. We are turning over a new leaf and let us get on with building a happier future for all of our people.” One thing I have learnt in South Africa, and again when I was investigating war crimes in Bosnia and the former Yugoslavia, and also in Rwanda, is that countries choosing the amnesia route have condemned their societies to more violence and more unhappiness – sooner rather than later. In the former Yugoslavia, the history lessons that I received on every visit to Belgrade, Zagreb and Sarajevo taught me what happens to a society that does not bring justice, some form of justice, and some form of acknowledgement, to the victims.

I read recently that the former Yugoslavia has more history than their people can consume. I thought that was certainly a neat way of encapsulating what I experienced. At the first meeting I held in Belgrade, I had scheduled a half hour meeting with the Minister of Justice and the Foreign Minister. The first forty-five minutes of the thirty minute-meeting were consumed with a long history lesson about the terrible things that had been suffered by the Serb people at the hands mainly of the Croats, but also at the hands of the Muslims. And the history lesson began with the battle of Kosovo in 1389 and ended with the Second World War and the loss of life of hundreds of thousands of Serbs at the hands of the Croatian Ustashe. And I went to Zagreb and I got a similar history lesson about the terrible things that the Serbs and the Muslims had done to the Croats. And in Sarajevo I had the story from the Muslim side. The histories never dovetailed, they never even intersected, because each of these societies was completely embroiled in its own history. And the terrible things that we are reading right at this moment about Kosovo might well have been averted had that history not been written the way it was, but instead there had been some attempt to uncover what really happened over the centuries, to uncover a sense of shared history.

So the objective really, if one is sensible, is to bring some form of justice to societies that have endured this sort of history of human rights violation. Prosecutions are obviously the preferred solution. In any ideal society, in any decent society, in any normal society, victims are entitled to full justice and full justice means prosecution and punishment. But, unfortunately, one is dealing with such massive numbers. In South Africa there were tens of thousands of victims of serious crime, committed in the name of apartheid. In Rwanda there were hundreds of thousands of victims and hundreds of thousands of perpetrators, people who organised the genocide and terrible

crimes against humanity.² In the former Yugoslavia similarly, and in Bosnia alone, hundreds of thousands of people were forced to become refugees, many tens of thousands of women were raped and even more tens of thousands of people – men, women and children – were tortured, murdered and ethnically cleansed. In these situations no criminal justice system in any country can cope with prosecuting the criminals. You could opt for Nuremberg Trial-type prosecutions and place the most important leaders on trial and have them serve as an example to the victims. In some situations, and certainly after the Second World War, that was a rational and sensible solution. Yet the Nuremberg Trials have often been criticised as an impure form of justice, a “victor’s justice”. But one must bear in mind when looking at Nuremberg that the choice facing the victorious allied powers was one between lining up the Nazi leaders and executing them, military style, which is what Stalin wanted and initially what Winston Churchill wanted. Fortunately, good sense prevailed and the victors decided that there would be at least a form of justice, a decent trial at which the guilt of the accused would have to be proved beyond a reasonable doubt.

The Truth Commission route has really emerged as a political necessity more than the ideal solution.³ The Truth Commission which most influenced South Africa was the Chilean model.⁴ Chilean President Aylwin, as the rule of General Pinochet was ending, promised the Chilean people that there would be a Truth Commission, that the past would not be covered up, that the disappearances, at least, of so many thousands of Chileans, would be

² On the debate over whether a truth commission should be established in Rwanda, see J. Sarkin, “The Necessity and Challenges of Establishing a Truth and Reconciliation Commission in Rwanda”, 21 *Hum Rts Q* (1999) 767.

³ On truth commissions generally, see P. Hayner, “Fifteen Truth Commissions - 1974 to 1994: A Comparative Study”, 16 *Hum Rts Q* (1994) 597; J. M. Pasqualucci, “The Whole Truth and Nothing But The Truth: Truth Commissions, Impunity and the Inter-American Human Rights System”, 12 *Boston Univ Int L J* (1994) 321; T. Buergenthal, “The United Nations Truth Commission for El Salvador”, 27 *Vanderbilt J Transnat'l L* (1994) 497; M. Popkin and N. Roht-Arriaza, “Truth as Justice: Investigatory Commissions in Latin America”, *L & Soc Inq* (1995) 79; R. Goldstone, “Justice as a Tool for Peace-Making: Truth Commissions and International Criminal Tribunals”, 28 *N Y U J Int'l L & Pol* (1996) 485; H. Steiner (ed.), *Truth Commissions: A Comparative Assessment* (1997, Harvard). See also D. Dyzenhaus, *Judging the Judges, Judging Ourselves: Truth, Reconciliation and the Apartheid Legal Order* (1998) which focuses on the South African Truth Commission’s hearings into the role of the legal profession during apartheid.

