

# Workers' fight

3p

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## A BLOT ON US ALL

# YOU CAN'T EAT FIGURES

## SAY 20,000 SCOTTISH WORKERS

**THE STRIKE** of 20,000 Scottish workers for pay claims to meet the massive rise in prices is a major challenge to the 'Social Contract'.

As sewage workers, lorry drivers, busmen and engineers battle it out with the employers in Scotland, there are signs of this revolt spreading elsewhere. Local government workers are preparing for their fight for a national minimum wage, and engineers in many factories are trying to get local settlements before the national pay talks.

### Increase

In an attempt to deflect some of this movement against high prices, the bosses' press has tried to wage a campaign, using the latest Government statistics, to show that workers are getting more than their 'fair share' of the 'national cake', and that every pay increase will make inflation worse and throw workers out of jobs.

The figures are that the 'basic weekly rates' have risen by 20.7% over 12 months, compared to 17.1% increase in the Retail Price Index.

Profits, in this argument, are supposed to be untouched. Wage increases are supposed to be passed directly on to prices as a natural, rightful process. Above all nothing must stop profits being maintained and increased! But even on its own, capitalist, terms, the argument falls down.

One journalist, writing in the 'Guardian', pointed out that the figure of 20% wage increases "suggests that real earnings (after allowing for inflation and tax and other deductions) may have kept pace with prices for the first time for some months". (22.10.74)

For the last four years, policies of wage freeze and wage restraint, Phases I, II, and III, have resulted in a fall in working class living standards. One of the main factors in pushing the figure for wage increases up to 20% is the fact that the Tory threshold trick has 'turned' on the bosses. It could give up to £4.40 per week rise to millions of workers by the time the

agreements run out in November.

It is for this reason that the Labour government, the TUC and the CBI are in complete agreement on the scrapping of threshold clauses.

But even the threshold clauses have been useful only in a limited way. The same article from the 'Guardian' quoted above points out that "earnings have to rise at least 20% faster than prices over the same period simply to maintain living standards for most workers". A 30% increase in gross earnings will not give a 30% increase in take home pay, because on the higher earnings the rate of deductions will be higher. To get a 20% increase in take home pay, and keep pace with 20% price rises, needs an increase of 25 to 30% in gross earnings.

The most recent pay settlements are some way behind that figure. Fords are offering an average of 18% with strings to last two years — and voting so far has gone heavily in favour of this offer. The newspaper printworkers, other than the NGA, have accepted an increase of 5 to 11% on their basic. The latest offer from Vauxhalls is for £5.20 — and that deal has productivity strings.

### Inflation

In the coming period, the prospects are for prices speeding up, not slowing down. The rate of inflation will receive a big boost from the Labour Government's plans to assist the bosses out of their crisis. The proposals for tax concessions, for cash handouts, and for the lifting of price controls, will increase the rate of inflation by about 5 or 6%, on top of the rise in the cost of living expected when the rent controls are lifted in early January 1975.

Most industries already have price rises in the pipeline, two major ones being in gas and electricity. If Labour abandons food subsidies, that again will impose an extra pressure on working class budgets.



"BREAK the British connection and you break Long Kesh", a young Republican internee wrote a couple of weeks ago. But the prisoners of war who inhabit Britain's biggest concentration camp couldn't wait for a slow historical process to work itself out, albeit helped by the armed struggle of the Provisional IRA. And last week, in a full scale uprising, they burned the place from end to end.

### 2 Died

They had already gone the full way in their struggle to improve their conditions. Though the only real improvement is freedom to leave the hell hole of Long Kesh, in which two men have already died, the internees had patiently struggled for better food, clean bed-linen, more space to move in, and visiting conditions free from degrading body searches (they and their relatives being stripped naked by leering British soldiers) and 5 hour waits in the rain and mud by wives, mothers and children. But when they refused the camp food, instead of looking into their

request for a tiny reform, the British authorities replied by cutting off all food parcels and closing the 'tuck shop', thus forcing the entire camp into a virtual hunger strike.

Last month, supporters in both the Republican and Orange areas of Belfast put up barricades and brought the city to a standstill. And when they threatened a general strike, the British finally promised to provide a bit more bed linen (some men have been getting changes of sheets at three month intervals) and to employ the British Army's vast technological know-how so that the semi-edible food at least arrived hot in the prisoners' cages.

### Maggots

They said nothing about the plague of maggots, the damp, the overcrowding. And they refused a democratically elected camp council. But the internees accepted their word, and went back to 'normal' to await the small improvements. They never came. And when the Army went in to settle an argument in their own peculiarly brutal way, the Republican

internees coolly carried out their long-standing threat to burn the place down.

We can only wonder at their quite remarkable courage. After all the hungry weeks, they knew they would face a virtual massacre; even an argument or mild protest normally brings a savage beating. Now they faced the lot.

### Scale

As the ambulances screamed out of Long Kesh, carrying scores of men seriously wounded by Britain's peacekeepers, republicans all over the North came out in a massive show of solidarity. And they too faced 'our boys'.

### Prison

The events of the past week are like a presentation in miniature of the last 6 years of struggle by the oppressed Catholic community in the north of Ireland: starting with appeals for reform that drew only a brutal and repressive response, and since then a heroic and desperate fight, against overwhelming odds, to break out of the prison-camp that Britain and its Orange proteges have made of the six northern counties of Ireland.

Magilligan Camp too) reduced to ashes, there could be no other purpose. People of all ages, especially teenage kids, were dragged in off the streets, and if a street was deserted, the troops went into people's houses and dragged them out. Then they were made to stand spreadeagled for hours and hours on end before eventually being released — to make way for a new batch.

Break the British connection, and you break THAT prison camp. BRITISH TROOPS OUT OF IRELAND — NOW!

