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1. MR ADDISON
2. PRIME MINISTER

FOOTBALL TRUST

Today I had lunch with Richard Faulkner, Secretary of the Football Trust, and Grattan Endicott of Littlewoods Pools. It produced a very worthwhile discussion on the problem of hooliganism in advance of your meeting with Lord Aberdare, Chairman of the Trust. Your meeting with Lord Aberdare will fortuitously precede a meeting of the Trust's Council.

First, Messrs Faulkner and Endicott said that your intervention in this issue had "disturbed" the complacency of clubs. It was a most important signal. But they could not be sure that they had yet been shaken out of their complacency. Much depended on the follow-up to your meeting with the Football Association and the Football League. They were, however, convinced that the pressure needed to be maintained if things were to improve next season.

They added that, given the game's history, there would undoubtedly be further incidents next season. The important point was to minimise them and gradually - the quicker the better - to recover the game for the ordinary, decent and peaceful supporter.

They were, however, somewhat resistant to the idea of making grounds safe for families. Soccer had never been a sport for families, as such; what we needed to do was to make it safe for fathers to take their sons to matches. It was inconceivable to them that so-called "family" stands - ie for fathers and sons - should be fenced.

They did, however, agree that the priorities were to keep spectators off the pitch; to enact similar legislation to that in Scotland on alcohol, making sure that this covered hire vans as well as trains and motor coaches; to ensure that football trains were "dry" and properly policed by the club (supported by British Transport Police); and to ensure that club managements took a tough line against hooliganism at the beginning of the 1985-86 season.

/I said that

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I said that the Luton v. Millwall had been a watershed, not necessarily because it was the worst incident but because - perhaps because of television - it had engendered the thought, after the miners' strike, that this kind of behaviour simply could not be allowed to go on.

You were acutely aware of the need for any solution not to put the poorer clubs out of business and that any membership card system should not prevent the ordinary, decent but casual fan from going to a match anywhere in the country.

But you did expect action - and there could be no prevarication. It was a political imperative that next season behaviour at football matches should improve - and be seen and felt to improve. You meant business and that should be communicated to the sport.

By way of response, Messrs Faulkner and Endicott emphasised their concern to improve behaviour in the sport. They revealed (at my prompting) their reservations about:

i. boards of directors - not generally very good, or politically sensitive or bright;

ii. football managers - they agreed with my contention that managers would be better occupied looking after the players instead of giving press conferences after a match where all sorts of trivia were given currency and provocative statements made. (I said that if I were a football chairman I would ban my managers from giving post-match press conferences since the objective of sports journalism must be primarily to report on the game.)

iii. media - they said they were generally a poor lot; failed in other areas of journalism, with notable exceptions; merely gossip columnists who had no idea how to handle your intervention in football hooliganism (and had all too readily handed it over to political correspondents).

NB: I have an extremely poor view of football writers but the attitude of Messrs Faulkner and Endicott struck me.

/Against this

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Against this background, Messrs Faulkner and Endicott sought to make the following points:

- the Football Grounds Improvement Trust takes 54% of the income from pools (of which Littlewoods supplies 75%)
- this Trust is independent (though under the umbrella of) the Football Trust which benefited from 46% of the Trust's income. This money was devoted in part to the grass roots of soccer - eg inner city grounds and changing rooms and community projects associated with soccer. The Government must be careful not to cast doubt on the availability of funds for these sporting/community projects by its concentration on making grounds safer.

Their priorities, in the light of your intervention would be:

- perimeter fencing on designated grounds;
- video recording (they apparently have an excellent case study of the value of cameras in Yorkshire grounds); they are prepared to fund the provision of these cameras on designated grounds to a value of £25,000 per club.

They added that they already met the cost of policing inside grounds. BUT they had the greatest reservations about identity cards for the Football League on grounds of present practicability.

I believe that this was the main point they wished to get over to me. They said that the technology undoubtedly exists, but they doubted the capability of the sport, even with their help, of introducing it quickly.

Instead they would like to see a limited experiment, by way of the resurrection of the FA Travel Club for England internationals and Football League club matches abroad, - ie anyone wishing to travel to

/see England

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see England or an English club play abroad would have to have an FA membership card (which could be withdrawn) and would have to travel by approved (and policed) transport. (This would of course require host clubs elsewhere in the world to refuse to sell tickets to English fans on the day. This meant that the problem would not be cracked unless we could win the support of overseas football authorities).

I asked about Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales. They said England was the problem and we should concentrate upon it. Northern Ireland and Wales presented no problem on the international circuit and, while Scotland had unjustifiably persuaded the UK that it was blameless, the real problem existed in England.

I then raised a number of presentational/public relations points. What mattered, I argued, was that clubs should set the right tone - and absolutely reject hooligans as fans.

They agreed to support the following ideas if approved by you:

- Agree that under the chairmanship of the Director of Information, Department of the Environment; Brian Mower, Director of Information Home Office; and I should devise a presentational campaign (for your approval) for introduction from the first matches of the next season in August? (We would of course consult the Football Trust, Football Association and Football League.)
- Agree that the essential elements of such a campaign should be:
  - designation of 1985-86 as Stop the Hooligan Season
  - persuade the football pool companies to carry the message - eg from the new chairman of the Sports Council - in all their publicity (we are knocking at an open door)

/- agree we persuade

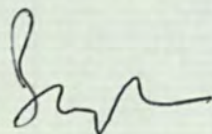
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5.

- Agree we persuade each club to carry a similar message in their first programmes - and updated for subsequent issues
- Agree we persuade the Chairmen of each Football League club - regardless of Division - to broadcast at the beginning of the season (and repeated as updated as necessary) over the club tannoy a determination to stamp out hooliganism and to support the police
- Agree we organise the television sports broadcasters to put over this message on every pre-season (and subsequent) programmes
- Agree we arrange for a big promotional effort by goalkeepers (who are in the front line of missiles) to persuade the fans that enthusiasm, enjoyment, exuberance is one thing; violence is entirely another and will not be tolerated.

Much of this will depend on the response, expected shortly, of the Football Association and Football League. But the Football Trust have the money and I believe they have considerable leverage on the FA and FL.

This minute should be considered before you see Lord Aberdare.



BERNARD INGHAM  
7 May 1985

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