



NATSOPA

National Society of
Operative Printers
Graphical and
Media Personnel

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General Secretary
Owen O'Brien

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Also

Rt. Hon. Mrs. Margaret Thatcher, MP,
Prime Minister,
10 Downing Street,
LONDON, SW1

Dear Mrs. Thatcher,

Bowaters, Ellesmere Port

I attach copy of a letter which we have sent to Sir Keith Joseph from which you will see our deep concern at the possibility that the national press of this country will be totally dependent on foreign imports of newsprint.

It would be a catastrophic situation if at any time this supply was cut and there would no indigenous supply to fill the gap.

Obviously we are not only concerned with the effect this would have on the democratic processes of this country, but the vast unemployment problem it could well create.

Yours sincerely,

Owen O'Brien

Owen O'Brien, *PPGMS.*
General Secretary

Dictated by Mr. O'Brien but
signed in his absence.

Rt. Hon. Sir Keith Joseph, MP,
Secretary of State,
Department of Industry,
Ashdown House,
123 Victoria Street,
LONDON, SW1E 6RB

J A Moakes

Dear Sir Keith,

Bowaters, Ellesmere Port

Our Executive Council at their meeting earlier this week considered letters that we had received from members concerning the threatened closure of the above plant.

Our Executive share our members concern. Not only would the closure increase the number of unemployed workers in this country - and you will appreciate that at Bowaters the workers are members of our sister union SOGAT, with whom we have a particular affinity - but the loss of newsprint production in this country places the printing industry in this country at increased risk.

Foreign paper producers, primarily of course Scandinavia and Canada, already have the advantage of home produced raw materials, whereas the British industry has to import wood pulp. In addition, because of subsidies, they are less affected than the British industry by the high costs of, for example, fuel.

Once the subsidised imports from abroad have destroyed the British papermaking industry, the foreign producers will have the British printing industry in a pincer grip and this could result in even more printing work going abroad - to the further detriment of our members and the British labour force generally. Already the cheaper cost of paper abroad is increasing the amount of printing that is leaving this country.

We would urge the Government to subsidise the Bowater plant at Ellesmere Port, to enable it to continue in production. Failure to do so will aggravate the already appalling unemployment situation in the Merseyside area as well as placing the printing industry in further jeopardy.

Yours sincerely,

Owen O'Brien,
General Secretary

26th September, 1980

1 October, 1980

I am writing on the Prime Minister's behalf to acknowledge your letter of 30 September. I will, of course, place this before her in advance of her meeting with the delegation from the British Paper and Board Industry on Friday.

T. P. LANKESTER

Owen O'Brien, Esq

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1 October, 1980

I enclose a copy of a letter which we have received from the General Secretary of NATSOPA. I don't see any need for the Prime Minister to reply to this, but perhaps Sir Keith in his reply to the letter of 26 September could refer to the fact that they had also written to the Prime Minister.

P. E. LANKESTER

P E Mason, Esq

(Lord Trenchard's Private Secretary,
Dept of Industry)

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