



# An Chartlann Náisiúnta National Archives

<b>Reference Code:</b>	2017/4/75
<b>Creation Dates:</b>	31 March 1987
<b>Extent and medium:</b>	7 pages
<b>Creator(s):</b>	Department of Foreign Affairs
<b>Accession Conditions:</b>	Open
<b>Copyright:</b>	National Archives, Ireland. May only be reproduced with the written permission of the Director of the National Archives.

Meeting with Bishop Cathal Daly,  
Belfast, 31 March 1987

---

I called on Bishop Cathal Daly (Bishop of Down and Connor) at his residence in Belfast yesterday.

Among the points which Bishop Daly made to me were the following:

Provisional IRA

The Bishop views the recent spate of IRA violence (last week's killing of two RUC men and a prison instructor in Derry and Monday's bomb attack in the Divis Flats) as an attempt by the Provos to compensate for Sinn Fein's poor electoral performance in the South. There is a perpetual tension between the militant and political wings of the movement: if the militants feel that the proponents of the "political" approach have had an opportunity to prove themselves and have failed to exploit it, pressure inevitably builds up for a return to the militant approach.

A RUC source has told him that the police are very worried by the tactic of the "secondary bomb" (i.e., a bomb attack followed by the booby-trapping of a corpse left by the attack) which the Provos demonstrated - as far as the Bishop can recall, for the first time ever - in Derry last week.

The killing of the Army soldier in Divis, according to the local priests, was the result of careful planning over a period of several days and was unrelated to the ecumenical service which had taken place in the adjoining St. Peter's Cathedral on the previous day. Bishop Daly mentioned that, in an incident which may or may not have been related to the killing, "dozens"

of Army soldiers caused upset in Divis Flats at 4 a.m. one night last week by entering the square in jeeps with a lot of commotion, flashing headlights along the balconies and screaming obscenities at startled residents. (Allegedly they were looking for an armed individual in the flats but this explanation was disbelieved locally).

### Sinn Fein

At our last meeting the Bishop had mentioned a rumour that Gerry Adams was trying to put together a set of proposals which would enable the Provisional IRA to call a halt to their paramilitary campaign. Adams was working on, specifically, a possible declaration of intent to withdraw, with however long a timescale, on the part of the British Government.

The Bishop's present understanding is that, as a result of a number of contacts between different parties, the NIO has agreed on a "form of words" which could perhaps be of assistance. This "form of words" was to be proposed separately to John Hume and to Gerry Adams about a month ago. Due to some breakdown in communication, however, the text did not reach either. It is possible that it has since reached them - the Bishop does not have up-to-date information. In any event, responses from both Hume and Adams are awaited.

### INLA

Bishop Daly does not believe that the 'ceasefire' negotiated by two West Belfast priests last weekend will survive. He recalled that the initial murder of Power and O'Reilly in the New Rosnaree Hotel had occurred at a supposed mediation meeting arranged by Fr. Desmond Wilson at the request of the Army Council faction. Well-meaning but misguided, Fr. Wilson allowed himself to be used by one side for the purposes of setting a trap for the other. The Bishop is not ruling out the possibility that one or the other side is "using" in the same way the two priests behind the 'ceasefire', Fr. Alec Reid and Fr. Gerry Reynolds. The two priests, who are friends of

Fr. Wilson, are from the Rēdemptorists' Clonard monastery in West Belfast. Bishop Daly considers them no less "emotional and misguided" in their attitude towards the paramilitaries than Fr. Wilson. He strongly suspects that the ceasefire they think they have negotiated is merely a smokescreen designed by one side to deceive the other and to coax it into lowering its guard.

The Bishop is certain that the Provisional IRA played no part in the ceasefire negotiations. The INLA is a rival organisation, it controls areas which the Provos would like to control - it is clearly in the Provos' interests to let the feud continue unabated.

### Funerals

The Bishop disagreed with the decision taken by his Derry colleague, Bishop Edward Daly, that Requiem Masses for paramilitaries will no longer be celebrated in his diocese with the body of the deceased present in church. He commented that, while the situation which arose at Gerald Logue's funeral in Derry last week was undoubtedly very difficult, Bishop Edward Daly had responded to it in the wrong way. His decision was taken very much "in the heat of the moment" and its implications were not fully thought out. In the event of similar Provo provocation at any funeral in the Belfast diocese, he (Cathal Daly) would not follow suit.

