

Police harassment: The bitterness grows

Six young people were casually kicking a football about in Roseberry Street, Liverpool 8 recently when a police car drew up.

The teenagers, all of whom were black, were told to move on. Five minutes later, as the youths were walking up Granby Street, still playing with the ball, an incident took place which would have seemed out of place in a comedy film.

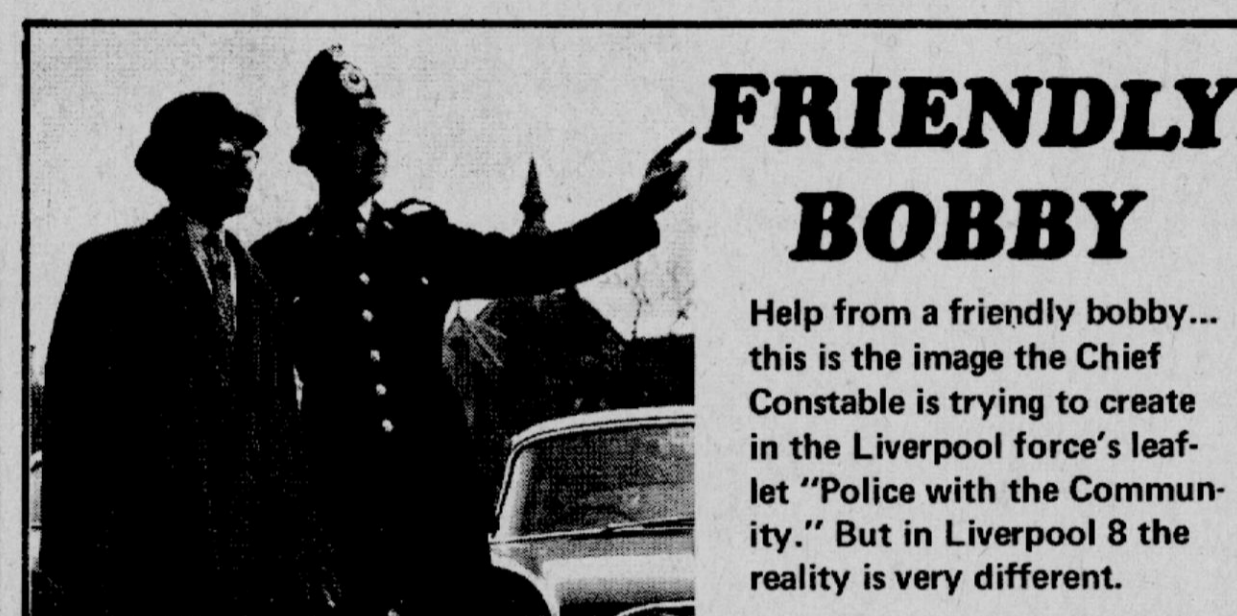
As if from nowhere, a panda car, a police jeep and a private taxi with two policemen arrived on the spot. Within seconds two of the teenagers were pushed into the back of the jeep. The others quickly followed.

Peter Burnett, Victor Steele, Robert Robinson, George Carpenter, Sandy Crawford and William Mohammed were charged with causing an obstruction whereby a breach of the peace might be occasioned.

In short, they were playing football in the street.

Even the magistrate, Mr Sam Curtis, seemed taken aback by the trivial nature of the charge when the lads appeared in court on May 10.

He asked one PC, who was giving evidence, where he lived. When



FRIENDLY BOBBY

Help from a friendly bobby... this is the image the Chief Constable is trying to create in the Liverpool force's leaflet "Police with the Community." But in Liverpool 8 the reality is very different.

he answered "over the water" Mr Curtis asked if he had ever seen kids playing football in the street there.

And then he remarked that he would like to join the accused in a game of football... but was prevented by his age.

All the boys were discharged and the case was dismissed, after Mr Curtis had said: "We all know what it's like living in Liverpool 8, don't we? I know there are no jobs, that you can't play football in the park, that there's nothing to do, but you still mustn't be impudent to the police." (There's no evidence they were).

