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Reference Code:	2017/10/47
Creation Dates:	7 April 1987
Extent and medium:	5 pages
Creator(s):	Department of the Taoiseach
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SECRET

Meeting with Bishop Edward Daly,
Derry, 7 April 1987

I called on Bishop Edward Daly at his residence in Derry on 7 April.

Among the points which arose in our discussion were the following:

Provisional IRA

Bishop Daly, who was in a particularly dejected frame of mind, condemned recent Provo activity in Derry. During the second half of 1986 a period of relative peace seemed to have arrived: there was less paramilitary violence than in previous years and there was an air of confidence in the city. The Provos' recent killing of two RUC men and a prison instructor, however, had put paid to that. The Bishop had been profoundly depressed by the combination of this atrocity, the subsequent controversy over the Logue funeral and the ongoing Magilligan unrest. He believed that Derry was in for "a long hot summer - beginning now". He spoke wearily of his own twenty-odd years "bearing the brunt" in Derry and said that the recent developments had reduced him to a state of complete psychological and physical exhaustion.

Killings in Magee

The Bishop believes that the killing of the civilian prison instructor and the two RUC men on 23 March was primarily planned as a Provo response to the image of a prosperous Derry which was conveyed in the "Panorama" special on Northern Ireland on the same night. A further motivation was probably

concern at the dent in the Provos' reputation from Sinn Fein's poor performance in the Dail election - and concern also, in Derry, at the capital which Republican Sinn Fein would try to win locally because of this. An additional factor behind the killing of the instructor, of course, was the campaign against integration in Magilligan. The two RUC victims, as it turned out, were the RUC's top detective in Derry, Wilson, and a RUC officer called Anderson who was a former SAS man. Further evidence of a Provo plan to mark the Logue funeral with a display of strength was the fact that on the same night a lorry containing explosives was stopped at Culmore Road checkpoint as it tried to enter Derry from Donegal.

Logue funeral

The Bishop understands that there were some "sinister aspects" to the death of Gerard Logue. If the IRA man (as is alleged by the Provos) accidentally killed himself with his own hand-gun, it is hard to explain why two high-velocity bullets were found lodged in his body. As Logue was detained in Castlereagh a week previously, it is possible that he informed on some colleagues and that his death was, in fact, a punishment shooting (which the Provos, reluctant to name a colleague as an informer, preferred to present as suicide).

The Bishop told me that local reactions to his statement following the firing of shots in the church grounds at the funeral have been evenly divided between support and hostility. He is, however, clearly worried at what may happen on the occasion of the next paramilitary funeral in Derry. The saga of the Marley funeral in Belfast had increased his anxiety. Strictly speaking, of course, the Marley funeral posed a different issue for the Church. With the shots already fired ("that part of the Provo liturgy is now over"), the issue in Belfast was whether or not the Church should further Sinn Fein interests by acting as mediator in a controversy stirred up to a large extent by Sinn Fein. What was clear, however, was that the Provos were intent on exploiting to the full the

propaganda value of funerals. Bishop Daly feared that, on the occasion of the next IRA funeral in Derry, the Provos might bring the coffin to the gates of the Church and pointedly leave it there, with perhaps a 'guard of honour' alongside, for a number of days. The international media would, of course, fasten on such a story immediately.

In the particular circumstances of the Logue funeral, however, Bishop Daly felt that he had been right to issue his statement. The night before had seen a particularly vicious IRA atrocity - the killing of the two RUC men and the civilian instructor. Not just local Protestants but many ordinary Catholics were horrified by it. When the Provos on the following day staged what was obviously a carefully-planned stunt, availing of Church facilities in order to do so, Bishop Daly decided that "enough was enough" and that the Church would have to distance itself unequivocally from what the Provos had done. The fact that a number of mourners jeered at the police (who, by agreement of the Church, were unable to enter the grounds) made matters worse. Indeed, the jeering reached the point where the police were almost provoked into entering - which would have caused very serious violence.

A further concern on the Bishop's part was that, if he did not take some strong and dramatic action now, the Provos might feel emboldened to fire shots inside, rather than outside, the church on a future occasion. Their objective would be to provoke the police into entering the grounds or, ideally, the church. The ensuing mayhem would, of course, play into their hands. Bishop Daly felt he had to take action now in order to head off such a development.

The Bishop, who was deliberately not present but was in touch with his priests on the ground throughout the funeral, told me that his suspicions had first been aroused by the Provos' choice of the Long Tower church for the funeral. This church would not have been normal for the Logue family (who live in the Waterside) but it had the advantage of being built in such

a way that the police waiting outside could not see what was going on inside the grounds. Two Provos in paramilitary uniform had concealed themselves in confessionals prior to the service. When the service was over and the coffin was moving towards the gate, they suddenly appeared and fired shots. They then went back into the church, took off their uniforms and escaped into the crowd. It is not clear what they did with their guns.

Bishop Daly had contemplated once or twice before banning Requiem Mass in Derry churches for dead paramilitaries if the coffin was present. It is in any event not automatic for funerals in Derry to be preceded immediately by a Mass. The practice in the case of about 20% of normal funerals in Derry is for the Mass to be said a few days later. At the last two paramilitary funerals, furthermore, there was no Mass at all. The Bishop has deliberately confined his edict to city churches as, in contrast to country areas, there are very few city churches with an adjoining cemetery. (Thus, a funeral procession directly from the home to the cemetery would present no difficulties).

The Bishop was "interested", but not convinced, by Martin McGuinness's indication (after he had issued his statement) that the Provos would "review" their policy of firing shots in church grounds. He thought it possible that there had been a hostile local reaction to the Provos' choice of the Long Tower church (associated with St. Columba and venerated as the birthplace of Derry) for this stunt.

In conclusion, he expressed sympathy with the predicament of his fellow Bishop, Cathal Daly, over the Marley funeral. It was clear that McGuinness was trying to put into practice in Belfast (in the absence of Gerry Adams in Oslo) some lessons he had learnt in Derry (e.g., postponement of the funeral at will in order to heighten tension). The Bishop felt, however, that the RUC were behaving very badly over the Marley funeral. He pointed out that his own statement had included a severe

reprimand to the police for an obtrusive security presence at funerals which was behind the present controversy. He would like the RUC, on the one hand, not to give in to Sinn Fein pressure (i.e., to continue to cover the funerals) but, on the other hand, to do so in a more discreet way which would not play into the hands of Sinn. Fein. "I want the police to win this one - but in a way which will not alienate more nationalists from them".

David Donoghue

David Donoghue,
13 April 1987.

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

2395m