THE House of Lords has now decided that you can be a racistist .... but you need a club licence first. An Englishman's home is his castle — and so, too, apparently, is his club. Even if it has three and a half million affiliated members!

The judgment was made in favour of the Preston Dockers' Labour Club. For those too blind to see racialism within our class, this will be an eye-opener. For most, it will be just one more disgraceful example of the widespread acceptance of racialism in the working class movement.

The case was in fact pursued by the officials of the Club and Institute Union, in the name of a pathetic and despicable apeing of the exclusiveness and snobbery of the boss class's 'gentlemen's clubs'. Already there are large doses of this: for example, the male chauvinism that lets working class women in on suffrage.

### Filthy

But the CIU's urge to play at gentry would get nowhere if the filthy instincts and ideas of the boss class were not so rife among the working class. Unfortunately they are.

Liberal journalists out to defend the Preston Dockers Labour Club members have been at pains to point out that they are not really hard core racistists (in fact some of their best friends are apparently black....) that they themselves would never have pursued the principle to the House of Lords and that they rather regret that it was.

But the fact remains that the club did bar a man because he was black, and for no other reason. If they say they only did it to keep their own club white but are not really racistist, they don't know the meaning of racism. It's just like racist workers in places like South Africa whose whole argument is that all they are trying to protect is their right to stay separate.

### Feeble

The Race Relations Act never could be relied on. We've said that plenty of time before. And we have urged workers to show up its feebleness by showing how much more effectively it is possible to protect black people's rights by working class action.

That it's been shown up in the way it was last week is a shameful blot on the working class and its movement. And in opening the way for a whole new wave of racialism in workers' clubs, makes the fight against racialism in the working class a bigger, and more urgent task.

The first thing, and the least, that workers can do to remove this blot is to urge and fight for their own clubs to come out publicly and repudiate this judgment, and declare that they themselves will not practise racial discrimination and will boycott those clubs which do.

If the members of Preston Dockers Labour Club really do feel bad about it all, then they are welcome to lead the way in this...

Demonstrate Sunday 1.45pm,  
Clerkenwell Green, EC1

Contd. on back page

## An Open Letter from WORKERS FIGHT

The Editorial Board of WORKERS FIGHT this week published an Open Letter for a Revolutionary Regroupment.

It is of course extremely common on the left to find people saying they are in favour of unity.

But the disunity of political organisations claiming to represent the interests of the working class cannot in general be overcome without dangerously ignoring the different trends they reflect within society.

Unity which does not take this into account is at the best an unprincipled patchwork; at worst, a recipe which simply says "biggest is best".

What then is the meaning of the Open Letter for a Revolutionary Regroupment? First, it makes clear that it is not just another general, broadcast appeal for unity, empty of practical content.

We do not believe that there is at present any possibility of uniting with any of the larger left groupings — the International Socialists, the International Marxist Group or the Workers Revolutionary Party. There are serious differences on almost every important political question, on the struggle in Ireland, the Common Market, how to fight inflation, how to use the call for a general strike, on attitudes towards the Labour Party ... above all on what a political party should do, and how.

These organisations are also increasingly bureaucratic (except in the case of the WRP, which couldn't get worse), making it impossible to accept a common discipline and still fight for changes.

Nevertheless there are at present within (and often recently ejected from) these organisations both individuals and groupings with whom a regroupment could be effected on a unified and principled basis. (Though certainly not just on the basis of a common hostility to those groups.)

### 12 POINTS

The Open Letter lays down 12 points which we believe form a necessary basis for unity, though these points are not of course comprehensive.

We hope that this letter will be endorsed by many of those individuals and groups we have referred to above. For it will then be possible urgently to initiate discussion with a view to full, principled and active unity. Such a regroupment could in turn bring towards it further individuals and groupings as they come to see the inadequacy and political poverty of the other existing organisations. The alternative is a further fragmentation, and the loss of many individuals to revolutionary politics. As one supporter of the Open Letter — Mike Covell of the Left Opposition tendency recently expelled from I.S. — has written: "I do not consider there to be any likelihood of our grouping remaining intact ... In signing the Open Letter ... I have attempted to give the necessary lead which can alone make the most of the Left Opposition."

The Open Letter has also been endorsed by Chris Marshall, formerly a leading member of the 'Left Opposition Tendency' of the IMG, who has urged the other LOT, comrades and sympathisers to enter into a discussion on regroupment with Workers Fight.

One important proviso in relation to regroupment is that it shouldn't mean an endless open-ended discussion for armchair soul-mates. It means right now formulating certain concrete steps toward common action. These too are spelled out in the Open Letter.

Copies of the Open Letter can be obtained from 98 Gifford Street, London N.1. There is no price to pay, but please send stamps.

Editorial Board W.F.

# Half the human race - HAUNTED BY THE SHADOW OF HOME

"The oppression of women at home is inseparably linked to their economic oppression. Put simply — as long as women have sole responsibility for the running of the home and childrearing, no amount of legislation in itself will enable them to take advantage of any equal opportunities which do exist in theory."

THE ABOVE statement, quoted from a recent press release of the Working Women's Charter Campaign (WWCC) really does pinpoint the central problem for working women. It is indeed impossible to understand and fight the super-exploitation of women at work — and the discrimination which keeps a large proportion in low-skilled, low status jobs and denies them promotion — without understanding how

women are oppressed socially and domestically.

It is an essential part of that oppression that it has been disguised and dressed up, and presented to women as part of a natural order of things; one, moreover, that any 'real' woman is supposed to welcome.