⁴ The Chilean Commission on Truth and Reconciliation was established by Ministry of the Interior Decree No. 355 of 25 April 1990, published in the *Diario Oficial* (9 May 1990). It became known as the ‘Rettig Commission’ after its chairman, the jurist Raul Rettig. On the role of the Chilean Truth Commission, see J. Zalaquett, “Balancing Ethical Imperatives and Political Constraints: The Dilemma of New Democracies Confronting Past Human Rights Violations”, 43 *Hastings L J* (1992) 1425; J. Correa S., “Dealing with Past Human Rights Violations: The Chilean Case After Dictatorship”, 67 *Notre Dame L R* (1992) 1455; R. Quinn, “Will the Rule of Law End? Challenging Grants of Amnesty for the Human Rights Violations of a Prior Regime: Chile’s New Model”, 62 *Fordham L.R.* (1994) 905; M. Ensalaco, “Truth Commissions for Chile and El Salvador: A Report and Assessment”, 16 *Hum Rts Q* (1994) 656.

investigated. And General Pinochet was prepared to co-operate to some extent but only to some extent. Firstly, he insisted, and Aylwin had to accept, that the Commission would be limited to disappearances and would not investigate other forms of human right abuses. So if people had not “disappeared”, this horrible expression which has come to us from Latin America, their human rights violations would not be investigated. The second condition laid down by Pinochet was that none of the hearings would be in public. They would all be behind closed doors. And his third condition was that in no way would the names of the perpetrators ever be made public. So, if one looks at the report of the Truth Commission of Chile⁵, you will find that no perpetrators were named although the victims were. Notwithstanding those deficiencies, the Truth Commission in Chile did help to heal a nation that had been so badly traumatised by the Pinochet military regime, by the terrible human rights violations and abuses for which it was responsible.

When South Africa began to emerge from apartheid, during the transition period people in our society initiated a huge public debate. It was important that the whole of South African civil society contributed to the debate as to what South Africa should do about past human rights abuses. We held two important seminars in Cape Town. We were fortunate in having a very well qualified ambassador from Chile. Ambassador Heine was a civil rights lawyer in Chile for many years. He was not a career diplomat, but he was sent to South Africa fortuitously. And he brought with him to one of the seminars in Cape Town, President Aylwin and members of the Truth Commission. They made a very important contribution to South Africa’s decision to establish a Truth Commission.

At those seminars we heard from some of the victims. Some of us were moved to tears by the stories of the victims. And one of them I recall, and will never forget, was the widow of a black lawyer in South Africa, who was murdered by the security police because he defended people accused of contravening the apartheid laws. He was not involved in politics himself and his widow came to give evidence about the terrible loss to herself, and particularly to her young children, aged eight and ten when their father was murdered. They heard about it, not by any policeman knocking at the door, but on the radio. During the conference I spoke to her and complimented her on her courage in coming to Cape Town from her home, many hundreds of miles away, to tell us her story. And her response to me made a deep impression. She said, “You know, last night is the first night that I’ve been able to sleep through since I heard about my husband’s death.” I asked how she accounted for this and she said, “I don’t know, but I can only put it down to the fact that so many important people from South Africa and from abroad, were interested in hearing my story.” And it was a good illustration, I think, to me, and to people to whom I repeated the story, of the importance of acknowledgement to victims. It was the beginning of that woman’s healing process, the fact that her story was being heard, not only by her

⁵ The Chilean Commission presented its final report, *Report of the Chilean National Commission on Truth and Reconciliation*, in February 1991; see further D. Weissbrodt and P. Fraser, “The Report of the Chilean National Commission on Truth and Reconciliation”, 14 *Hum Rts Q* (1992) 601.

family who knew the story and that she could speak from, what was to her, an important public platform. Many victims know who the perpetrator is and they obviously know what happened to them. But they are not satisfied with that knowledge, they want the acknowledgement that comes with some form of official and public inquiry.

