



INVERGORDON WORKERS MUTINY OVER CLOSURE

IN THE final week of the old year yet another Scottish community had its livelihood blasted away - on this occasion in record time. Now, added to the growing list of towns devastated by industrial closure we have the small towns of Invergordon and Ainess, the homes of the workforce of the Invergordon aluminium smelter closed by the British Aluminium Company (BACO).

The closure was announced on a Tuesday (29 December) and carried out the following Wednesday. Even the last shift was not allowed to work its full course.

As a result 890 jobs were lost with a haste so indecent that it has to arouse suspicion that it was an attempt to preempt a workers' occupation was obvious. But the attempt proved to be futile - the workforce helped by their wives and families re-entered and occupied the plant on 6 January.

We learn now from the press, however, that BACO emerged from the closure with a profit due to the negotiations which led to the termination of the agreement which supplied electrical power to the plant. As industry nation wide collapses it's a case of capitalists taking the money and running.

To show their contempt for the role played by the Government, the Highland Regional Council passed a vote of no-confidence in them, directly after meeting one of their ministers. While in Edinburgh, Mick McGahey made a statement at a meeting of the Triple Alliance saying miners, railway workers and steelworkers would support the sit-in of the workers at the smelter.

It had been known that BACO only made a profit in one year of its approximately ten years of operation at the plant, mainly due to a continuing 'problem of energy costs. This however was not insoluble, but a downturn in the demand for aluminium products sealed its fate.

As with other closures, this too will have a knock-on effect on other jobs such as the railways; but with the plant having absorbed 7 per cent of Scotland's total electricity output this will be particularly severe on the energy industries. Meanwhile doubts have already been sown on the continued existence of the Company's rolling mill at Falkirk employing over 1000.

The workers at the plant have obviously taken heart from the victories at the Robb Caledon Shipyard at Dundee,

and at Lee Jeans in Greenock, and have decided to make a fight.

The chances of success are slim since the number of companies worldwide able to take over such a plant can only be counted on one hand, while the government shows complete disinterest. In rescuing any part of industry, however important that industry is.

Their stand is, though, a stand for decency; to show that a community refuses to be annihilated in such a callous fashion. As such it deserves total support nationally. They stand as the sole guardians of another part of Britain's industrial base, which is being eaten away remorselessly.

**NURSES
PAY
BATTLE**
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Will the miners take on Govt.

AN overwhelming rejection of the Coal Board's latest 9.3 per cent offer is vital for the future of the mining industry in Britain. The miners should follow the recommendation of their National Executive Committee backed by the support of delegates to the Special Conference in London last month and vote for strike action in pursuit of this year's wage claim.

The union submitted the following to the Board on the 6th October 1981:

1. A surface minimum grade rate of £100 per week with consequential increases for all other grades.
2. Payment of wages on a salary basis.
3. Holiday pay to be paid at the enhanced rate of time and



Victoria Station last week during the ASLEF strike.

Photo: Press Association

ASLEF fights to preserve railways

WORKERS can no longer live with a capitalist system that is no longer prepared to live with them. This is the central political message to emerge from ASLEF's struggle against the attack of the BR Board on their working day. When the Board took the unprecedented step last summer of refusing to pay a wage increase to railway workers recommended by arbitration via the Railway Staff National Tribunal, it was clear that both employer and government were manoeuvring to break the mould of 'business as usual' between the Board and the Railway unions.

Threat of strike in August, followed by wringing of hands at ACAS produced a form of words by which an increase would be paid in two stages, 8 per cent back-dated to April and 3 per cent from August. The price to be paid for acceptance of this offer (well below the original claim) was an undertaking to resume talks on productivity within the railways joint machinery.

Over confident with railway workers unwillingness to fight during the summer and now goaded on by the Transport

Secretary, David Howell insisting on cuts and 'book balancing' as the price for new investment, BR have renewed the attack. Their target - the train drivers, whose union of 27,000 members has traditionally provided the core of resistance in defence of wages and conditions on the railways. The BR attack comes at a time when big sections of state employed workers, fighting back against the economics of Thatcherism, are pressing home claims in defence of living standards. It is intended to act as a warning to others.