What is surprising about the case

is that Curtis is not thought to be particularly sympathetic by youngsters in Liverpool 8.

For Mr Curtis is also chairman of the Stanley House Centre. He strongly supported the successful move to close down the coffee bar which was extremely popular with the youngsters in the area.

The case is just one of many. Within the last two or three months black youngsters have faced more harassment than usual from the police.

There are numerous incidents of youths being stopped, questioned and arrested for doing nothing more than walking down a street. Several of those involved have not been in trouble with the police before.

Five weeks ago Mrs Patricia Smeda was sitting at home about 10.30 p.m. when there was a knock on the door of her house in Cairns Street. Standing outside was a policeman with her fifteen-year-old son, Stephen. Both of them had just got out of a police jeep which was parked in front of the house.

The reason for this dramatic entrance, a policeman informed her, was that her son had been seen... throwing a chip paper on the floor.

"The case will have to be referred to the Chief Constable to see if a charge is to be made against him," she was told. Stephen had never been picked up by the police before, and yet he was bundled into a jeep, taken home, and may be charged with an offence which is ludicrously trivial.

Bitterness against the police has

now reached a peak which few people are willing to admit.

Recently the Echo praised the Chief Constable for introducing 'community relations' officers and trumpeted: "One of its effects has been to dispel the long-held beliefs in certain areas that the police are the enemy."

In Liverpool 8 police/community relations certainly aren't improving.

Over 100 mothers have already signed a petition organised by Mrs Josephine Mohammed of Selbourne Street, complaining that the police are picking up their children "for anything and nothing".

"A group of lads, or occasionally girls, walking down the street with their friends, sitting on a step, waiting for a bus, or for that matter walking down the street alone, can be and are, with unbearable frequency picked up and charged with various forms of breach of the peace and obstruction offences. Offences where the policeman's word rules," says the petition.

"We wonder if you could possibly believe how many of the real problems with which police eventually deal, involving young people in our area, begin in many ways with the actions of the police;

CHILDISH

"We protest. This must stop. We want police to stop arresting our children on trivial charges of behaviour on the street for no sensible reason. We want racial remarks by policemen and childish behaviour by policemen to stop."

No doubt the police will dismiss this petition and the accusations as just malicious propaganda. They will point to the creation of community relations' police officers and the juvenile liaison scheme (which is patently breaking down) to show the effort they are making.

But trappings and public relations efforts are irrelevant, especially while so many policemen are deeply racist. One told Mrs Terry of Milner House "Niggers shouldn't be allowed to walk down Upper Parly Street. They should make it like South Africa."

LIVERPOOL'S HOTEL MANIA

LIVERPOOL is not a wealthy city, yet by this time next year there will be four new luxury hotels in the city centre. The reason for this grotesque boom in luxury hotel building is simple - cash.

The Wilson government offered lavish grants under its 'Hotel Development Incentive Scheme' for all hotels built before March 1973 - and the Tory government has generously administered the scheme.

This is why the leisure tycoons have been scrambling for sites on which to lay the first brick and thus qualify for a government handout. But hotel speculators in Liverpool have been luckier than most. Because Liverpool is in a development area, they can claim 25% of all construction and fitting-out costs up to £1,250 for each bedroom.

Liverpool's biggest grant-aided hotel, the Holiday Inn (owned by Holiday Inns of America) started construction in Paradise Street in the summer of 1971 in a blaze of publicity. The Echo hailed Holiday Inns' arrival like the second coming



Holiday Inn

with headlines on its front page: "£1½ million hotel with 300 bedrooms - Paradise Street."

The Americans first 'sold' their scheme to Tiny Macdonald Stewart who saw this as a god-send opportunity to fill up an empty space and to boost his reputation as 'the man who rebuilt Liverpool'.

To lesser beings Holiday Inns' sales talk is truly terrifying - they claim to open one new inn every 52 hours, and they are opening four other hotels in this country with government assistance.