The burden of child rearing, housework and

personal service to a man affects women's employment in a vast number of ways. The psychology of the supportive role leads girls into jobs as nurses or secretaries, air hostesses or bus conductresses, where they slot into a team in which the more skilled and leading role is taken by a man, who is of course paid more.

They even model women's clothes designed by men!

Sex roles are learnt young. From the age of one and a half years, a girl begins to learn which activities are considered appropriate, and what she must and must not do if she is to be suitably 'feminine'. After a dozen or so years of conditioning with dolls and sewing sets, nurses'

outfits, domestic so-called science and 'True Romance' comics, how many girls will opt for an engineering apprenticeship when it comes to choosing?

Marriage is the goal, the important thing, the real career. Work will be temporary, part time, sporadic. So why take on a 6-year training?



## POVERTY'S O.K. — BUT THE POOR MUST GO...

Not since Enoch Powell's "rivers of blood" speech in 1968 have the words of a British politician aroused either so much attention or so much revulsion as Sir Keith Joseph's of October 18th.

What has drawn the greatest protest is Joseph's statement that "the balance of our population, our human stock, is threatened" and his solution "to extend birth control facilities to these classes of people (classes 4 and 5)".

In other words his solution to the problem of poverty (classes 4 and 5 of the Registrar General's census are the poorest and least skilled groups) is to stop the poor 'breeding'.

It is not even as if this suggestion comes from someone who is an ardent advocate of birth control in general. On the contrary, when Joseph was Minister for Social Services he opposed the lifting of prescription charges on the Pill.

### 'RE-MORALISATION'

Nor does he advocate contraception as a freely available method for all women to control their own bodies and lives. No. He wants it to reduce the number of a certain class of people, claiming it is necessary for the "re-moralisation" of society. For he puts at the door of the poor and the Left the blame for every conceivable — and imaginary — social ill. Lumped together, he refers to this as "degeneration".

This tycoon, who proclaims his horror at the disappearance of public schools, decrying it as "social engineering", does not bat an eyelid at advocating a near-Nazi genetic engineering.

And this man poses as the saviour of the moral nerve of "the nation". A nerve he's got! The only thing he is likely to save if he gets his way is a massive amount of money — the money that is currently spent on social services.

Like the U.S. opponents of public social services, he demands — in the name of family responsibility — that the family bear the entire burden of social cost: "Parents are being divested of their duty to provide for their family

economically, of their responsibility for education, health, upbringing, morality, advice and guidance, of saving for old age, for housing."

In other words, the state's contribution toward education, care for the old, for health and housing, will be cut drastically.

His speech is a witch's brew of every irrationality, prejudice and superstition. Every one bar the ones that are Powell's stock in trade: racism and Orange bigotry. It is almost as if they had divided up between them the field of middle class fears, with Powell playing the white man's with-doctor and Joseph the family protector.

### THE FAMILY

Time and again he returns to this theme of the family and its need to assume more responsibilities than at present. And he is quite explicit about its consequences: removing these "responsibilities" from families "you break down traditional morals, the framework of behaviour, concepts of right and wrong; it is easier to subvert the social framework..."

His emphasis on the family thus serves two purposes: to absorb social costs and to strengthen its role as a transmission belt for capitalist values and discipline.

(The Communist Party's paper, incidentally, also thinks the family is a great institution. Their response to Joseph is to reply that "It is Sir Keith's capitalism that destroys family life".)

What he doesn't say is that the family is also a unit inevitably providing for the oppression and stereotyping of women, and the near-complete wasting of their abilities and potential as human beings.

And Sir Keith has the cheek to pose as the champion of the exploited women!

From there he runs through a catalogue of an alleged modern moral Armageddon, compounding unexplained facts with pseudo-scientific fiction.

What is this witch's brew for? Both Powell and Joseph understand that the Tory Party's "natural constituency", the ruling class, is so small that any candidate for its leadership needs two qualifications. Firstly he needs to be able to put forward a policy which will create the best conditions for the ruling class to continue its exploitation. This is what Joseph attempted to do in his "3 million unemployed" speech shortly before the election.

### LEADERSHIP BID

And secondly he needs to be able to win elections — that is, unite behind the Tory Party a substantial part of the classes they will ruin and exploit. And this is what this speech was designed to do. Not necessarily right away: like Powell his leadership bid is a more long term project.

Joseph evidently estimates that, for his pose as moral saviour, he doesn't need to be a glad-handing, kiddy-kissing man-of-the-people. Like Powell, he prefers the stern philosopher king pose in which he does not imitate the average man — but articulates his terrors.

Born into immense wealth and privileges, no doubt that suits him better, too.

Perhaps the worst thing in all this, though, is the way in which Joseph sees no fault in this social system in which poverty is commonplace and in which a feeling of powerlessness so overwhelms the most downtrodden that it throws them into despair and desolation.

He would like to think of himself as a true representative of capitalism and its morality. His high birth and base ideas combine to make him just that.

## Prejudice

On top of the conditioning there are the difficulties — the lack of options and facilities at school, the downright refusal of admittance to many trades and jobs through sheer prejudice, and the practical problems of getting young kids taken care of.

And it all leads back to that well known "woman's place" — the home. The home is what restricts the part women play in the general culture of society. The home, that is,

## Women win after 17 weeks

VICTORY — after 17 weeks on strike — at Wingrove & Rogers, Liverpool. The women had been on strike for more pay, and they won it. Now they will begin to tackle the conditions they have to work in: "We used to have to put up umbrellas on a rainy day". It was the first ever strike at Wingrove and Rogers, and the women got their victory by going out and getting blacking organised around Merseyside, at the docks and the airport. When other workers heard about the marathon strike, help came for the picketing too.

But it was the women's determination to stick it out through the summer and into Autumn that must have finally convinced the management that they couldn't win this one.

B.W..



