

# 'I'M NOT DEAD YET' CLAIMS PHONE-FREAK M.P.

SIMON MAHON, MP for Bootle, has suddenly woken up. First he claimed his life had been threatened on the telephone. More recently he's been on about left-wing extremists, mainly because some people in the Bootle Labour Party are sick to death of his idleness.

By an odd coincidence, the threats story appeared in the Daily Post on the same day as the results of a "major investigation" into the performance of local MPs.

But Simon Mahon's work record was nowhere to be seen. He had refused to take part in the Post's survey because "it served no useful purpose".

Mahon knows, of course, that if his record became generally known, his parliamentary life might quickly come to an end.

His performance as an MP is disgraceful. Sleepy Simon rarely speaks and rarely asks any questions. He hasn't held a regular surgery to discuss constituents' problems in years. Even his telephone number is ex-directory. (It's 525 2050).

The only official post he's held in 20 years as an MP was as an opposition whip from 1959 to 1961. In Cassell's Parliamentary Directory, a standard reference book, he hardly rates a mention.

It's hard to believe, but in one parliamentary session (from 1960 to 1961) Mahon did not ask a single question, did not put down a single written question, and did not contribute to a single debate.

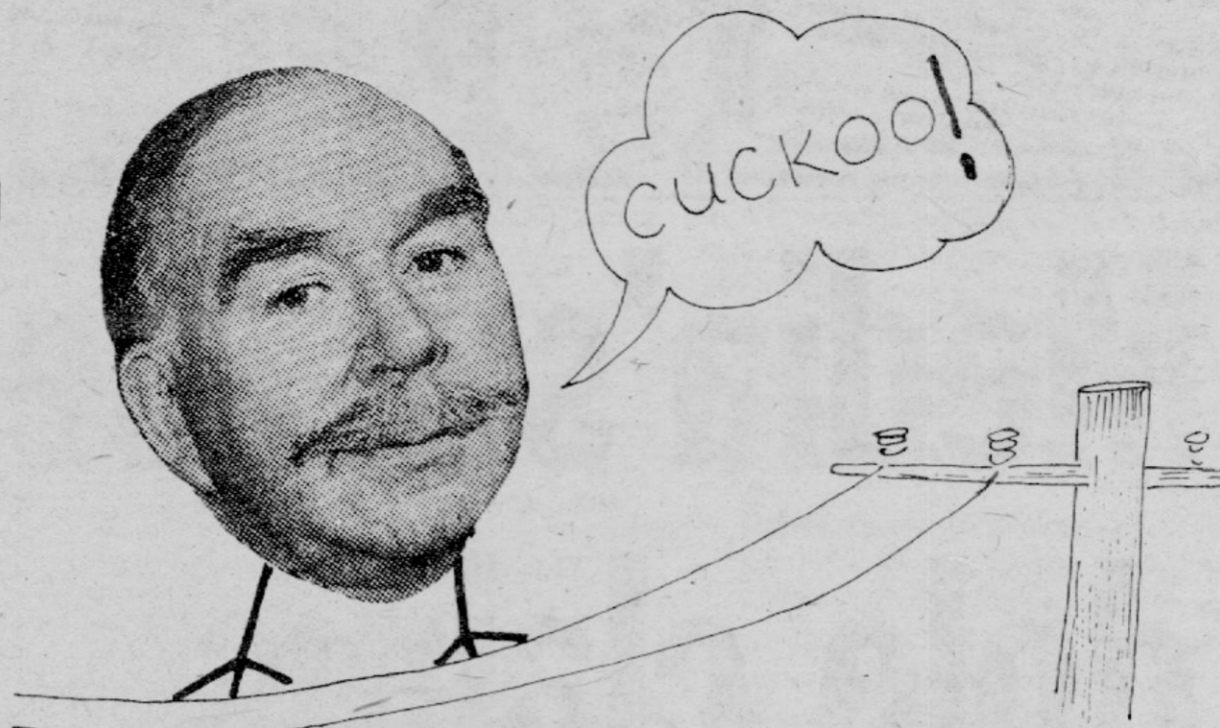
The truth is, as one Labour Party member commented about the death threat, that Simon Mahon "has done practically nothing to be killed for". His worst enemies would like to see some life in him.

The irony is that the well-timed death threat should come by phone. Mahon is a phone-freak. His ex-directory number has been changed five times in the last few years to prevent people disturbing him.

Some time ago he asked the Postmaster General to scrap telephone directories — and was gently reminded that the entire system depended on them.

Then, in October, he came up with the brilliant suggestion that the country's 77,000 public telephone kiosks should be scrapped. The Post Office disagreed.

In May last year Simon Mahon introduced a piece



*It's cheaper to threaten your MP after 6 and at weekends (525-2050)*

of legislation for the first time in 20 years — the Cancer Screening (Education) Bill. After rambling on about himself, he told the House of Commons:

"I have always asked myself why my constituents have so much trouble. Why do they always get everything — bad housing, plus bad health, plus bad environment..."

