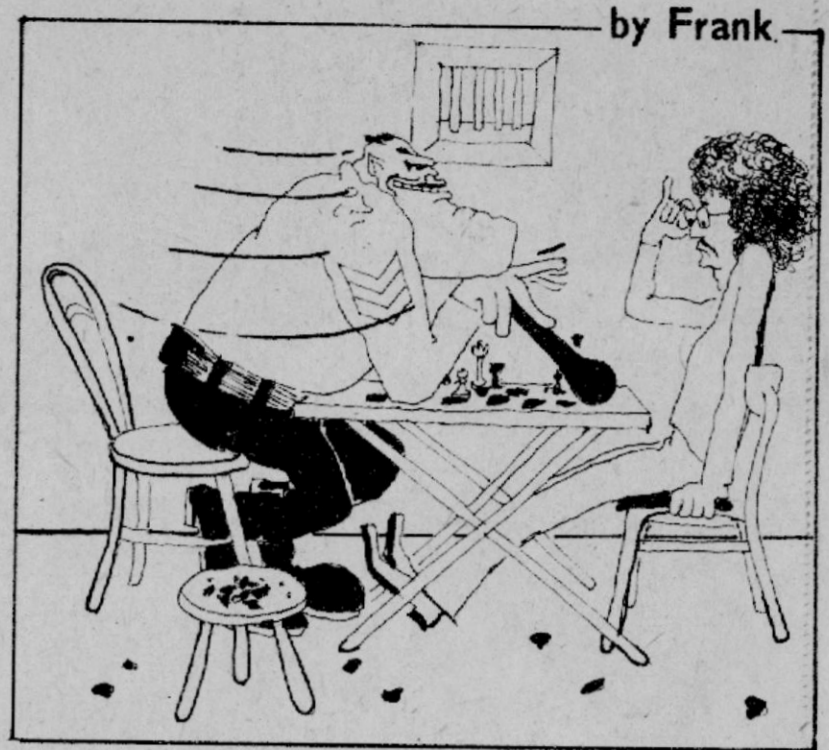
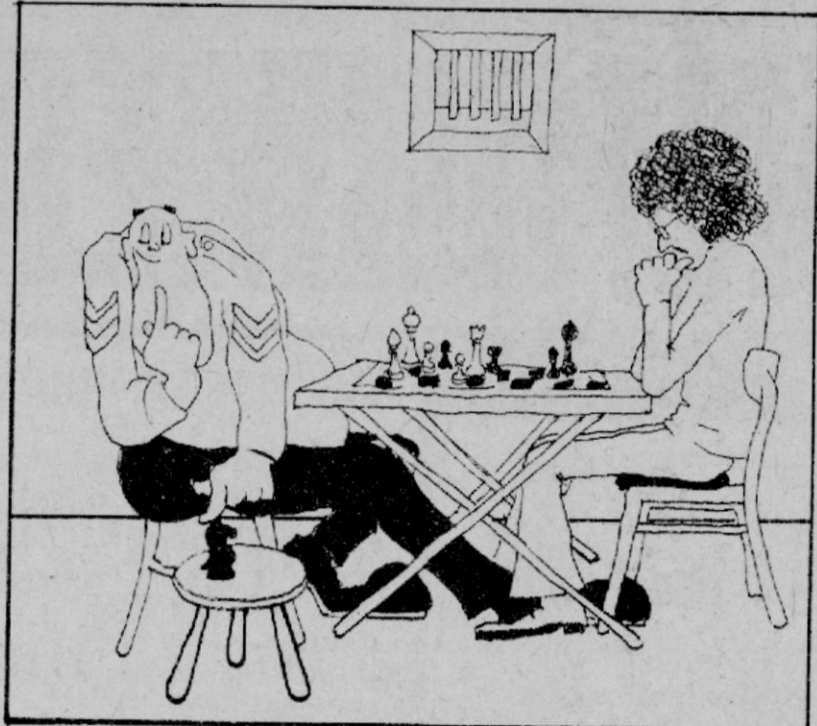
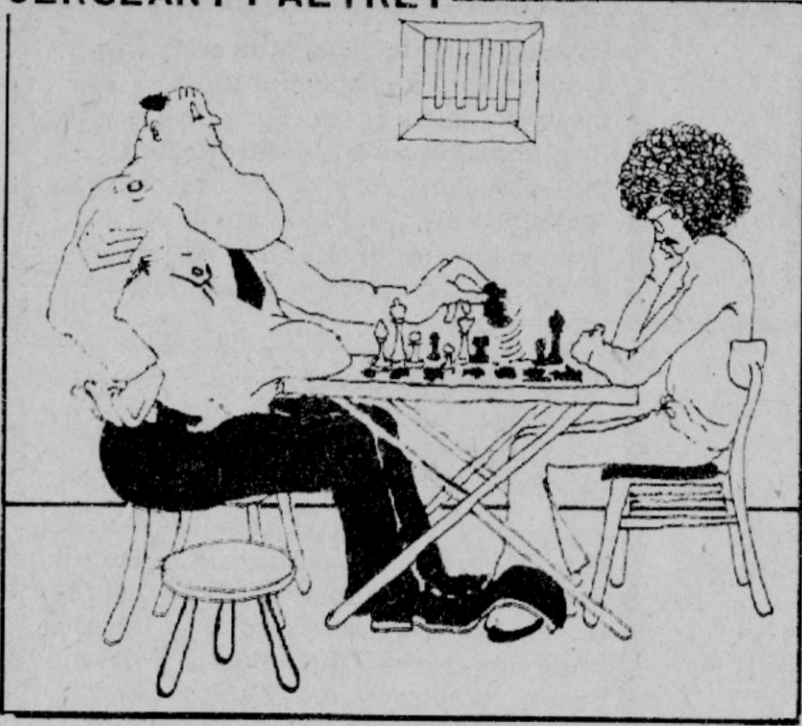