The Board has refused to pay the second stage 3 per cent increase unless train drivers agree to what is called 'flexible rostering' - that is giving up their eight hour day which they won as far back as 1919. This has always been an important condition of work for the drivers, limiting the stress of the job, providing regular home life and ensuring a predictable pattern of work. Even so, train drivers still work a good deal of overtime, in part a reflection of erosion of their wage position in recent years. They also

work longer hours than many of their continental counterparts.

In response to the Board's attack, ASLEF have put into effect a plan of industrial action - not reporting for duty on Sundays and withdrawing of labour on two days a week. The Board and its Chairman, Peter Parker, who says 'flexible rostering' is a symbolic issue, have backed their policy of blackmail with threat of suspension to ASLEF members whilst offering the 3 per cent to NUR drivers who whilst not opposing the productivity line have not deserted their ASLEF colleagues.

As ASLEF action struck home on Wednesday and Thursday of last week, anti-rail propaganda stood exposed. "With the expansion of road transport, rail was no longer important." But nonetheless stopping the arteries of the Nation slowed industrial and commercial life to a trickle. "It takes no skill now to drive a train." But there were no alternative drivers to be found to speed commuters to their

The Week

Mrs Thatcher's front page humanity under such headlines as 'A Mother Weeps' and 'Maggie Breaks Down in Tears' had us thinking that the latest unemployment figures had been made known to the Prime Minister, now overcome with remorse. It seems the fuss was caused by her son lost in the Sahara. Newspapers took on the appearance of teenage romance weeklies, the ones with tearful young girls on front covers and written by them such as 'He Popped Out for a Packet of Camels and a Week Later Hadn't Come Back' or suchlike. Apart from newspaper editors who think such 'happenings' are news (and who have 20 photographers following the Princess of Wales) nobody else seemed too interested. The thought that Thatcher was human was about as plausible as Roy Jenkins being a Scotsman. The country yawned.

It seems like only the other week that Thatcher was interviewed by Gordon Clough for Radio 4's 'The World This Weekend', by way of a New Year message to the nation. This type of interview has become standard fare and provides a platform for the politician in question. Mr Clough asked Thatcher when she was going to ease up with her policies because many people were finding it very tough going; indeed if there were to be an election tomorrow there was no chance the present government would remain in office. Thatcher replied that she would like to be even tougher but her colleagues had [eluded] her 'progress'. On the second point she noted that there was going to be no election tomorrow or the day after. On that point she is absolutely right, so when is the penny going to drop for some people? Thatcher has not yet run half her five year term and will not go without being pushed. Regarding the tough talk there was no maternal instinct there, more sadistic than anything.

A Prime Minister given to tears might consider what Cyril Chantler had to say when all eyes were on the Sahara. Professor of paediatric nephrology at Guy's Hospital, London, he drew attention to the likelihood that one-third of children under 15 years who develop kidney disease this year in Britain will go untreated and will die because facilities to treat them are in short supply. Among adults, about 2000 develop this disease each year but only 1000 can get treatment, an equivalent number have to die. In this respect Britain lies in 18th place in the European league table for such treatment. In proportion to population, Spain and Cyprus do a lot better than Britain. Now why didn't the news editors who tried to preoccupy us all with sand in the Sahara put that story on their front pages? Would there have been tears over that?

On the matter of hypocrisy, attitudes to Poland come to the fore, where many have referred to obvious double standards. LBC, London's news radio station spent every morning last week covering the USA's interference in the internal affairs of other countries, region by region. Its 'surprising the things you forget about until such programmes act as reminders.

HISTORIC NOTES

SINCE 1917 every attempt to subvert and strangle Socialism and reverse the October Revolution has had to concentrate its attention on Poland.

This was immediately apparent at the end of the First World War when the establishment of an "independent" Poland gave the British ruling classes an opportunity of destroying the young Soviet State which they had failed to crush by direct armed intervention between 1918 and 1920.

The Polish regime which emerged from the Versailles Treaty of 1919, encouraged by Britain and France, attacked the Soviet Union in April, 1920, armed with massive aid from Britain (and France), General Weygand lent by the French General Staff, and a huge loan, from the Americans. The aggression managed to force the Treaty of Rigan (March 1921), which ripped large chunks of territory from the Soviet Union. It resulted in one third of the

POLAND PAST....

territory of the new state being inhabited by non-Poles.