## CONTEM

IN THE recent case of the Public Prosecutor against Paul Foot and Socialist Worker for contempt of Court, a new precedent was set for possible muzzling of controversial courtroom evidence by the extension of the scope and powers of a judge's ruling.

Appropriately in setting such a precedent, the State was acting against a socialist

and women's place in it as decreed by capitalism.

Any woman would of course tell you that. But many think it only right and proper that thing should be so, and one reason for this is that they don't see clearly the mechanisms of this oppression: how the Home follows them and dogs their footsteps wherever they go and whatever they want to do, and even affects what they want to do; how it creates fears of "competing in a man's world"; how the fact that they are destined for the Home, and therefore not worth a lengthy training, makes them feel worthless; how it puts real problems and difficulties (a double burden or else sheer impracticability) in the way of a woman once she has children; and how it presents the employers with an excuse for discrimination and extra exploitation ("they need more time off when kids are sick", "why train them — they'll only drop out to marry" etc.).

## Circle

The enormous strength and staying power of this form of oppression is a result of its self-fulfilling, circular nature: illusions in the home, plus of course social and educational pressures, make many women quite genuinely less skilled and therefore less fitted for satisfying work, whilst capitalism's super-exploitation (unequal pay for the same work, grading into 'women's jobs' and discrimination in promotion) make it less rewarding financially; and the circle is completed as women retreat back into the home from a work situation even harsher and more alienating than it is for working men under capitalism.

Thus women are shunted back and forth, from the triviality, drudgery and isolation of housework to the most boring and repetitive work in shops, factories and offices.

## Handicap

Capitalism, having thus turned women's child-bearing biology into a crippling physical and mental handicap (by infusing it through any moment and every aspect of a woman's life) has proceeded to turn that handicap to its own advantage by using women as a reserve army of cheap labour.

Clearly, the struggle to

change this whole situation will have to take place on a number of fronts: we need to attack all the aspects of oppression and exploitation as they interact with each other. (Which doesn't of course mean running off in every direction at once.)

Two main areas can be defined. There are the struggles which are basically to deny the right and freedom of employers to use our difficulties for their advantage. And there are the demands to alleviate or eliminate the actual difficulties of women in this society.

## Charter

In the first area, it's a matter of saying to employers: if our being women is inconvenient to you, that's too bad. We demand rights as human beings. If our being mothers gets in the way of your profits, that's too bad. We demand to be treated according to our needs.

In the second area come demands for public childcare facilities, free contraception and abortion, an end to sex-

role brainwashing and equal access to training for all the jobs we choose to do.

The Working Women's Charter Campaign is particularly valuable in bringing into the 'trade union arena' (roughly described in the first area above) the demands relating to social and educational oppression (the 'second area') which have been previously fought for and developed in and around the women's liberation movement. Thus it combines demands about nurseries, maternity leave, abortion and contraception, equal pay, training and promotion, with involvement in the mass trade unions and a campaign to commit trade union bodies to struggles for these demands. It brings together demands about the position of women in the family, at work and in the labour movement.

The Charter was drawn up by the London Trades Council in March this year. It has already found support both within the women's movement and the labour movement at large. It has been adopted by many trades councils and trade union branches.

# A Charter for working women

WE PLEDGE ourselves to agitate and organise to achieve the following aims:

1. The rate for the job, regardless of sex, at rates negotiated by the trade unions, with a national minimum wage below which no wages should fall.

2. Equal opportunity for entry into occupations and in promotion regardless of sex and marital status.

3. Equal education and training for all occupations and compulsory day release for all 16 to 19 year olds in employment.

4. Working conditions to be, without deterioration of previous conditions, the same for women as for men.

5. The removal of all legal and bureaucratic impediments to equality, e.g. with regard to taxation, mortgages, pension schemes, passports, control over children, social security payments, hire purchase agreements.

6. Improved provision of

local authority day nurseries, free of charge, with extended hours to suit working mothers. Provision of nursery classes in day nurseries. More nursery schools.

7. 18 weeks maternity leave with full net pay before and after the birth of a live child; 7 weeks after birth if the child is stillborn. No dismissal during pregnancy or maternity leave. No loss of security, pension, or promotion prospects.

8. Family planning clinics supplying free contraceptives to be extended to cover every locality. Free abortion to be readily available.

9. Family allowance to be increased to £2.50 per head, including the first child.

10. To campaign amongst women to take an active part in the trade unions and in political life so that they may exercise influence commensurate with their numbers and to campaign among men trade unionists that they may work to achieve this aim.

Of course, this is only a beginning, still only a campaign (though a very necessary one) to enlist the labour movement in women's struggles. In fact it is only the beginning of such a campaign — it is still at the stage of resolutions being adopted: the commitment is still a verbal one. And then there will be the struggles themselves.

How far we are even from reliable or consistent trade union support is shown by the long drawn out fight of women at SEI, Heywood (Lancashire), where the AUEW has done nothing to discipline its male members who are scabbing on an elementary equal pay strike.

## Male

In seeking to pin down trade union bodies and commit them to fight for women's social, legal and economic rights, the Charter Campaign has done a good job so far, though the charter of demands is by no means complete and could be a lot more specific.

Where its programme of demands most urgently needs to be enlarged, however, is precisely where it addresses itself to the position of women in the trade unions, and their relationships with male trade unionists. For the problem is that the trade union movement itself is still dominated by men, most of them either complacent in relation to women's rights or downright hostile. For instance, many jobs are closed to women through trade union bans rather than those of employers.

## Vapid

The Charter's tenth point merely calls for a "campaign amongst women to take an active part in the trade unions..." This is really a bit vapid. It mentions nothing about women's rights within the trade union movement: the need, for instance, for women's contributions and benefits to be brought into line with men's; the need for women's caucuses to fight within the main body (rather than the present women's sections which so often segregate women and shunt them off onto the sidelines of the movement).