The 226-bedroom Atlantic Tower Hotel in Chapel Street is being built by Thistle Hotels (a subsidiary of Scottish and Newcastle Breweries who run Liverpool Airport's exclusive restaurant). S & N Breweries are substantial contributors to the Tory party.

Scottish and Newcastle are hotel operators in a big way, with 96 hotels, 24 of which are the luxury four-star Thistle type - and by 1973 they will have seven more, all built with the help of public grants.

Financial observers have described S & N Breweries as the 'Stock

Market's darling'. In the last three years profits have grown from £12 million a year to £17 million. One report estimates that this year's profits will be 10% up at £19 million - not an obvious case for government and corporation aid.

No doubt the Atlantic Tower will prove to be a profitable outlet for S & N's booze (including McEwans, William Youngers, Newcastle Ales and Harp Lager).

Brewers

Hotels are big business because they provide an outlet for the big brewer's products - and half of all money spent on hotels and catering goes to buy alcoholic drinks. This was the reason for the £150 million takeover bid by Allied Breweries for the Trust House Forte group which failed in January. Trust Houses have just opened their 157 bedroom St George's Hotel in a sickening blaze of publicity.

Trust Houses cater for the high class end of the market, with 200 luxury hotels (one they are building with government help near Heathrow

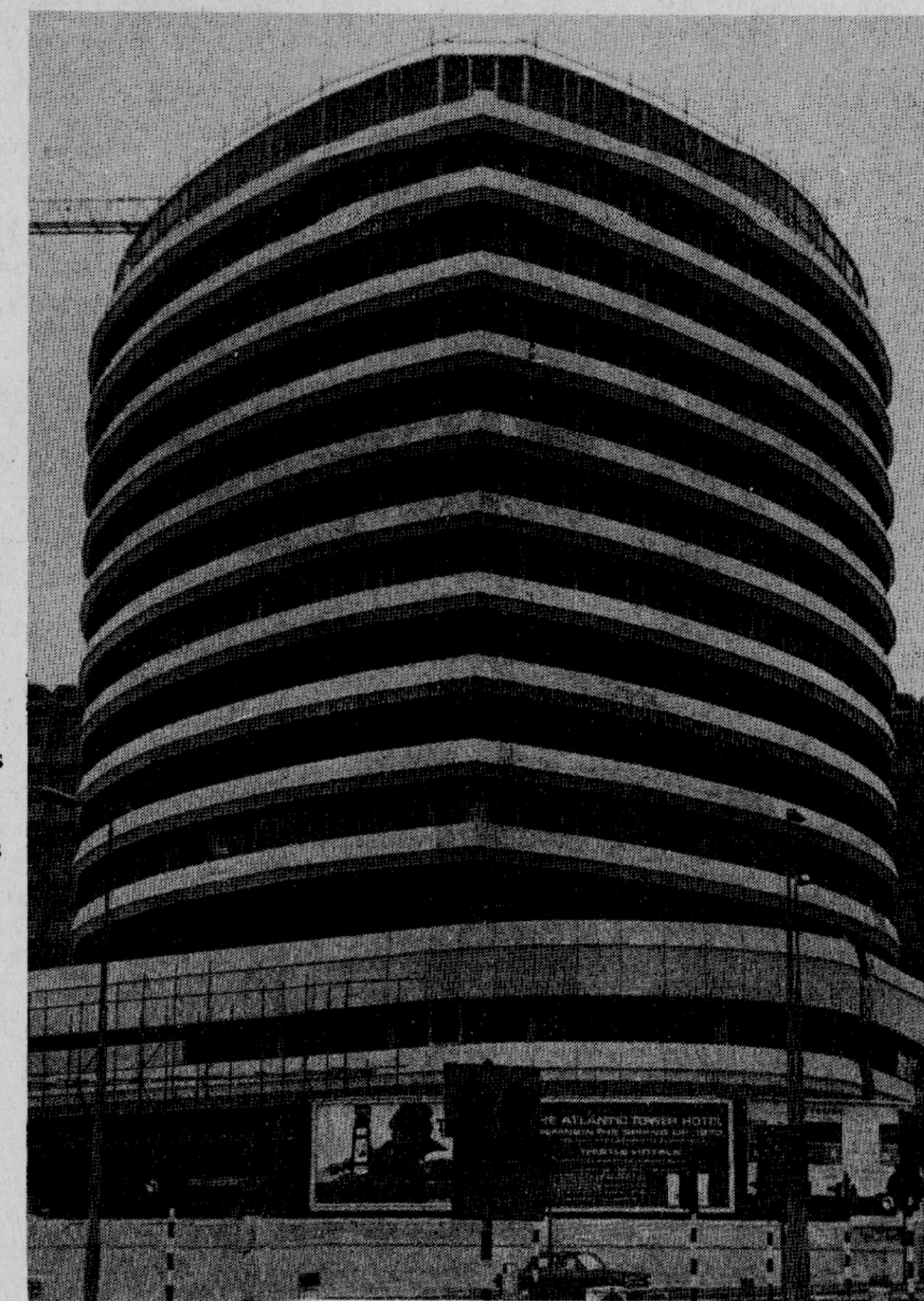
Airport will have an amazing 3,000 bedrooms). Profits for this year are estimated at between £11 million and £15 million.

