**Arkiv**

**Pravda and Istina**

In Russian there are two words for truth, *pravda* and *istina*. The first can be told and substantiated by the record (despite its corruption under the Soviets as the title of a propaganda rag). The second cannot be so told or substantiated because it is a romantic and revolutionary style dedicated to another (higher) truth - Irish unity or God and Ulster?

In the Haass process’s outworking, public officials and especially ex-RUC officers and public officials will be required to engage with the first while paramilitaries (through their intermediaries) can remain with the second. The Anglo-Saxon phrase which will not apply in this case is ‘equity’.

The proposals as they stand – an Historical Investigations Unit (HIU) combining HET and the Police Ombudsman and an Independent Commission on Information Recovery (ICIR) – confirm a distinctive vision of transitional justice which corresponds with a peculiar vision of progress and achievement. We appear to be moving from a model based on the rule of law to a Soviet style where a peculiar idolising of procedural rules means a disregard for the spirit of due process.

The notioned ICIR contact or intermediary will allow paramilitaries to impose a gatekeeping lock on what does and what does not go forward. That is the very practical distinction between *Pravda* and *Istina*, the latter impervious to the difference between what is true and what is useful to the cause.

For all its use of the term 'history', what is proposed has little to do with history but a lot to do with the ideological past. No self-respecting historian would entertain the validity of the contradiction in the apparent Haass proposals, the close examination of detail while others decide on themes to be explored.

This may sound like balancing the concerns of 'civic society' and the professional integrity of historical investigation. But in the real world the pre-existing themes will skew the integrity of investigation, putting ideology before history.

[**http://arkivni.wordpress.com/**](http://arkivni.wordpress.com/)

**27 December 2013**