

E. R.

MR Wilson  
RW 113/7

CONFIDENTIAL

cc. Mr Miles  
Mr McConnell  
Mr Bell  
Mr Dalzell

Principal Secretariat

LOYALIST STREET DECORATIONS

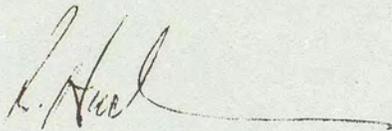
1. You wrote to Mr Wilson on 6 July concerning a matter raised by the Irish relating to a number of instances in which loyalist decorations have appeared at or near Catholic homes. There is, as you suggest, little that can be said to the Irish about any of these instances, but you may find the following additional information helpful.
2. I understand that local moderate Protestants were also annoyed at the Castlerock incident and attempted to remove the paint themselves. However, this nearly led to an ugly incident and the RUC asked that all activity cease to prevent a public order problem.
3. The DOE experience is that where DOE Roads industrial staff or contractors' men can be encouraged to remove these decorations it often results in further and more extensive street painting in retaliation.
4. DOE Roads Service advise that sand-blasting would indeed damage the kerbs, and in the Castlerock and Garvagh instances the Divisional Roads Manager felt it best to let weathering take its course. This weathering will usually fade any paint in approximately one month.
5. In relation to the bunting at the Lovell and Christmas factory at Agivey, my information is that bunting was erected both inside and outside the factory. The management removed the bunting from inside but were powerless to get rid of the remaining decorations fixed to BT poles outside the works.

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6. The RUC view is that they would not be justified in removing the bunting for public order reasons. The presence of the bunting does not represent a threat to peace and good order. Indeed, if they sought to remove it they would probably provoke a fierce reaction from local loyalists and would find themselves in a rapidly escalating situation.
7. Nobody has been arrested or apprehended by the RUC in connection with the matter. That part of your information is mistaken.
8. In summary, all you can say to the Irish on the Agivey incident is that decisions about flags and bunting depend upon the degree of community provocation and the risks of there being a breach of the peace. These decisions are for the operational judgement of the RUC who do not feel justified in removing the decorations at Agivey.



R BUCHANAN

Central Secretariat

27 July 1988

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