While their new hotel in St John's Precinct was starting to recruit servants and chefs, Allied Breweries were publishing embarrassing adverts reassuring Trust House workers that life would be rosy when they took over. Meanwhile they were quietly laying off staff from their Tetley Walker subsidiary offices in Liverpool just before announcing a record £41 million profit.

Buying

While Allied were bidding, some observers believed that Grand Metropolitan Hotels were buying up Trust House shares to prevent the Allied bid. Grand Metropolitan is run by Mr Maxwell Joseph, a director of Cunard, and includes a chain of 900 betting shops and bingo halls, Express Dairies, Ski Yogurt, Eden Vale products, Berni Inns, Chef and Brewer Inns, Mecca Trumans Beers, Robert Fraser merchant bank and Empire caterers, who operate the hideous Tower restaurant in St John's precinct.

The corporation's publicity machine freely advertises the Tower restaurant as a feature of Liverpool. This in turn helps Grand Metropolitan's profits, which at the last count were £20.4 million. Joseph has a personal shareholding in the firm valued at £8½ million - another obvious case for public assistance.



Meanwhile, Centre Hotels are busily building behind Lime St. station to make sure of their hand-out next year. Complete with planning permission for 60,000 sq. ft. of speculation office space, this hotel will have 170 bedrooms.

On the surface Centre Hotels look like a small operator, with a profit forecast of just under £1 million. But they are taking full advantage of the incentive scheme with four other hotels under construction elsewhere. And further investigation reveals the massive commercial interests behind this government-assisted expansion.

Twenty four per cent of the company's share capital is owned by our old friend Mr Maxwell Joseph. Twenty nine per cent

is shared between six directors, one of whom is Mr Robert Potel who was chairman of the £450m property company, Star (GB) Holdings Ltd until last June when he resigned after a dispute. The remaining 34% was held by Star itself until February, when they sold out to the insurance company at a profit of £3m. But Star assured the stock market that this showed "no lack of confidence" in Centre Hotels. You bet! With generous public assistance the shareholders must be rubbing their hands.

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NEED A PLACE TO STAY?

ST GEORGE'S HOTEL
157 bedrooms, each with a private bathroom, telephone, radio and television - international cuisine, £6.25 per night for a single room. £8.25 for a double.

- without breakfast!
CENTRE HOTEL
170 bedrooms - with radio and telephone and optional TV. £4.25 per night single.

HOLIDAY INN
291 bedrooms - fully air-conditioned, with private bathrooms, radio, telephone and television - heated swimming pool. £8 per night.

ATLANTIC TOWER HOTEL
226 bedrooms, with all the extras ("We have gone all out for sheer luxury and top-class quality") and additional radio and telephone in the bathrooms if required - cocktail bar, cabaret, coffee shop, a la carte restaurant, women's hairdressing salon. £7 per night.



St George's Hotel

WANT A HOTEL JOB?

