

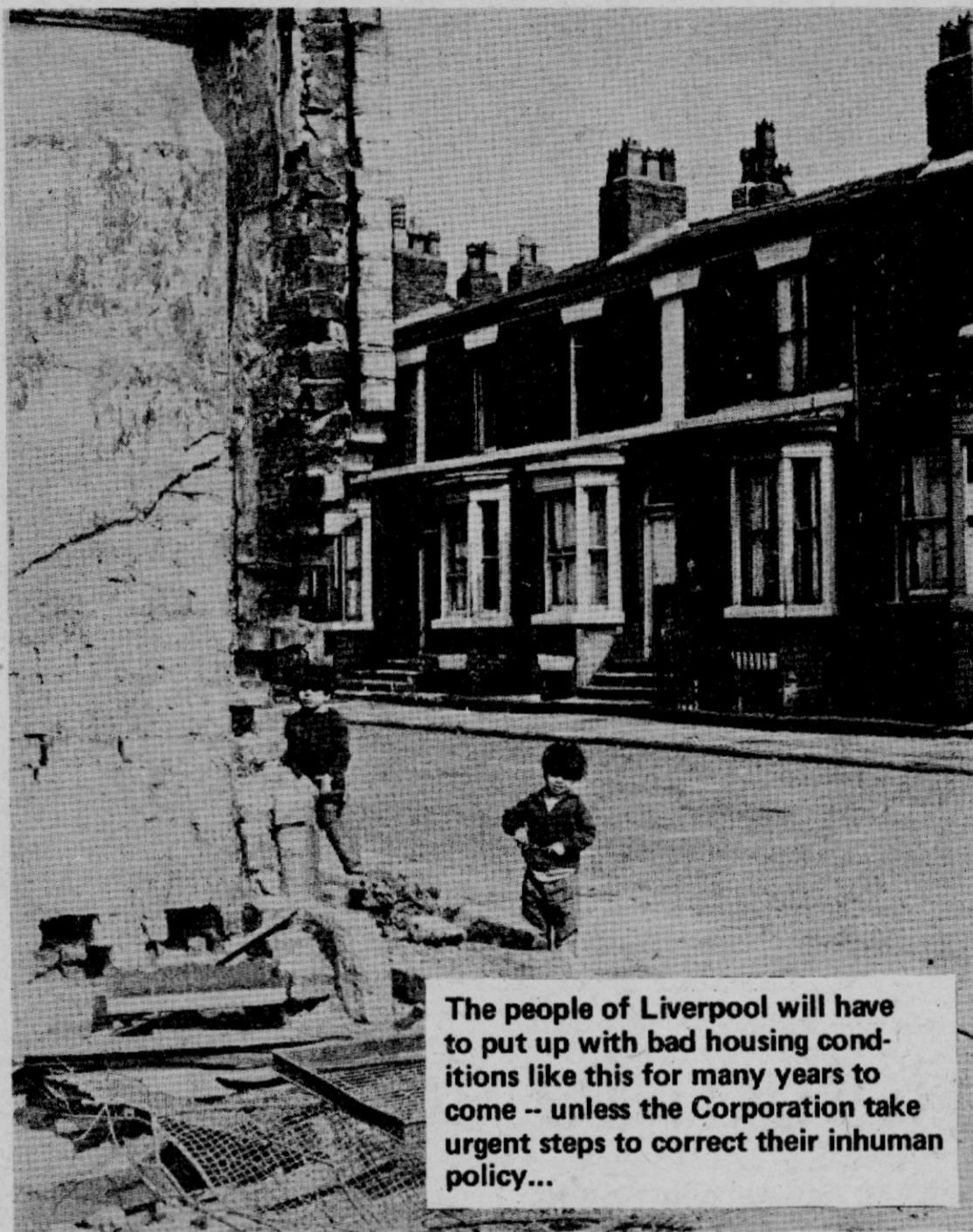
# LIVERPOOL Free Press

News you're not  
supposed to know

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The people of Liverpool will have to put up with bad housing conditions like this for many years to come - unless the Corporation take urgent steps to correct their inhuman policy...