SERGEANT PALTREY



by Frank

'Your move, Spassky'

# 5000 dockers get new boss?

FIVE THOUSAND Liverpool dockers may soon have a new boss — depending on the outcome of secret takeover talks between the Mersey Docks and Harbour Company and three of the port's major stevedoring firms.

Ocean Port Services, Port of Liverpool Stevedoring, A E Smith Smith Coggins are the three firms negotiating a merger with the dock company's cargo-handling division.

When the merger goes through — and a definite announcement is expected within the next month — a total of 7,500 dockers would be employed by the port authority.

## Redundancies

Earlier this year all three stevedoring firms told the local dock labour board that they wanted to lay off dockers into the unattached pool before May 31: OPS said 158 had to go, Port of Liverpool 85, and Smith Coggins 78.

Those redundancies were successfully resisted by the dockers, but OPS have since said that more than 500 men must go into the pool by the end of the year.

About two years ago takeover talks between the dock company and Smith Coggins fell through. Last year attempts to arrange a merger with Liverpool Maritime Terminals and Ocean Port Services were also abandoned.

West Coast and Liverpool Maritime Terminals will be the only major firms unaffected by any takeover. Together they employ about 1,400 dockers.

Furness Withy shipping line own Port of Liverpool Stevedoring, and part-owned OPS, along with Ocean Steamship.

The port employers and ship-

owners have made plain their opposition to the dock labour scheme. They resent the participation of the dockers, and even more resent having to pay the levy that finances the scheme.

Six Hull stevedoring companies have closed in nine months, and London's Southern Stevedores closed down a month ago.

Peyton, the Transport Minister, is faced with an angry reaction from the dockers to any more redundancies. For that reason he favours one employer in each port. That employer — the port authority — will then keep the peace with the dockers and let the shipowners off the hook.

All the big shipowners have growing interests in the Containerbase Federation and the large container consortiums, all of which employ non-registered labour. As their employment of labour away from the docks increases, so the shipping companies are happier to relinquish their interests in stevedoring on the Liverpool waterfront.

# For resisting arrest— 14 stitches

picture by Ron Vaughan



STEPHEN KENNY is twelve years old and small for his age. When a Liverpool police sergeant arrested him he suffered three broken teeth and a gashed mouth.

The incident happened when Stephen was with a group of youngsters who live in the Brownlow Hill neighbourhood. They had climbed on top of a furniture van when police spotted them.

Stephen ran off down Seymour Street, and was chased by a sergeant who flung his night-stick at him.

The stick hit Stephen in the mouth, causing a wound that needed fourteen stitches.