The position in Belfast has been that the families of dead paramilitaries either opt for a paramilitary-style funeral and do not seek a church service at all or else they request a Church service and undertake that there will be no paramilitary trappings while the coffin is in the church. In every case that the Bishop can remember, the latter assurance has been honoured. He referred particularly to the funerals over the past six months of James McKernon (Andersonstown), "Spotter" Murphy (Ballymurphy), Tom Power and John O'Reilly (Markets) and Emmanuel Gargan (South Belfast). From his experience of these funerals, the Bishop is satisfied that the families take

seriously the promises which they make to the Church. He has noted, furthermore, that the paramilitary organisations themselves have not sought to interfere. What the latter choose to do once the coffin has left the church grounds for the cemetery, however, is a matter for themselves. In a strict sense the Church's responsibility ends once the coffin has left the grounds. (Although the officiating priest usually accompanies the coffin to the cemetery, this is not an essential part of the liturgical rite). If paramilitary flags are unfurled or other trappings appear while the coffin is en route to the cemetery, or if shots are fired over the coffin in the cemetery, that is a problem not for the Church but for the security forces.

In Derry the Provos deliberately "sabotaged" the usual understanding between the Church and the family. (The Logue family stated publicly that there had been no such understanding but Bishop Daly believes that this statement was made under paramilitary pressure). Shots were fired while the coffin was en route from the church porch to the gateway. The Provos were clearly intent on provoking the security forces and causing embarrassment to the Church. Matters were made considerably worse (in the eyes of the RUC and of Unionists) by the applause of a number of those in attendance. Nevertheless, while sympathetic to the predicament of his Derry colleague, Bishop Daly is determined to "keep a cool head" if similar problems arise at funerals in Belfast. While it is undoubtedly possible that the Provos may stage a similar "stunt" in Belfast (though a statement from Martin McGuinness implies they will not), the Bishop expects that West Belfast families will not as readily allow the Provos to take over their funeral services in this fashion.

The Bishop made the general point that, if the Church wishes to draw people away from the IRA, a policy which amounts to casting the Provos into the outer darkness is not very helpful. It is important that those people "even inside the Provos" who have doubts about what they are doing should receive encouragement. In Bishop Daly's view, such individuals

are open to "pastoral persuasion" and the door must not be shut in their faces. While the Church has a duty to condemn evil where it finds it, absolute condemnations of Provo violence tend to demoralise the 'doubters' and have, the effect, perversely, of closing the Provos' ranks.

The Bishop fears that his Derry colleague's pronouncement may be counter-productive in this sense. (Note: Bishop Daly's West Belfast priests agree fully with him on the need to avoid absolute condemnations but sometimes criticise Bishop Daly himself in this connection).

Bishop Daly also considers that the Derry policy is unfair on the families, who are entitled to a Church service for their deceased if they so wish. In this connection, he pointed out that, while many Protestants regard the Catholic Church's "open door" approach to funerals as amounting to condonement of paramilitary activities, this is not the case. In contrast to the Protestant funeral rite (which celebrates the life of the deceased), the Catholic rite seeks forgiveness for the sins the deceased has committed.

#### RUC

The Bishop argued for greater sensitivity on the RUC's part in its West-Belfast operations. The massive RUC presence at certain nationalist funerals (which he has personally witnessed) has had a very negative effect on local attitudes towards the police. Such funerals end up as "recruitment centres for the IRA". He wholeheartedly supported the statement issued by the Ballymurphy priests following the "Spotter" Murphy funeral last October. (The same priests, the Bishop recalled wryly, had been visited by the RUC a week earlier for advice on how to improve police community relations).

On the other hand, the performance of the RUC in other areas has shown a definite improvement and this is why the Bishop, in a recent speech, urged nationalists to give the police credit for this. The speech was commended by many moderate

nationalists and Unionists (both lay and clerical) but, the Bishop freely admitted, it did not go down well in West Belfast.

### Army

Bishop Daly was particularly critical of the Army's general demeanour in West Belfast. Apart from the specific incident in Divis Flats (referred to earlier), he criticised the practice whereby soldiers on foot patrol crouch down and swivel their rifles slowly around until they are aiming straight at a passer by. This and other hostile postures inevitably cause resentment among people who have no reason to feel well-disposed towards the security forces in the first instance. Bishop Daly had a number of questions about such conduct:

- Does it take place in Loyalist areas?
- Does it contribute to a reduction in the level of violence?
- Does it produce results from a military point of view?

The answer in his view, is "no" in each instance. He concludes, accordingly, that the explanation for such conduct is political - it is intended simply as a show of strength to appease Loyalist politicians. Bishop Daly feels that this is entirely counter-productive: "if you treat in a hostile way people who may not necessarily be hostile to you, it is inevitable that they will become hostile". (Comment: The practice mentioned above is probably part of the Army's

standard operating procedures in areas which they regard as dangerous such as West Belfast but the point will be taken up through the Secretariat).

*David Donoghue*

David Donoghue,

1 April 1987.

c.c. Secretary  
A-I Section  
A-I Secretariat  
Charge d'Affaires a.i. London  
Box

2362m