British imperialism could progress no further at that time because the strength of the British working class limited their room for manoeuvre - the war was largely stopped by the refusal of British dockers to load the SS Jolly George with war supplies for Poland, and by the threat of a general strike in a labour movement organised in 'Hands off Russia' committees.

In the 1920s and 1930s Polish reaction was steadily supported by British finance. Poland became a semi-fascist state run by landlords.

Chamberlain, under popular pressure to stand with Russia against Hitler, offered to "guarantee" Poland against Hitlerite expansion. But he consistently refused to negotiate seriously with the USSR, hoping always that Hitler would attack

the Soviet Union. For its part, the Polish government refused to allow Soviet troops onto its soil, thus inviting Fascist aggression in September 1939.

Britain had done nothing to defend Polish sovereignty. According to AJP Taylor, not a single weapon had gone to Poland before the outbreak of war.

No sooner had Poland fallen to Hitler, than Britain set up a Polish government in exile, committed to the 1935 fascist constitution, and supporting those like General Anders, who borrowed 300 million roubles to organise an army on Polish soil which never fought. When military action was undertaken, such as the Warsaw uprising, it was staged so as to "liberate" the capital from the advancing Russian army, so ill-conceived and timed as to be doomed to savage Nazi reprisals.

The US and British govern-

ments, having supported Polish fascists who had no support among the Polish people, were in total disarray when the Red Army liberated the country and helped set up the Provisional Government of Unity.

The Yalta Conference of 1945 was the low point for Britain and the US, who were forced to concede recognition to the new socialist governments in Eastern Europe, backed by the Soviet Union.

Two years had not passed before Churchill called at Fulton for a renewed crusade against the USSR. But the "cold war" was unable to prevent economic growth outside the sphere of influence of US and British capitalism.

Nevertheless persistent efforts at subversion brought their reward, and the outlook for reaction was good in the late '70's, with the election of a Nazi-collaborator Polish bishop to the Papacy and the arrival of Thatcher.

...AND PRESENT

crusade against the proletariat of the world. In this they are supported by the ever reactionary clergy and Solidarity.

The Pope who had nothing to say when visiting South America (except turn the other cheek), who stays silent on the US-financed massacres in El Salvador has devoted every sermon, announcement and speech to Poland. His Holiness obviously considers that the Church has a divine right to interfere in the affairs of countries.

Solidarity posing as a trade union is in reality a political outfit eager to restore Capitalism into Poland and to turn Poland into the theatre upon which the NATO/Pope axis can fight its anti-Soviet anti-Communist crusade.

The drive to war initiated by Thatcher soon after her election in 1979 is being energetically pursued by Reagan and his masters in the Pentagon. But unlike previous World Wars today's drive to war stems from the fear of revolution at home, a fear strengthened by capitalism's present and deepening crisis. The bourgeoisie, ever fearful of the "mob" of red revolution, sees the Soviet Union as the essence of Communism. Regardless of the revisionism of Krushchev and those that followed him, the Soviet Union continues to occupy a special place in the heart of the proletariat everywhere. After all it was the birth place of the Bolshevik revolution, the land of Lenin and Stalin, the country that saved the world from Nazism.

Hence Thatcher and Reagan's hysterical anti-Sovietism.

Those who mouth the same words as Thatcher and Reagan, who condemn the military rule in Poland, and who criticise the Soviet Union and support Solidarity are in essence supporting Thatcherite policies of anti-trade unionism, cuts, closures, unemployment, inflation and wage cuts. For Thatcher's policies are indivisible, they form a coherent whole; war at home and war abroad. The one leads into, stems from and forms a component part of the other.

Solidarity, the Pope and Thatcher/Reagan have nothing to offer the Polish people except Capitalist wage slavery coupled with Catholic spiritual slavery, a horrifying combination of advanced Capitalism within medieval theology.

FOAMING at the mouth, Haig, speaking after Nato's ministerial meeting called for action not words against the Soviet Union. The day before NATO, led by Britain and the US, threatened reprisals unless Poland changed its internal policies to suit the bosses of NATO - a direct interference in Polish internal affairs.