Stephen's friend ran and told Mrs Mary Kenny (Stephen's mother) who looks after her eight children alone. With a neighbour, Mrs Nellie Sullivan, she set off for the station and met an ambulance on its way to pick up Stephen.

Stephen told his mother who had wounded him. And the sergeant admitted to Mrs Kenny and Mrs Sulli-

Stephen Kenny

van that he had done it: "Yes, I did it. I'll explain in a minute. My duty is to stop people resisting arrest."

Mrs Kenny told the Free Press: "That sergeant wasn't a bit sorry and never apologised."

According to Mrs Kenny, Stephen has since been charged with stealing a heavy typewriter, two brushes, a pen and a radio on the night he was injured by the police.

Stephen denies stealing anything.

**A LITTLE-KNOWN organisation designed to keep the pockets of property owners well-lined is on the look out for new members.**

It's the National Association of Property Owners, which already claims around 50,000 members. Owner-occupiers pay £3 a year to join, 'small' property companies (owning less than £1m) pay £30, while the large ones pay an extra £25 for each million they own.

The local representative will be only too pleased to pay you a visit — he gets 100% commission on subscriptions of less than £16, and 50% on all others.

Mischievous-minded Free Press readers may be tempted to see how this incentive scheme works by inviting the representative round to discuss membership.

When he calls, ask him to tell you how the association "led the campaign to reduce rent control which resulted in the 1957 Rent Act."

But first, write to Mr David Cameron, OBE (Director, NAPO) 14-16 Bressenden Place, London SW1 5DG. He'd love to hear from you.

# YET MORE OFFICES TO LET

WILLIAM SEFTON'S heartfelt appeal to Peter Walker to take action over the scandal of the empty Concourse House office block may have stirred Labour ranks.

But under both Labour and Conservative rule Liverpool City Council has refused to levy rates on empty offices. This has led to a potential loss of £150,000 a year, since councils are allowed to charge up to 50% of normal rates.

Now, instead of punishing property speculators for wasting resources, Sefton has demanded that a Tory government should obligingly supply steady tenants by filling the space with civil servants.

It was a Labour council under Sefton which gave planning permission for Concourse House in 1966. What's more, they accepted the advice of the planning consultant, Shankland, to actually increase the size of the office space from four to fifteen storeys and so "transform the heart of Liverpool

into one of Britain's most modern cities."

Again it was Sefton who gave the go-ahead for Liverpool's monopoly newspaper, the Liverpool Daily Post and Echo, to build 80,000 sq ft of luxury speculative office space at Old Hall Street. The British Land Company, who bought this block, are desperately worried about finding tenants, since 10,000 sq ft of the prestigious Silkhouse Court has remained unlet since it was built four years ago.

## Empty offices

Yet in spite of all this empty office space Sefton has given the go-ahead to the £17m Civic Centre which will be nothing more than a

colossal office block for Liverpool Corporation.

The Corpy admit that they occupy 40-odd office buildings in the city, and if the Civic Centre is built all these offices will be left empty — not to mention the corporation's own £2½m development at Canning Place, which houses two of its biggest departments.

It's no wonder there are desperate behind-the-scenes moves to persuade the government to flood Liverpool with civil servants from London. Yet only last month the city's top planner argued in the Financial Times that the city needed more office development and argued for financial incentives for property developers.

# 70 men laid off

Although there has been a partial return to work by electricians on strike at the Inland Revenue Office building site in Bootle, there is still no sign of a quick settlement of the 16 month dispute.

Meanwhile, the threatened redundancies among McAlpine's building workers on the site were carried out in July. Seventy men lost their jobs, despite last-minute efforts to prevent this.

Building stewards gave a tour of the site — attended by Simon Mahon, MP for Bootle, the leaders of Liver-

pool and Bootle councils and Simon Fraser of Liverpool Trades Council — to support their argument that there was still plenty of work to do without the electricians.

Two men employed by Lee, Beesley have gone back on three agreed conditions: Status-quo during negotiations, no victimisation, and negotiations for 25p an hour above the rate fixed by the Joint Industry Board.

The other electricians, all employed by Scotts, have said they will go back on the same basis if the Beesley men succeed in their negotiations.

## Bubbly end

TO SAVE MONEY Liverpool University are closing down Rankin Hall, their residential hostel in Ullet Road. The closure is to be celebrated by a 'champagne supper' for 250 guests.



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