Women should also be allocated proportional representation on leading bodies of unions, and in official positions.

## Empty

Moreover (at least until the demand for free state run nurseries is met) creche facilities should be provided at trade union meetings, or they should be held in working hours.

Without these demands, the campaign for women to take an active part is simply an empty exhortation: one, in fact, which implicitly puts the blame on women for their 'lack of interest'.

The coming conference of the WWCC is a good opportunity for these points to be discussed and, hopefully, added to the Charter.

RACHEL LEVER  
FRAN BRODIE  
NAOMI WIMBOURNE

# Let your People go!

**10 RUSSIAN JEWS were week refused entry into Britain. This piece of news is significant in a number of ways.**

First, it shows the shameless hypocrisy of politicians like Harold Wilson, who have been unctious in their support of the Zionist "Let my people go" campaign. They want Jews to emigrate from Russia, provided that they go ... only to Israel!

The Zionists want this because they want to build up the population of Israel the better to suppress the Palestinians' claim to the restoration of their land and their rights.

The Russian Government, if it has to allow emigration, also insists that it must be to Israel; it doesn't want a general exodus to "the west" showing up the oppressive prison-camp regime that claims to be a socialist paradise.

## SHUNTED

None of them care about what the Russian Jews want. But it's becoming more and more evident that for many of them, leaving Russia is uppermost, and settling in Israel a very poor second. As one man said "I wanted to see the world. To go to Israel was the only way out."

Already, about a third are 'dropping out' half way and don't even complete their journey to Israel. Hundreds, so far, having seen what Israel is like (and despite the star treatment they get there compared with the dark skinned Jewish immigrants from North Africa) have left again. 500 of these are camped in Belgium. Others are in Austria, Italy and France.

And last week, ten of these ex-Russian 'Israelis' were sent away when they tried to enter Britain. And now, it seems, the other European countries that have up to now allowed Russian Jews leaving Israel to enter on temporary permits, are putting a stop to this.

Socialists must demand an immediate end to these restrictions. First, because we are utterly opposed to immigration controls of any sort. The sight of human beings shunted from airport to airport is absolutely abhorrent. This planet as a whole belongs to mankind, and its parcelling up into exclusive tracts of land, patrolled and defended by separate national-minded ruling classes is completely outmoded in the modern world.

## USURPERS

Immigration controls serve to build up the image of the undesirable alien, and play a very big part in producing racial prejudice and hatred. We have seen this in the growth of anti-black racialism in this country in the period since the first immigration Acts in the early 1960s. A new growth of anti-semitism is entirely possible in the event of large numbers of Russian Jews being refused entry into this country.

With the news that Russia agreed to a Jewish emigration of some 60,000 a year, the issue becomes increasingly pressing.

There is however one exception to this general principal: and that is Israel. There, the immigration of Jews who themselves claim an exclusive birthright in that land led to (and was always meant to lead to) the

organised suppression and supplanting of the Palestinian population who were eventually driven out by force of arms. Now when they take up arms to try to regain their land they are branded as murderers and terrorists, while the Israeli usurpers can rain bombs on the refugee camps and suffer, at worst, polite and respectful criticism.

If anything sums up the injustice of the situation it is the so-called "Law of Return": any Jew from anywhere in the world is granted automatic citizenship, while those whose fathers and forefathers farmed the land for centuries past are excluded or oppressed.

## ACCESS

We say that this should be stopped. That the immigration of non-Palestinians should be halted at least until such time as all the Palestinians are restored to their own country.

The Zionist state, on the other hand, wants more immigration. Moreover, as a way of strengthening its claim to be a necessary refuge for persecuted Jews, it actually wants Jews to be denied access elsewhere and turned into refugees, and not merely voluntary immigrants. That is why it has turned so much attention to the situation of the Russian Jews.

There is in fact a whole history of the Zionist movement campaigning, mainly behind the scenes but sometimes openly, for Jews to be excluded from other countries. There is evidence that in Iraq in the early 1950s Israeli secret agents planted bombs in Jewish areas and synagogues to drive large numbers of Jews to emigrate in fear to Israel.

Most scandalous of all, in the 1930s and 40s, pressure was exerted by Zionists in the USA to restrict the entry of Jewish refugees from Germany — at a time when six million Jews were facing extermination.

## REFUGEES

The reasoning was that Jews settling in the USA would be lost to Zionism. In December 1938 David Ben Gurion, in a letter to the Zionist executive, posed the question in the most cold-blooded way: "Zionism is endangered. ... If Jews will have to choose between the refugees, saving Jews from concentration camps, and assisting a national museum in Palestine, mercy will have the upper hand and the whole energy of the people will be channeled into saving Jews from various countries. Zionism will be struck off the agenda..."

Given this record, there is little doubt that the Israeli government is right now exerting pressure to prevent Russian Jews going anywhere but Israel. Posing as the only friend of Jews, it needs a situation where all other countries appear hostile to Jews. Thus it welcomes anti-semitism.

Ben Gurion's callous and calculating words, and the present use of the Russian Jews as Zionism's pawns, show that Zionism is in fact the Jews' worst enemy.

Thousands of Israelis come to this country every year, to live, to work, to visit or to study. Why should these ten be excluded? Who ordered their summary deportation back to Israel? And why?

We say — LET THEM IN!



# PT?...YES, FOR THEIR READERS

paper, and it took the opportunity to levy a hefty financial penalty into the bargain. (In charging SW costs, in what was virtually a criminal prosecution, it also departed from usual legal practice.)