At the same press conference Haig refused to answer a question regarding the "double standards" adopted by NATO in its attitude to El Salvador, Chile, South Africa and other oppressive dictatorships. This was not surprising as Thatcher, Reagan and other NATO leaders have no interest in Poland or the Polish people. Their interest is only in using Poland as a pawn against the Soviet Union and the Polish people as fodder for their

Sanctions against the Soviet Union fall on deaf ears

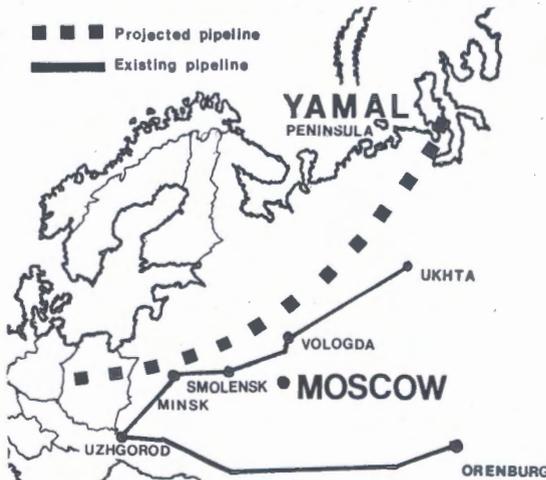
A YEAR or two ago the CIA announced that the Russians would be short of oil - and had publicly to revise the "estimate" almost immediately.

In fact, the Soviet Union is one of the world's largest producers of essential minerals and energy sources, and it is this strength which gives rise to the fear of a declining US capitalism - with Britain in tow - that this may be used to forge economic cooperation with the rest of Europe, and hence the future of world peace.

Natural gas is a case in point. For some years the USSR has been delivering 25 billion cubic metres of gas annually to Europe through existing pipelines. Already the Soviet Union is the world's second largest producer of natural gas. But under the Yamal peninsula, thousands of miles northeast of Moscow, there lies the world's largest deposit of natural gas, 26,000 million cubic metres.

In 1978, Germany, France, Italy, Austria, the Netherlands, and Switzerland began serious negotiations for the provision of pipelines and extracting equipment to the USSR in return for the use of this valuable resource. The frenzied attempt to whip up anti-Sovietism in Afghanistan at the end of 1979 had no effect on the project.

When President Brezhnev visited Bonn in November 1981,



the agreement was formally ratified by Helmut Schmidt, who is going ahead regardless of Reagan and his futile attempts at sanctions against the USSR, on the pretext of Poland.

Washington has blocked the sale of one hundred Caterpillar pipe-layers to the USSR. Immediately Komatsu of Japan stepped in to sign the contract for their supply. Britain toes the US line and accepts the US veto. At least 2,000 jobs and £200 million of orders are likely to be jeopardised.

This is typical of capitalist strategy in Britain which refuses to build a gas pipeline even to the North Sea, in spite of certainty of financial gain, leave alone the social necessity of such an energy project.

Russia's European partners have no time for the US-British strategy of acute anti-Sovietism. Two wars already this century have convinced the Europeans on either side of the fictitious barrier erected by Churchill at Fulton that peaceful economic cooperation, whatever the differ-

ences of political systems, is of paramount importance. Those who suffered from mis-directed B-52 bombs and the criminally late intervention of the US in the war against Hitler have correspondingly less faith in the United States.

The result of the building of the pipeline will be a bringing together on a vast scale of European countries. A German firm will provide 22 pumping stations, and A. E. G. Telefunken will provide the turbines. In return West Germany (the pipeline having passed through Poland) will receive 10 billion cubic metres of gas for 25 years. Italy will provide 19 pumping stations in return for 8 billion metres. The scale of economic cooperation is such that the Soviet gas would account for 30 per cent of French consumption in 1990 (doubling the existing amount), and equivalent to 5 per cent of France's total energy consumption.

The contribution of the Soviet Union to European peace and prosperity is evident. Reagan calls for sanctions against Poland and the USSR in a futile attempt to starve them into submission, but will not stop grain sales for fear of the US farming lobby. Instead he has the stupidity to ask European capitalists to forego lucrative economic exchange with the USSR. It is hardly surprising that his appeals have fallen on deaf ears.

