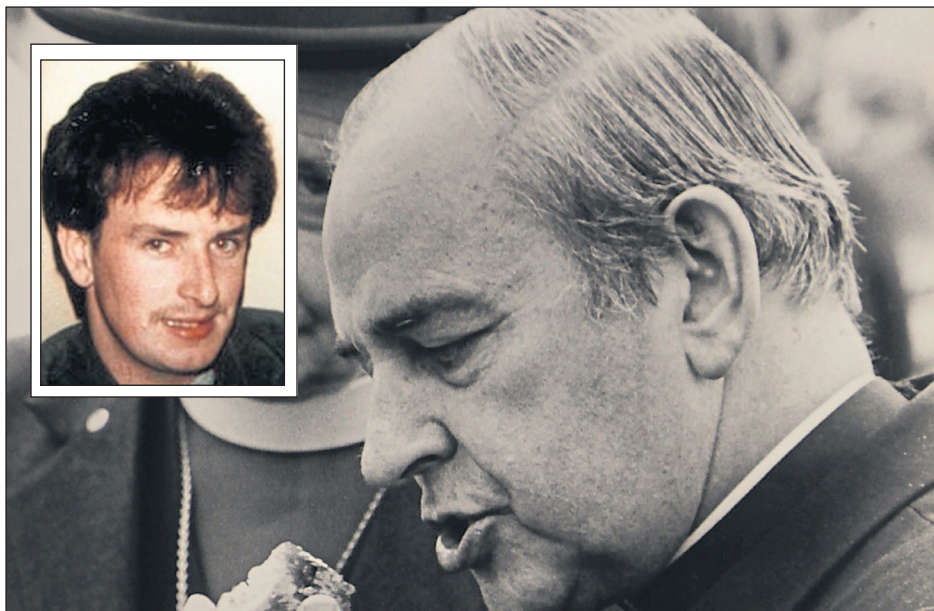


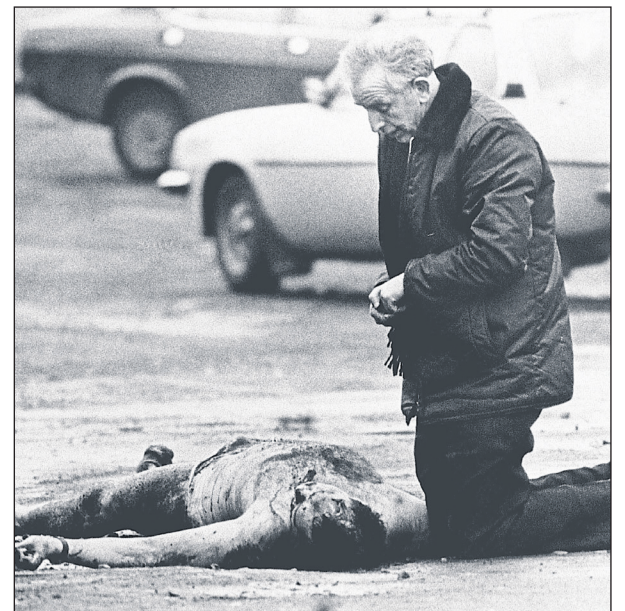
STATE PAPERS Belfast and Dublin



■ **REACTION:** Cardinal Tomás Ó Fiaich told mourners at the funeral of Aidan McAnespie, inset, who was shot dead by a British soldier at a checkpoint in Co Tyrone, that his killing was "murder"



■ **MURDERER:** Michael Stone attacks mourners at a funeral in Milltown Cemetery



■ **VIOLENCE:** Fr Alec Reid administers the Last Rites to Corporal David Howes who was shot dead by the IRA

Memo on recent atrocities

AMONGST files from 1988 released in Belfast this week is a memo on recent atrocities in Northern Ireland and the reactions of the two communities to them.

Written by JE McConnell of the NIO's Political Affairs Division for direct rule ministers in March 1988, it highlights the address of Cardinal Tomás Ó Fiaich at the funeral of Aidan McAnespie, who was shot dead by a British soldier at a border checkpoint at Aughnacloy, Co Tyrone.

The military claimed he was killed by "an accidental discharge" but this was disputed.

The cardinal's remark that

he "could not fail to call murder the killing in broad daylight of one of the best known men in the parish" was attacked by the UUP's David Trimble as "tantamount to incitement".

Turning to the murder of three mourners at Milltown Cemetery in Belfast during the funeral of three IRA members killed by the SAS in Gibraltar on March 16 1988, the official noted the divergent views in the two communities.

"The unionist community viewed this as a bizarre and isolated attack by an unbalanced individual. However, there was greater suspicion within the nationalist community (many of whom saw

at least the possibility of a link between Stone and a paramilitary group) and the ease with which he carried out his attack (why did the RUC van move away?)"

In the official's view these type of questions may have generated a level of hysteria and tension which "boiled over into the murders of two undercover soldiers at a republican funeral three days later".

The military deaths occurred during the funeral procession of IRA man Kevin Brady, one of those killed by Michael Stone.

Army corporals Derek Wood and David Howes, who had arrived in Northern Ireland

the previous week, were beaten by a mob and then driven away to be killed by the IRA.

The two soldiers drove towards the IRA cortege at high speed and then tried to reverse their car but found their exit blocked by black taxis.

One of the soldiers fired a warning shot before they were overpowered, beaten and stripped before being shot dead.

According to McConnell, whatever engendered the mob violence that occurred,

"the murder of the two soldiers has affected the unionist community in a very deep and personal way. They are particularly incensed that it occurred because the RUC were standing back to allow the funerals to proceed."

Anglo-Irish Agreement a 'nuisance' for British

THE new-found relationship between London and Dublin through the workings of the Anglo-Irish Agreement was regarded by the British as "a nuisance", apart from the security aspect. This was the view of a senior NIO official in 1988, according to previously confidential files released this week in Belfast.

In a briefing document for Sir John Belloch, the incoming head of the NIO, in the wake of the rejection of the Birmingham Six appeal and a decision not to prosecute RUC officers named in the Stalker-Sampson 'shoot to kill' inquiry, Peter Bell described Anglo-Irish relations as "perhaps under greater strain than at any time since the agreement was signed".

The official acknowledged "the damage done to confidence in our policies



■ **DEAL:** Garrett FitzGerald and Margaret Thatcher sign the Anglo-Irish Agreement in 1985

in Dublin, the US and to our image in the world generally". Bell expressed the hope that the British side would grasp "the damage to our interests as Irish sensitivities are severely bruised... But ultimately serious misunderstandings will continue to occur unless [British] ministers collectively see the Anglo-Irish relationship more positively than as a vehicle for enhancing cross-border

security operation. But otherwise, it sometimes seems, as a bit of a nuisance". In his view, Anglo-Irish relations should be treated as a "non-zero sum game". In particular, the official noted the continual rejection by the NIO of the Irish government's nominations to Northern Ireland bodies: "The Irish are already dismayed that we shall be rejecting their candidate for the new Police Complaints Commission... [This] is only the latest in a series."

The Irish candidate, he noted, Catholic solicitor Christopher Napier, "was not thought suitable owing to his activities in the early 1970s". (The late Chris 'Kit' Napier, a brother of the former Alliance Party leader Sir Oliver Napier, was a leading Irish language enthusiast and subsequently became Taxing Master in Northern Ireland.)

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