

State papers

Murder of comedian's father features in files

Stalker confided in Irish diplomat

Eamon Phoenix

THE murder of the father of comedian Patrick Kielty in 1988 and nationalist attitudes to the UDR feature in previously confidential files.

The killing of Jack Kielty in Dundrum, Co Down is covered in a memo from Miss S Johnston of the law and order division of the NIO, dated January 24 1989, listing various court cases involving members of the regiment.

The official refers to the charging of seven men from 9 UDR with possession of firearms and membership of a proscribed organisation in 1984, a guilty plea to the kidnapping of the wife of an Armagh businessman in 1985, a murder charge in Enniskillen in the same year, and the arrest of two UDR men for attacking and imprisoning a 17-year-old youth, also in 1985.

It is noted that all the men were off-duty when the alleged offences occurred.

Three years later, Peter Bell, a senior official at the NIO, referred to "the favourable impact UDR successes can have, especially on the nationalist community" and the importance of publicising them.

Referring to the Dundrum murder, he added: "Such work is, perhaps, all the more timely (in light of) the connection of a former (UDR) member for the murder of Mr Jack Kielty".

Mr Kielty, who was well known in Co Down GAA circles, was to be the prime witness in Central Television's defence of a libel action brought by UDA extortionist Jim Craig, who was said to have ordered his death.

The issue of the regiment's image was discussed by Secretary of State Tom King at a conference with ministers and officials on April 5 1989.

Mr King said examples of the UDR defending the community should be used to obtain the maximum favourable impact amongst nationalists.

However, an NIO official, John McConnell, said the UDR's image in the nationalist community was not improving.

"Many Catholics, who are not in any sense republican, claim to have experienced UDR harassment while a recent NIO briefing of junior UDR officers had revealed an element of sectarian feeling."

The UDR Commander, Brigadier Ritchie, was said to be fully aware of the problem.

The minutes record: "Clearly there was a certain sectarian problem in the UDR although the secretary of state believed it was not large scale."

That the issue of sectarian bias in the regiment was acknowledged by its commander is confirmed



■ **FUNERAL:** Patrick Kielty carries the coffin of his father Jack Kielty, inset, who was murdered by loyalists in 1988

Anger at arrests of 28 UDR members

Eamon Phoenix

THE October 1989 arrest of 28 UDR members as part of the Stevens Inquiry into collusion was "disgraceful", a senior army officer told the secretary of state.

The inquiry had been instigated by RUC chief constable Hugh Annesley under Detective Chief Constable John Stevens of the Cambridgeshire Constabulary to investigate collusion between some security forces and loyalists.

The arrests angered the UDR's colonel commander Dennis Faulkner who complained to Secretary of State Peter Brooke about how the arrests had been handled.

Confidential documents



■ **INQUIRY:** John Stevens and RUC Chief Constable Hugh Annesley in 1990 with the Stevens report

now released showed that Col Faulkner felt "if there were malefactors in the regiment, they should be vigorously weeded out". However, he said the arrests, which were carried out on a Sunday, were "little short of disgraceful" and news that 300 police officers had been deployed in the

operation was "highly provocative". He claimed such force was unnecessary and "carried the implication that UDR soldiers were on a par with terrorists". He pointed out that of the 28, only four had been charged and with minor offences.

"People were drawing the conclusion that the operation had been mounted for political reasons to impress Dublin," the files revealed. Mr Brooke told Col Faulkner that Mr Annesley and the Stevens Inquiry had to act as they saw fit "without political input or direction". "It was certainly not the case that the arrests were designed to have an effect on Anglo-Irish

relations," he said. The file revealed that at a subsequent meeting, Mr Stevens indicated that more serious charges might well follow the arrests. It was also revealed that a special vetting unit had been established by British military headquarters for potential UDR recruits. In a further note, also dated October 1989, a Northern Ireland Office official reported that Mr Stevens had told senior army officer Major-General Tony Jeapes that his inquiries so far suggested that only a small number of UDR members in a particular brigade had been guilty of offences "but there was no evidence of any central coordination of their activities".

by a memo to Mr King by John Belloch of the NIO dated April 6 1989.

He reported a meeting with Brigadier Ritchie at UDR HQ where he raised the issue - favoured by the Irish government under the Anglo-Irish Agreement

- of "RUC accompaniment" of the UDR. The brigadier's reaction, the official noted, "was clear and firm. He welcomed it and saw it as a positive advantage to the UDR".

"He also made it very clear that he

was fully aware of the continued potential problem of sectarianism in the UDR and, therefore, the risk of underworld contact between members of the regiment and paramilitary groups".

Brian Hutton

A POLICE chief who investigated an alleged shoot-to-kill policy in Northern Ireland confided in a diplomat that he was not concerned about a cover-up but "murder, six murders", newly declassified files show. There were also behind-the-scenes fears that a masonic plot within the police against John Stalker could be revealed during one of the most controversial episodes of the Troubles, according to the documents marked 'secret'.

Mr Stalker, pictured, was asked to investigate the RUC shootings of six people but was removed from the inquiry shortly before it was due to report in 1986.



He was taken off the case at the moment he believed he was about to obtain an MI5 tape of one of the shootings. Suspended over allegations of associating with criminals, he was later cleared of any wrongdoing and reinstated in his job as deputy chief constable of Greater Manchester Police but his report was never published. Mr Stalker unexpectedly turned up at the opening of the Irish Centre in Manchester in November 1986, just months after his controversial suspension from the inquiry.

Then Irish ambassador to London Noel Dorr wrote to Taoiseach Garret FitzGerald about a brief private conversation with the police chief at the event.

Mr Stalker complained he never had access to politicians at any stage during this inquiry and was "convinced" had he been allowed to talk to then home secretary Douglas Hurd "he would have got attention to what he was saying".

Some months beforehand in July, a senior Irish official met Andrew Mackay MP, then parliamentary private secretary to Mr King, for lunch in London.

During the meeting, Mr Mackay - who would later become shadow secretary of state - said he feared a police plot against Mr Stalker.

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