## City housing policy in ruins

# SECRET REPORT

## 50,000 homes short by 1980

### WHO KEPT THE FACTS FROM US?

## It's time to say goodbye, Bob

By Tom McGuire

There is a grim logic about the recent early retirement of Bob Edwards, Director General of the ailing Mersey Docks and Harbour Board.

Although everyone paid tribute to his honesty and fairness in reporting his departure, the reviews were less than fulsome about his ability. Among evidence of his capability was cited the 1967 negotiations for decasualisation of Liverpool's dockers for which it was said "He will long be remembered."

He certainly will. Edwards chaired the committee which made such an unutterable mess of the changeover that a six week strike ensued.

The strike was so important that the then Prime Minister claimed it was one of the two major causes of devaluation in 1967. The dock strike was triggered off by the negotiating committee's complete failure to grasp the implications of the deal which they had agreed - which was highly threatening to the dockers. The dockers grasped it alright and walked out.

The result was a crippling strike which was only ended by adding an inflationary wage award on top of an already messy wage system.

The result was that productivity fell, strikes proliferated, ships were delayed and costs rocketed.

The result was that the Dock Board fell further and further into deficit.

The result was last autumn's wretched and largely unnecessary crisis (see Free Press no.1).

Liverpool is facing a housing crisis that will escalate to a shortage of 50,000 homes in 1980.

This shock statement comes from a secret 200-page document produced by the City Planning Department, but suppressed because of political pressures.

And it flatly contradicts statements made by housing committee chairman Gordon Pascoe that Liverpool will have a housing surplus of 14,000 council homes by 1980.

A copy of this report - which has never been submitted to any council committee - is now in the hands of the Free Press.

The report tears to shreds the so-called housing policy of the city council, and shows up the inhumanity of Liverpool's approach to the housing problem.

### Inadequate

Its main conclusion says "The theoretical dwelling requirements by 1980 arising from a natural increase in the city's population, from existing over-occupancy, and from an inadequate number of vacancies, are 50,000."

Figures backing up this read:

Natural increase in pop.....	24,000
Existing shortage.....	15,314
Vacancies.....	7,230
<b>TOTAL.....</b>	<b>46,544.</b>

The report rounds this up to 50,000.

In the report, there is repeated criticism of any cuts in the city's housing construction.

Since the housing 'surplus' was estimated at 21,000 in 1969, Liverpool have cut back their housing construction by 5,000. Houses planned to be built at Church Road; Fazakerley; Kirkby and Speke have been scrapped.

The report, produced in January, and described as a background document to current planning policies, states:

"In a situation where the dwelling stock is clearly inadequate any cut-back in new construction, private or public, should be regarded as a setback in the task of eliminating housing need."

The housing surplus predicted by the Corporation and revised to 14,000 recently by Councillor Pascoe is based largely on the dramatic rise in the number of re-lets in the city, and on the success of the improvements programme.

Re-lets are caused by people moving out of corporation property

Liverpool's housing policy is in ruins.

Councillor Gordon Pascoe, Housing Committee Chairman, stands up and says we will have a surplus of 14,000 council houses in 1980.

A major corporation survey of the housing problem says we will be short of 50,000 houses.

A discrepancy of 64,000 houses!

It is an insane and potentially tragic situation. Even more insane is that this vital report has been suppressed.

It should have been made known to the people of this city immediately.

Whoever was responsible for making sure it never left the planning office suppressed it - whether he be corporation official or politician.

Who did see the report? Did Alderman MacDonald Steward, leader of the city council, see it? Did James Hall, Director of Housing see it?

If they did see it what have they done?

There is now an urgent need for informed public debate about Liverpool's housing policy with everyone taking part - politicians, planners and people.

Otherwise nothing will be done. And 150,000 people will either have to leave Merseyside altogether or live in overcrowded conditions.



Bowlers ... brollies ... briefcases ... and jeans. No, they're not the new Dock Board (though they couldn't do much worse than the last lot). But these youngsters and many others like them are about to become company shareholders. To find out why turn to Back Page.

TURN TO PAGE 2