In South Africa, prosecutions for crimes of apartheid were never going to happen. Systematic prosecutions were not feasible for the reason I mentioned – there were simply too many perpetrators and too many victims. More compelling were the political considerations. It was astounding when President de Klerk, the leader of the Government, in control of the armed forces, initiated the transition process. Had he wished, he could have continued the apartheid system for one year, two years, ten years, for all of my life. I have heard that apartheid would last only ten years more; I heard it in the 1950s, in the 1960s, in the 1970s and the 1980s, and it went on. One apartheid leader after another continued with some modifications – one step forward and two steps back - but continued the system. President de Klerk saw apartheid's failure and for that reason decided to begin reforms. It was truly unexpected: it certainly took South Africans and indeed the whole international community by surprise. But it would have been impossible for President de Klerk alone to have agreed to a negotiated transfer of power to a black majority. He needed support from the ruling elite and that support would never have been attained if he had said to his colleagues in his cabinet and in the police and the army, "Not only are we going to hand over power, but we are also going to arrange for Nuremberg style trials and many of us are going to go to prison for the rest of our lives". The transition would never have happened. There would have been no agreement if the leaders of apartheid were inevitably to be put on trial.

President Mandela and the ANC were certainly not prepared to accept a blanket amnesty and opt for the path of amnesia. Had that been the condition laid down by the de Klerk Government, again there would have been no peaceful transition. It was not acceptable to the majority of South Africans that the book on the past should be shut in 1994.

The Truth Commission in South Africa really was a political compromise more than a moral imperative.⁶ The political compromise was that there

⁶ The South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission was based on the final clause of the Interim Constitution of 1993 and was established under s 2(1) of the Promotion of National Unity and Reconciliation Act, No 34 of 1995. The objectives of the Commission are listed in s 3 and include establishing as complete a picture as possible of the causes, nature and extent of the gross violations of human rights which were committed during the period from 1 March 1960 to the cut-off date (10 May 1994); facilitating the granting of amnesty; establishing the fate of victims and granting victims the opportunity to relate their own accounts of the violations perpetrated against them; recommending reparation measures in respect of violations; and compiling a comprehensive report containing recommendations to prevent future violations of human rights. Three committees were also established under the 1995 Act for the purpose of achieving the objectives of the Commission: a Committee on Human Rights Violations, a Committee on Reparation and Rehabilitation, and a Committee on Amnesty. Chaired by Archbishop Desmond Tutu, the Commission began its work in 1995 and published its final report in October 1998 (see n 11 below). On the role of the

would be amnesties, but only in return for full confession, and that incentive-scheme is unique to the South African form of Truth Commission.⁷ There were objections from some of the victims. The families of Steve Biko and Griffiths Mxenge came before our Constitutional Court and argued that the Truth Commission was in violation of certain Constitutional provisions.⁸ Our court, with difficulty, with reluctance and with hesitation, upheld the constitutionality of the Truth Commission, mainly because it had been provided for in the postamble of what was then the interim constitution.

In South Africa, prosecutions were not ruled out as they were in Chile or Argentina. If people did not apply in South Africa for amnesties they should and can be prosecuted if there is sufficient evidence presented to the Attorney General justifying prosecution. High profile prosecutions have been conducted in parallel and simultaneously with the work of the Truth Commission. The Truth Commission was given primacy which meant that if an individual was brought before a court in a criminal prosecution and then applied for amnesty, his trial was almost automatically postponed and suspended, pending the decision of the Truth Commission. Where amnesty was granted, no trial would follow.

When the Truth Commission was set up by Parliament, it was obviously important that it be set up by the first democratic parliament in South Africa's history: a parliament that truly represented the victims of apartheid. It was the representatives of the victims who agreed to the establishment of a Truth Commission. This was of fundamental significance to its moral foundation. It was not the sort of self-amnesty that people like Pinochet granted to themselves, but a decision taken almost unanimously. Although there was opposition to it from the extreme white right-wing party in Parliament, the Truth Commission had the overwhelming support of the members of the democratic South African Parliament. That fact is often forgotten in the debate on the moral justification of the South African Truth Commission.

When it was first established, its supporters were extremely nervous. Would it work? Would perpetrators come forward? Would victims come forward and give evidence of what had happened to them? Would any significant figures apply for amnesty and make full confessions? This was by no means inevitable. I headed the Commission of Inquiry into Violence in South Africa between 1991 and 1994 and, fortunately, we were able at least to scratch the surface of the police and military involvement in serious

South African Truth Commission, see I. Liebenberg, "The Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa", 11 *S Afr P L* (1996) 123; and J. Sarkin, "The Trials and Tribulations of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission", *S Afr J Hum Rts* (1996) 617. On the operation of the three committees, see the Commission's website at: www.truth.org.za/.

