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in the country
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This was to be of interest in recent circumstances

Funerals of Brendan Burns and Brendan Moley, 5 March 1988

Summary of meeting with Fr. Moran, PP, Cullyhanna on 8 March 1988

- Fr. Moran, at the request of the RUC, acted as mediator between both families and the RUC.
- Both the RUC and the families indicated in advance that they wished the funerals to be peaceful and dignified. The Burns family, however, while agreeing to the "understanding" worked out, indicated that they might not be in full control of the arrangements.
- The "understanding" comprised:
 - no paramilitary display/no shots
 - in return for
 - a "low-key, discreet RUC presence" (no advance definition of this)/no
 - interference with tricolour, beret and gloves.

Burns funeral

- At the Burns funeral, which took place in Crossmaglen, approx 100 RUC men lined up in full riot gear on the roadway beside the house (roughly 200 RUC and 200 soldiers in all were involved in the operation). This may have convinced the family/"organisers" that the RUC had breached the "understanding".
- Trouble flared when the hearse, driven, Fr. Moran understands, by a local SF councillor, headed in the opposite direction to that covered by the RUC. In the scramble by the latter to regain position, scuffles ensued and a number of people were injured in the clashes.
- There was further trouble at Crossmaglen Church when, in breach of the "understanding", masked men in paramilitary dress emerged from the crowd to act as pallbearers. There were further scuffles as the RUC sought - unsuccessfully - to reach these people. The RUC honoured their undertaking not to interfere with the tricolour, beret and gloves.

Moley funeral

- This took place in Cullyhanna and passed off without incident. Fr. Moran, who had not personally attended the Burns funeral, officiated and acted as mediator in the resolution of a number of difficulties which arose during the funeral. Both Gerry Adams and Martin McGuinness were involved in the negotiations and he found them amenable to seeking reasonable compromises.
- The RUC did not flank the hearse; instead a group of 50/60 of them walked in front of the cortege, followed at a distance of 20 yards by Fr. Moran, followed by the family and close friends, followed at a distance of about 10 yards by a further group of 50/60 RUC men. Subsequently, the remainder of the mourners were allowed through RUC ranks to link up with the family group. (The overall numbers of RUC/Army involved in the funeral were roughly similar to the Burns funeral).
- The RUC again honoured their undertaking not to interfere with the tricolour etc., as did the family in relation to no paramilitary display. (A volley of shots had been fired over both coffins (at Glasdrummond, Co. Armagh) 2 days prior to the funerals en route to Sheelagh Church in Co. Louth. Fr. Moran understands that they had been brought to Sheelagh to allow friends of the men on the run in the South, to "pay their tribute" to them).


T. O'Connor,
Anglo-Irish Section,
11 March 1988.

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