One excuse used to justify these hotels is that they will increase employment. But what kind of employment is it?

Hotel workers are the lowest paid workers in Britain - the average weekly earnings of full time male staff are £18.90 and women earn £11.90 per week on average. The rate for waiters is £10.57½ per week, and for wait-

resses £9.15. Because many of the hotel operators refuse to recognise a Union the workers are badly organised and they have to rely on the quality of their "service" to earn a decent wage through tips - while the hoteliers rake in vast profits. The extent to which the hotel operators actively discriminate against women is matched only by the brewers.

City aids the speculators

When the new hotels are completed Liverpool will have nearly 900 more luxury bedrooms than it had before. The new hotels are purely speculative - they do not cater for any need. Holiday Inns admitted this in 1970 when their European development executive said: "We don't use market research. We go into a city of over 100,000 population and we build. If we waited for market research we wouldn't be as big as we are today."

However, many people must be wondering who will be found to fill all the new beds.

Liverpool Corporation has been trying very hard to persuade the hotel speculators they have nothing to worry about. Here are some examples of its amazing generosity: ● Its Public Relations Officer is secretary to the "Liverpool Tourist and Conference Association," formed April last year under pressure from the big hotel interests to promote the image of Liverpool as a tourist and conference centre. ● Liverpool's Town Clerk and City Treasurer obligingly give their services to the North-West Tourist

Association, which is accommodated in the Municipal Building. ● The Corporation's work on behalf of the big hotel operators was further revealed when its "1971 Industrial Mission to America" was briefed by the British Tourist Authority in New York on the "need to promote Speke airport in conjunction with the four new hotels." ● In April this year the Corporation's public relations officer announced a £20-per-weekend scheme to attract refugees from bomb-torn Ireland. He admitted "We have to do something to help fill the new hotels and this is a start."

● In addition to the cool quarter million that Holiday Inns will get from the government, Liverpool's Town Clerk, Stan Holmes revealed in his report of "Strategies and Priorities" last August that the City Council will actually pay out £9,000 over the next five years on a walkway in the hotel building. ● The Corporation has also committed itself to spending £5,000 over the next five years on the 226-bedroom Atlantic Tower Hotel in Chapel St

to give easy access to its exclusive restaurants and £7-a-night bedrooms. ● The Corporation is committed to spending £34,000 on a public car park which will conveniently serve the Centre Hotel. ● What's more, the Corporation has allowed Centre Hotels to include 60,000 sq ft of speculation office space in their building, even though the city centre plan does not recognise this as an office development area and Concourse House stands almost empty only a few yards away.

While the Corporation strains itself to find customers and create demand for luxury hotels its own reports admit the real need is for cheap accommodation. The 1971 City Centre Plan Review laments that over half the present 2,200 bed spaces for those requiring 'sheltered' hostel accommodation will disappear by 1980, at a time when demand for such beds is growing.

Already the Corporation is demolishing 15 or so cheap, small hotels in Mount Pleasant (to make way for yet another multi-storey

car park). Conveniently this will reduce the competition for the big hotel operators - and increase the cost of a night's stay in the city centre.

This is all part of a deliberate policy to attract the rich to Liverpool's city centre and to increase the number of 'clean' service workers. Liverpool's ex-planning consultant, Graeme Shankland, set the tone to this policy in 1964 when he wrote: "Foreign visitors do not yet see Liverpool as one of Britain's main tourist attractions. The next ten years can change this."

Those who live with slums and deteriorating social services may be forgiven for treating such comments as a sick joke. It will merely confirm their suspicion that Liverpool is being planned for the benefit of those who are just passing through.

STORY:
Rodney Lunt
PICTURES:
Ron Vaughan

'ARREST-HAPPY'

"You might find one or two policemen who are reasonable but there are not very many. Ian Smith would be proud of this lot."

These are the words of Mrs Marie Frank, of Alt Street, whose son Emmanuel has just been charged with using threatening behaviour liable to cause a breach of the peace.