⁷ On the debate over amnesties and indemnities, see P. Parker, "The Politics of Indemnities, Truth Telling and Reconciliation in South Africa: Ending Apartheid Without Forgetting", 17 *Hum Rts L J* (1996) 1; and E. McCarthy, "South Africa's Amnesty Process: A Viable Route Toward Truth and Reconciliation?", 3 *Mich J Race & L* (1997) 183.

⁸ See *Azanian Peoples Organisation (AZAPO) and Others v President of RSA and Others*, 8 BCLR (1996) 1015 (Constitutional Court), Deputy President Mahomed speaking for the majority of the Court.

criminality, even during the negotiating period. I have no doubt that, without the knowledge of the then President de Klerk (that he should have known, it may well be, but that he did not know I have little doubt) elements in the military, and in the police, who did not want the negotiations to succeed, who did not want a black government and who would have preferred apartheid to continue, were sabotaging the whole negotiation process by committing the most terrible criminal offences. Exposing the involvement of senior members of the military and the leaders of the police in criminal activity certainly helped to pave the way for the Truth Commission, because the denials had already begun. We heard for years in South Africa, particularly in the 1990s, that these allegations of murders and torture were untrue; that they were not committed by the police; that this was propaganda put out by the African National Congress and other liberation movements. We were told we did not need a Truth Commission because there was no truth unknown. The disclosure of some of the truth, in 1993 and 1994, was sufficient to pull the rug from under the feet of the people who were putting forth these denials, and they were forced, in the light of those revelations, to agree to and to participate in establishing the Truth Commission.

The most recent Truth Commission report, that of Guatemala is interesting too. It is a very different form of Truth Commission, a Truth Commission that was set up by agreement when the military regime came to an end.⁹ The United Nations was asked to appoint the chairman of their Truth Commission, and they appointed an eminent German international lawyer, Professor Tomuschat from Humboldt University. He sat with and investigated alongside two local Guatemalan lawyers. The agreement was that this Commission, like the Chilean Commission, would not name names. They would not hold hearings in public. But nonetheless their report, which was published two or three months ago, has been very important already for change in Guatemala. It exposed the involvement and complicity of former leaders of Guatemala, who denied their involvement, and it also disclosed, to the credit of the United States, the covert assistance and finance which the governments of the military in Guatemala received from the CIA, who were aware of the criminal activities of those governments.¹⁰

⁹ The decision to establish a truth commission in Guatemala dates back to June 1994 when, as part of the negotiations to end the conflict and under intense international pressure, the Guatemalan Government and the guerrilla movement known as the 'Guatemalan National Revolutionary Union' (URNG) agreed to the formation of a truth commission; see *Accord on the Establishment of the Commission to Clarify Past Human Rights Violations and Acts of Violence that have caused the Guatemalan Population to Suffer*, signed in Oslo, 23 June 1994 (UN doc. A/48/954-S/1994/751, 1 July 1994). Although agreement was reached in 1994 to establish a truth commission, it was not to begin work until the parties had signed a final peace accord. This occurred in December 1996 and was followed by the establishment of the 'Historical Clarification Commission' which formally began its work in August 1997.

¹⁰ The final report of the Guatemalan Historical Clarification Commission was presented to President Alvaro Arzu and declared public by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Kofi Annan, in accordance with the procedures contained in the 1994 Accord (see n 9 above) on 25 February 1999. In his inaugural address on 14 January 2000, the new President of Guatemala, Alfonso Portillo, reaffirmed his

Public interest is served by the search for truth and its public inscription. Although there will always be those who attempt denials and revisionist accounts of the past, their impact can be lessened. In South Africa, without the Truth Commission, there would have been at least two histories as there are three in the former Yugoslavia. Denials issued by the apartheid government would have been believed, certainly by most white South Africans. White South Africans would have wanted to believe the denials because they would have alleviated their guilt in respect of what they knew, or what they did not know, what they could have done and what they did not do. That belief cannot stand up against the evidence presented by the Truth Commission. Disclosure is relevant too in preventing a recurrence of atrocities because much of the evidence presented by the South African Truth Commission has ensured that certain people who would have remained in official positions, in the police and the army in particular, have been removed from office.

In the former Yugoslavia, the work of the War Crimes Tribunal, too, has lessened the impact of denials and in some ways may have helped prevent recurrences, at least in Bosnia. The Bosnian Serb army denied the massacres of 8,000 men and boys outside Srebrenica in July 1995. It was only when evidence was obtained from one of the Bosnian Serb soldiers who made a confession to us, that one of the mass graves was found and exhumed. It contained the bodies of boys and adult men, each had been killed by a single bullet wound to the head. Before the exhumation, the Bosnia Serb army had denied the massacre, had said that if there were graves, they were of those who had died in the war. Here too public disclosure helped to prevent denial.