Unfortunately, the actual issue which brought SW up against the law is hardly the best calculated to rally the sympathy of socialists. With its

reporting of the Janie Jones case, SW brought its now pervasive sub-political 'muckraking' very close to crude sales boosting sensationalism. Under a thin veneer of class indignation, it indulged in a prurience which is quite alien to socialism.

Nor should socialists mechanically negate every dot and comma of bourgeois law. The naming of alleged

blackmail victims, whoever they are, is scarcely going to advance the class struggle, nor should the overthrow of capitalist society open the way to such practice.

There are better things to fight for. And better ways of fighting than to transgress one of the few bourgeois practices that we CAN approve of.

Nevertheless, whether or not we sympathise with SW,

we clearly support it against the bosses' state. Whatever the merits of the particular case, any attack on a section of the labour movement by the capitalist state, a state that upholds this entire system of wholesale robbery with violence under which we live, must be repulsed with vigour.

Ron Vandy

## SCAB G.P.O. UNION GETS ITS CHARTER FROM THE LORDS

RETURNING FROM ITS grave last week, the Industrial Relations Act delivered its final blow against the working class. The final blow was dealt by the House of Lords, who rejected the appeal of the Union of Post Office Workers (UPW) to maintain sole bargaining rights for Post Office telephonists. So, in effect, it now allows the scab Telecommunications Staff Association (TSA) to recruit members and apply to the Post Office for representation.

militants in the UPW must now fight to win them over. The first step is to demand from the Post Office that only the UPW be allowed to recruit new members, a right which was suspended because of a NIRC decision. Coupled with this fight is the struggle that must be waged in the UPW for democratisation of the union.

### Re-instatement

The first breakthrough on this front was attained a few weeks ago when the Overseas Telephones no. 2 branch forced the General Secretary, Tom Jackson, to reinstate their branch secretary and chairman, after Jackson had suspended them for leading the branch in industrial action (contrary to national rules).

### Apolitical

Unfortunately for the TSA the facts do not support the propaganda. Related to their strike breaking calls is the fact that the TSA has a number of NF fascists in leading positions in their association.

Add to this the talks they have had with the Tory Party Industrial Relations Advisory department, and it doesn't appear that the TSA is either apolitical or democratic.

However, given that many of the TSA's 5000 members are misguided and misinformed,

Besides the reinstatement, all other demands, including the removal of the executive officer responsible for telephonists' national negotiations, were agreed to by Jackson unconditionally.

Since then the branch has called off its action, to await the implementation of these demands.

The course to be taken by militants over the next period is quite clear, and that is to fight at rank and file level to drive out the scab union and to struggle throughout the UPW for union democracy.

JOHN ROSE

# Lorry drivers' strike strong and still spreading further to the South

THE STRIKE by Scottish lorry drivers is in its third week. Most road haulage in Scotland is now at a standstill.

The 9,000 drivers are demanding £40 for a 40 hour week. Already the struggle is spreading to England.

The special importance of this demand is due to the low basic rates (around £28 for an artic driver). Drivers are forced to work long hours of overtime, and at weekends, to make a decent living. At the end of next year, legally permitted driving hours will be reduced from 10 to 8 per day. A higher basic rate will then be an absolute necessity. Already, some drivers risk their necks and their licences by working over their hours. If wage rates are not raised, thousands more will be forced to follow suit.

Although most drivers are unionised, effective organisation has always been

hampered by the combination of working alone with the large number of small firms in the industry. One great step forward in the Scottish strike is the building of a strike committee with representatives of the workers at all the firms involved. Another step forward is the involvement of drivers from Scottish Road services and from the Tayforth Group, both parts of the state owned National Freight Corporation. They have rejected an offer of £35.55 in favour of parity with the private sector drivers' demands.

The employers' organisation, the Road Haulage Association, has been forced to negotiate, although it claims not to have the power to settle the strike without consulting all its members. The RHA has also pressurised some firms to stop them making separate agreements.

The RHA has offered £35.66 now with the rest in January. At a mass meeting on Wednesday, Alex Kitson, the T&GWU's national road haulage officer, recommended acceptance; but the meeting decided not only to reject the offer, but also to step up the strike, banning the movement of all food and medical supplies.

In England, 92 haulage firms in the Hull area are now involved, and shop stewards at Southern British Road Services are calling for strike action from Monday 28th in support of the £40 for 40 hours claim. The Teesside depot of one Scottish firm is already out, and others in the area are likely to follow.

The following steps are necessary:

\*The T&GWU and the United Road Transport Union must immediately make the strike official.

\*Rank and file committees should be set up in each area, involving drivers from all firms on strike, as has been done in Scotland. The strike committees must link up on a national scale.

\*When other groups of workers are on strike, they depend on lorry drivers not to cross the picket lines. The drivers must now be supported. All work normally done by strikers must be blacked and prevented from moving. Attempts to transfer goods away from the strike-bound areas must be stopped.

Messages of support, information, donations, etc. should be sent to the Strike Committee, Trades Council Club, Carlton Place, Glasgow.

Simon Temple

## BOC GO BACK... TO FIGHT AGAIN?

THE STRIKE which began last Monday at BOC Harlow is already over. The men have accepted £5 now and an additional £2 in April.

An improvement in sick pay will bring it up to the basic rate, though the medical assembly shop which had given its notice of terminating their piece work agreement have had to extend it until the end of the year.

The original demand was for £10 across the board, an improvement in the sick pay, and

a renegotiation of the working arrangements in the medical assembly shop. With correct tactics, BOC, generally recognised to be the best organised firm in Harlow, could have won these demands.

The fact is that the headlong way the strike developed made a victory less likely than a more cautious approach. Given the fact that BOC is an important member of the Engineering Employers' Federation, there was every likelihood that the management would try to force a very low settlement and make an example of BOC in the district.