Emmanuel has never been in trouble with the police, is studying at a catering college in Liverpool and is supposed to have called two policemen.... while he was on his own... "fascist pigs".

A few days after this he was stopped while walking down a street in Liverpool 8 and told

by the police that they would pick up anyone if any windows were broken in Granby Street.

Said Mrs Frank: "The police will never be able to make peace with the kids in this area because they never leave them alone. They are arrest-happy. This situation cannot be allowed to go on."

"Every time a woman goes to Granby Street she is followed by cars. The police don't bother them. They are arresting the wrong people. Whenever I go to visit a friend in Grove Street, I am followed by four or five cars. When one stops, someone else takes over. The police see these cars but they just turn a blind eye."

Fisher-Bendix

Dear sir and brother, In reply to your article in Liverpool Free Press, April 1972 under the heading: "Will King succeed where Thorn failed?"

As the convener and chairman of the Joint Shop Stewards Committee, I would like to make one or two points with regard to this article. I want to make it quite plain from the start, that we as shop stewards have no intention of defending Mr King, or indeed, defending Sir Jules Thorn. It is our considered opinion, that in the society we live in today, "the capitalist society" we got possibly the best deal that we could get from a very serious situation.

JUST AS WELL

Clohurst, as a subsidiary of International Property Developments, is indeed a new venture, but the negotiating committee feel that we are just as well dealing with the unknown quantity, in work with some security, rather than dealing with the likes of Thorn Industries, who are only hell bent on closing this Fisher-Bendix establishment.

We could go on fighting, but there

would come a time when somebody would come in and compromise for us. So rather than have this situation, we felt that we were advanced enough to draw up an agreement with Mr King and IPD.

You go on to say in your article that "the transfer fee resembles curiously enough the same amount of money that would be paid in redundancy payments." I want to point out here and now that as regards any entitlements for the future irrespective of the policy of no redundancy, that there is still an obligation on behalf of Thorn, and indeed of IPD, for future payments under the Act.

It also states that we can no longer use the blacking weapon effectively to fight IPD as we did to fight Thorn. Unfortunately it must be said that the blacking weapon is a bone of contention throughout the land anyway, and you know as well as we do that the blacking weapon has to be fought for.

The committee at Fisher-Bendix feel that you have not printed the proper wording with regard to the legally binding or NON-legally binding agreement. This is a non-legally binding agreement. It is grossly unfair to state that we have a 'strike', no resistance to reorganisation clause. To put it in its proper perspective, what the stewards have in fact agreed to is that we have a transitional period of six months in which there would be no resistance to reorganisation. There would be, as far as possible, no restrictive practices or strike used on the premises, but always reminding the company that in the event of a major issue, we would reserve the right to withdraw our labour or to take whatever other action was necessary.

NO LESS

We have got for our part, in return, a complete status-quo with regards wages and conditions, where people irrespective of whether they were welding radiators or brushing the floor, during this transitional period would be on no less wages than they would have been on their normal job. It is also a fact that we have negotiated with this company the continuity of our service - a most important feature when it comes to negotiating fringe benefits like pensions and sick schemes.

It is also a fact that during the transitional period we will be negotiating a wage deal and hours and holidays in line

SEND YOUR LETTERS TO:
LIVERPOOL FREE PRESS,
24 WAPPING, LIVERPOOL 1.

with the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions' instructions. The people have found a new spirit. This factory will go from strength to strength, and rather than having a closure threat around our necks, we will in fact be witnessing the recruitment of labour shortly, I believe in the early autumn or beyond Christmas 1972. With regards the footnotes: "Workers in Kirkby would do well to heed the same advice and stay on their guard until the board can put some solid proposals on the shop floor and in their pockets." I would remind you that we never got in this strong position by being lackadaisical or apathetic to anything that's going on. It is our considered opinion that we are always vigilant and on our guard, ready to do battle with anyone, anytime if the right guarantees do not come forward, but we are confident that we are now in a position of strength and security for the future years.

Yours fraternally
JACK SPRIGGS
(AUEW Convener and Chairman of Committee)
Fisher-Bendix, Kirkby.