In East Germany, similar problems were faced at the end of the communist era, when it was decided that the Stasi files should be made public and administered by the Gauck authority. To this day, if a former Eastern German wants any official position in government, at state or federal level, the Gauck administration must certify that the files do not incriminate the individual concerned. There too the exposure of the truth has helped to ensure that people who should not be in positions of authority are removed.

Disclosure averts collective guilt. Collective guilt has been the fuel for the tragedies in Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia. When blame is levelled at an entire people indiscriminately, individuals such as Karadzic and Mladic can take advantage and bring about the calamities to their country and people.

The advantage of a Truth Commission too, as opposed to prosecutions, is its broad focus. In South Africa, the Truth Commission has a mandate to expose human rights abuses during a period of 34 years, between 1960 and 1994. It would take many years before the same amount of information could be exposed by prosecutions. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission has been able to condense its investigations into a shorter period because of the response it received. Little could anyone have anticipated that there would be over 8,000 applications for amnesty and over 21,000 victims coming to tell their story, covering this period. And the huge five-volume report of the

commitment to establish a mechanism to follow up on the recommendations of the Commission.

Truth Commission is a testimony to that.¹¹ The history of apartheid which is recorded in the report of the Truth Commission, I think, will become a shared history of black and white South Africans. The process has avoided collective guilt because the Truth Commissioners themselves came from all parts of our country, black and white people served on the Commission. The victims too came from the white community and the black community and the Asian community. So it was not a question of whites or blacks judging blacks or whites. It was South Africans coming together to judge fellow South Africans. It was this shared history that will avoid the collective guilt.

Amnesties are not essential to Truth Commissions. South Africa made amnesties serve as an incentive-scheme. Without the amnesties a lot of the truth would not have emerged. Yet the impressive fact that there were over 8,000 amnesty applications obscures one troubling reality. About 55% of the applications came from people who had already been convicted to – people in prison who really had little to lose by confessing. Fortunately, the Truth Commission had an efficient investigation department and many amnesties have been refused because one of the conditions for the amnesty, a full disclosure, was not met. Many families opposed particular amnesties and the Truth Commission itself brought forth evidence in contradiction of some of the disclosures that were made.¹² There is talk of a Truth Commission now in Bosnia. Many individuals and NGOs, not government, are talking about the need for a Truth Commission in addition to the United Nations Tribunal. And if the people of Bosnia want it, I have no doubt they should be encouraged. I do not agree with some of the views expressed by people working for the UN War Crimes Tribunal that a Truth Commission would conflict with the work of the Tribunal. I think the South African experience has shown that there is no contradiction, as long as one institution is given primacy, and where you have a Security Council Tribunal established, clearly it would have to be given primacy in the Bosnian situation. But if victims were encouraged to come forward, and to state in public what happened to them in Bosnia (and there were victims on all sides in Bosnia) and to tell their stories, I have little doubt that in the experiences they relate, they would only assist the prosecutions by the International Criminal Tribunal.

This whole concept of “Truth Commissions” which started in South America, moved to Africa, and was incorporated within Germany is

¹¹ The *Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission* was presented to President Mandela on 29 October 1998, the full text of which can be accessed via the Commission’s website at: www.truth.org.za/. Volume One (twelve chapters) is an introductory volume which describes the working methods of the Commission; Volume Two (seven chapters) addresses the commission of gross violations of human rights on all sides of the conflict; Volume Three (five chapters) focuses on gross violations of human rights from the perspective of the victim; Volume Four (ten chapters) investigates the nature of the society in which gross violations of human rights occurred and reports on a series of ‘institutional hearings’; and Volume Five (nine chapters) contains the conclusions and recommendations of the Commission (including the minority position of Commissioner Wynand Malan).

¹² For transcripts of the decisions on amnesty, see the Commission’s website at: www.truth.org.za/.

composed of so many variables that it is not a tidy process one can simply import or export. It is certainly of significance to any society moving from a period of violence, from a period of ethnic division, or religious division, to a period of democracy and reconciliation. But the extent to which a particular society can employ the process can only be determined by the society itself. The choice really must depend on the history, on the culture, on, above all, the prevailing politics. I hope that the South African experience will be relevant to Ireland, I do not know that it is. One thing I do know is that South Africa has received so much from the international community. We have received so much advice, so much assistance, and more importantly, the political opposition to apartheid, without which apartheid would have not come to an end. And I can assure you only of one thing as a South African, that any assistance that you may need from South Africa will be gladly and open-heartedly given to you.