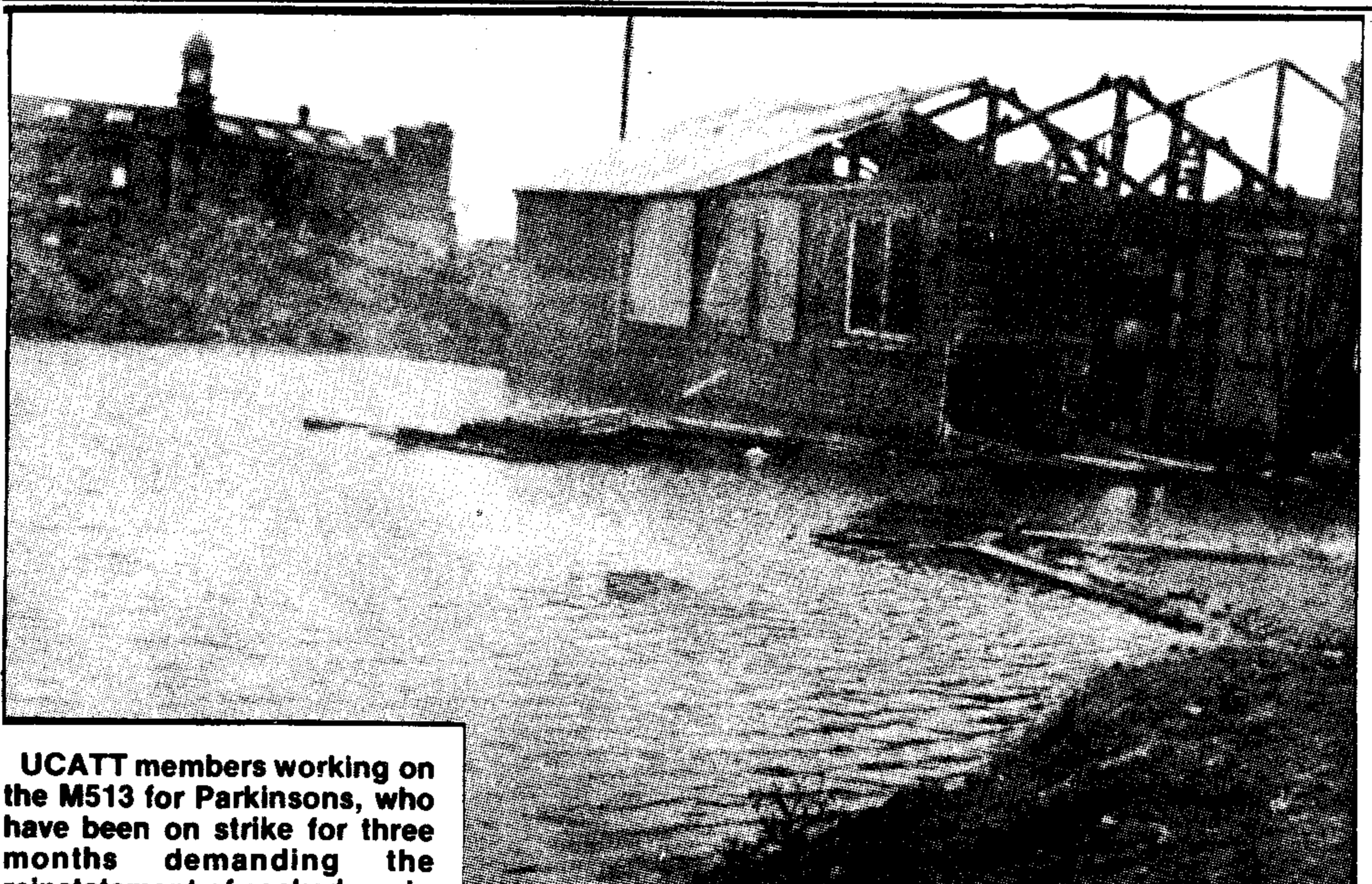
In this situation, not to have done more preparation for the strike was bound to produce a feeling of misgiving and lead to an early return.

Workers in this area must therefore not be discouraged by this poor settlement into thinking they can't do better. They can — if the lessons are learnt.

And the BOC workers themselves must not be prepared to accept the settlement as fixed. They must be prepared to fight again. It is all right for the bosses to make a settlement for a year; but if prices and the cost of living continue to rise during that year, as they will, then workers can't just sit back and watch living standards drop.

The fact that the employers' offer was accepted quickly simply indicates the extent to which the militants in the firm need to understand that victories are going to have to be much more carefully planned than in the past. And that planning must start now.

Jack Price



UCATT members working on the M513 for Parkinsons, who have been on strike for three months demanding the reinstatement of sacked work-mates, are angry at the state of the site, which fringes a large Ellesmere Port housing estate. They point out that the site, which is unfenced, is a serious hazard to health and safety. Kids play on the unfinished motorway bridge, and there are numerous watery death traps (see picture). The strike committee issued a statement this month, which was posted up in the local shops, pointing out that, though the state of the site is not their responsibility, they were pressing the contractors to make it safe for nearby residents and their kids.

## 'Homeless' Newcastle students take over building

ANOTHER struggle over the cuts in students' living standards imposed by current State policy is taking place in Newcastle.

Homeless students have occupied no.2 Sanderson Rd, Jesmond. In a leaflet, they say: "This is an attempt to stop landlords turning good houses into offices, depriving people of homes".