We can tell Simon Mahon a small part of the answer. It's because they've got such a bloody awful MP.

## Deserting the force

SHARP-EYED readers of the Echo may have spotted a host of senior police retirements lately. The announcements have been published separately, without comment or explanation.

Last January James Haughton's ten-year reign as Chief Constable ended when he was bundled off to the Home Office with a knighthood. And what began as a touch of spring cleaning by the new chief — Hanratty-catcher Ken Oxford — has dragged on into winter.

Among the first victims was Supt. Bob Moores, 54, who since 1974 had been in charge of the Task Force — the jeep-borne heavies who made it unsafe to walk the streets at night. He was promptly put out to grass as Supt in charge of CID at Lower Lane. In November he left the force to become a private eye.

When Oxford took over, he told associates the Task Force was "out of control" and thought of disbanding it [see Free Press 24]. It still exists, but with some changes.

Liverpool night-life won't be the same without the "Jack of Clubs" — alias Sgt Bill Wain. For twelve

years he was in charge of licensing administration and claims to know every pub, club and betting shop in the city. He told the Echo he had never mixed business with pleasure — "it was all strictly business."

Bill, still only 55, is off to a newly-built bungalow in the Isle of Wight.

The Ace of Clubs has also gone. Supt Arthur ("call me Otto") Schmuehle's job was to organise raids on clubs. Naturally the owners turned out in force for his farewell party. Otto told the Daily Post there were some bad club owners, but "others were likeable people who happened to exceed the law I had to enforce. They will be at my party, having a drink with me."

Yet another victim is Sgt Doug Corlett, still only 50 and retiring after five years as Houghton's personal dogsbody. He was known in the Force as "Dr Kissinger".

Then the former head of the Regional Crime Squad, Supt. Eddie Washbourne also went early — though he won't be forgotten.

And finally it's goodbye to former-acting-deputy-chief-constable Ron Lancaster. Mind how you go!

## Giving it all away

GREAT George's Community Arts Project — better known as 'the Blackie' — must have money to throw away.

They have just published a lavish newspaper congratulating themselves at the staggering cost of £6,000. (As a comparison, that would cover the costs of more than a dozen issues of the Free Press.)

The 15,000 copies of '7-Up' were individually packed into huge cardboard containers and delivered

to unsuspecting people by post or by hand.

At least one household received no less than five of them.

However, the Liverpool Daily Post and Echo were probably not too dismayed by this extravagance, even though they gave £300 to Great George's between 1970 and 1975.

This should easily have been recovered on the contract they got to print the 32-page newspaper.

## Lawlor is re-elected

RAY Lawlor, the General and Municipal Workers Union official, has survived our revelations about his high living at the Atlantic Tower hotel, where he was supposed to be representing the workers. (See last issue.)

The article was discussed by the union's Regional Committee, who went on to confirm him as an official for another year. However, it's understood that Lawlor received a warning about his future behaviour.

Meanwhile, the GMWU shop steward at the Atlantic Tower has been told to deal with a different official. And the union's solicitor has wisely advised that no action be taken against the Free Press.

## What is the Liverpool Free Press?

*THE 'Liverpool Free Press' has appeared since 1971.*

*The paper is non profit making. It is run democratically, without an Editor, under workers' control. Readers' meetings are held to criticise past issues and discuss future ones.*

*The Free Press is an alternative to most newspapers which exist not to inform, but to make money.*

*Most of the information in the Free Press would not appear elsewhere — either because of political or legal restraints; or because it is journalistically difficult, eg, time-consuming; or because of class, racial, or sexual prejudices.*

*The paper is not connected with any political party or group. But we do not pretend, like the established Press, to be 'neutral' or 'objective'. The politics of the Free Press are contained, largely, in what we choose to report.*

*We want it to be useful to people struggling for control over their own lives — as well as providing information about the sort of people who actually do have control over them.*

## A chance to gain revenge

THERE could be something nasty in store for landlord Leslie Rubin.

Rubin — whose office is in Lord Street — is Liverpool's main operator of 'rental mortgages'.

These are basically a smart way round the Rent Acts. Instead of letting flats, the landlord "sells" them. "Buyers" get the responsibilities of home ownership without the benefits, and also lose their normal rights as tenants.

There's now a chance to stop all that. Because rental mortgages are a form of credit, Mr Rubin must apply for a licence under the Consumer Credit Act between January and May 1977.

Merseyside Trading Standards Department have said that if they get enough complaints they will refuse a licence, or not renew it after three years.

They can't deal with individual

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problems, but victims of rental mortgages could at least help to save others from the same fate. Details of complaints should be sent to Mr Butler, Trading Standards Department, 62 Great Crosshall Street, Liverpool 3. (227 4751).

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