The leaflet also points out that "There are 14,000 people on the housing list in Newcastle at the moment, and 200 Poly students homeless at the beginning of this academic year". The Newcastle situation is no more than typical. Middlesbrough Poly students sent a telegram of official support within a couple of hours. Students need a clear policy for fighting the accommodation crisis, along the following lines:

1. Student unions to survey, list and take steps to occupy suitable empty properties in their localities. This to be done in coordination with squatters' associations and tenants' associations; it would be disastrous to have homeless students and homeless working class families fighting each other for the available accommodation.
2. Labour councils to put compulsory purchase orders on suitable empty properties.
3. Campaign for the Labour government to nationalise all building land and the building industry, and to set about a crash building programme.

Shaun Murray

## SEI STRIKE ENDS IN DEFEAT

THE S.E.I. strike ended last week, a tragic story of working women's militancy defeated by division, apathy and the union bureaucrats' desire for a quiet life. AUEW District Secretary negotiated with management a settlement no better than one the strikers had rejected two weeks before. Though most of the active strikers, the 100 who had kept the picket going for 10 weeks, voted against, they were outvoted when the rest of the strikers were bluntly informed by the same official that they couldn't expect to do any better.

In fact, support for the strike was beginning to build up. Only the weekend before, a successful demonstration had been held in support of the strike.

Basically, the union was unwilling to take active steps to support the strikers, steps

which would have meant action against its other members — the men at SEI who had not only walked past the pickets for 10 weeks, but actually taken over their jobs and done their work.

Though local militant women joined the picket, the AUEW did nothing about getting support and solidarity, and nothing to discipline its scabbing members.

Meanwhile, management was harassing individual strikers, sending them letters and actually visiting some at home to threaten the sack if they didn't knuckle under and get back to work. After that, no-one is putting much faith in the written 'no victimisation' pledge. With the strike defeated, the militants feel they are wide open to the management.

SUE ARNALL

## STRIKE WAVE FROM PAGE 1

On top of that is the threat of one million unemployed.

It is important, then, that all pay claims are pressed through, in opposition, if need be, to all bleating about the 'social contract' or the 'national interest'. The crucial claims, like the building workers' 100% demand, must not be abandoned in return for interim increases and some progress on other matters — i.e. the Lump. Remove the Lump and fight for the claim!

### Threshold

Central to the fight against rising prices must be unity between all sections of workers. The main unifying demand is for a "zero threshold agreement" — that is, a sliding scale of wages, where as prices rise, so do wages. There must be at least 60 to 80p flat rate rise for each 1% rise in the cost of living. To ensure that such a deal works in favour of the working class, the price rises

must be monitored by trade unionists and housewives, in opposition to the fiddling of the Government's Retail Price Index.

In Labour Party and Trade Union meetings we must challenge the Government: if you are a Labour government, bring in a sliding scale of wages and a national minimum wage by law! That is a simple, practical measure, worth ten million times more than all the Labour politicians' hot air about "price controls".

### Sliding-scale

But we cannot afford to wait and hope for the Government to do something. Right now, the fight is on against price rises; and right now, the Government, with its 'social contract' is on the other side. In each workplace and each union we must press for the sliding scale.

Alongside this fight, hours must be cut. This will be an effective gain, not easily removed by inflation, and an important way of fighting unemployment. No productivity deals must be signed; one way or another, they always mean jobs lost! All redundancies must be fought; the slogan 'Work or Full Pay' must be raised.

Stephen Corbishley

PARENTS, together with some teachers and kids, picketed Tulse Hill school (S.London) last Friday in protest at the continued employment of a member of the National Front.

There was a time when Nazi teachers such as Colin Jordan were quickly cleared out of a staff room. Now, Tulse Hill Governors have merely expressed their abhorrence of the National Front in general, while the Inner London Education Authority has ruled that his views are his own business.

Many people, though horrified, are still reluctant to demand the man's dismissal, and the official Parent Teacher Assoc. regretted that the picket was being held. All the same, the picket went ahead, organised by an unofficial grouping of parents and teachers. Lambeth Teachers Association has declared that it will support any teacher who does take such action.



THE occupation at Metal Box, Westhoughton, is in its third week. 200 AUEW members are demanding an increase in the hourly rate from 98p to £1.20, and today rejected an offer from the employers of £1.15.

The occupation started after three days of strike, when a lorry was driven out of the factory, through the picket line. The lorry was sent back by T&GWU members when it reached its destination, but nevertheless the men decided to occupy.

The production workers, members of the T&GWU, have been still receiving pay until recently; but now their pay has been cut off. Also, all the AUEW members have been suspended by Metal Box. Although strikers living outside Bolton have been getting Social Security for their families, those living in Bolton have not. It looks very much as if Metal Box management have been acting in collusion with Bolton Social Security officials.

Messages of support and donations should be sent to the Strike Committee, Metal Box, Westhoughton, near Bolton.

George Stewart



Liverpool Corporation workers employed on maintaining houses in the Netherley area returned to work on 14 October after two weeks on strike. Management have agreed that the supervisor we were protesting about will be moved — but they haven't given a date.

The management offer came as soon as they felt threatened — our steward was about to call a meeting of all Liverpool corporation stewards to call for support. Now management knows that the supervisor will have to be moved soon. The men will be watching the situation closely.

Stan Clare



ON THURSDAY 17th, 70 students from Liverpool Polytechnic occupied Walton House in support of six demands that the Administration have been refusing to do anything about.

The six demands are: reverse 15% canteen price increases; provide more student accommodation and reverse the 33% increase in hall fees; stop the reduction in staffing levels; increase the Poly's grant to the Union; get on with promised improvements in facilities; take over responsibility for the nursery that the union is setting up.

Students are able to use facilities in the occupied building, but academic and library staff are being kept out. So far the occupation has had visits from Liverpool's Director of Education, and his deputy, who were both suddenly very anxious to 'cooperate'.

Paul Barker