Editorial

WHAT THE miners are really voting about was put very clearly by the NUM branch secretary at the Wearmouth colliery, Sunderland. "We must stand up as a union to protect wages and jobs. If the vote goes the wrong way, Thatcher would lash in and tell the Coal Board to get stuck in with another round of closures." The vote is not, as the retiring NUM president seemed to think, about adding another couple of pounds to the 9.5 per cent offer by the National Coal Board. It is about whether the lesson of BL and British Steel has been learned - that you don't save jobs by knuckling under and accepting lower pay. You save jobs by fighting.

This is the lesson the railmen are learning. ASLEF is not prepared to let the Rail Board use 'productivity' deals to cut back the rail service severely and pay fewer workers less for working more. The Rail Board counters with a completely unprincipled attempt to sow divisions among the rail unions by meeting a commitment to the NUR it is withholding from the ASLEF and threatening a lockout of the whole rail industry. What Thatcher really wants, of course is to deal with ASLEF the way Reagan dealt with the Air Traffic Controllers union - just get rid of it. But she will find that a tough proposition here in Britain.

If any proof is needed that accepting low pay is not the way to save jobs, the steel industry provides it. Steel men are expected to agree to forego any pay rise at all this year and their reward for such abstinence - 15,000 more redundancies! In February, the ISTC is banning all overtime as part of a fight to make the Steel Board start hiring workers instead of firing them.

Triple Alliance

All this should not be seen as a reconstituted Triple Alliance of unions strong enough to get more money for themselves than other workers. Instead it is the beginning of a movement by organised workers in Britain to co-ordinate their efforts in a counter-offensive against Thatcher. Thatcher has been waging all-out war on us. In doing so she has brought about a qualitative change in class struggle.

We are no longer engaged simply in using our trade unions to defend rates of pay and to improve conditions in this work place or that. We have to organise ourselves to survive the onslaught unleashed against us. Some people complain that industrial action is being undertaken for political motives. They are right. Nothing is more political than the battle to stay alive. We can only survive by settling the political question of whether the bosses are to exploit the life out of us for profit or whether we are to rule them for the good of Britain. Every form of resistance against cuts or closures thus becomes a skirmish in that political war of who rules whom. We have to learn to fight our individual battles in the full awareness of the part they play in an overall working class strategy which links struggle with struggle and union with union in a mighty campaign to sweep capitalism away.

Thatcher wants war against the Soviet Union as a way of making war on us. For the peace of Britain we must give her all the war she wants right in her own backyard. That is the service we must render ourselves and workers everywhere.

LONDON TRANSPORT

Fares Fair - the facts

THE FIRST act of sabotage of Fares Fair was when the GLC tried to negotiate similar fare reductions on British Rail's commuter services, in the hope of creating a planned and coordinated public transport system, at the same time helping those ratepayers who do not use the buses or tubes. The Government vetoed it.

The second act of sabotage was the court case, a political show trial using stock phrases like 'running at a loss', a 'drain on taxpayers or ratepayers money' to ensure the maximum political attack.

That public transport should 'operate at a loss' is a tautology, a self-fulfilling prophecy, a play with words.

The more sensible capitalist countries recognise this. After the GLC's fare reduction, fares would have covered 54 per cent of London Transport's costs. This compares with 39 per cent for Berlin, 44 per cent for Paris, 25 per cent for Rotterdam, 33 per cent for Barcelona, and 55 per cent for New York. The subsidies actually represent the payments by the community and the state for an enormously important service. The true cost of pursuing so-called 'economic' 'break-even' policies



For how much longer will London's buses be running? Photo: The Worker

is incalculable. The fact that roads cost money, parking space is valuable, that people getting to work makes the economy go round - the list is endless - is regarded as irrelevant by the accountants so long as they do not result in money gains for the enterprise concerned. The cost of making transport workers redundant, keeping them on the dole and losing the incomes from their taxes, is ignored. A true valuation of London Transport's economic contribution to the capital would take all this into account and the balance sheet would look very different.



Steel - overtime ban to save industry

THE IRON and Steel Trades Confederation representing half of the 107,000 workers in the steel industry will ban all overtime from 7 February. The reason for this action is to try to force the British Steel Corporation to take on workers instead of continuing to sack them. In the last two years 93,000 jobs in steel have been lost - nearly half the entire workforce.

Not only has the BSC said there will be no pay award at all this year; it has also announced that another 15,000 jobs are to be lost. It has also refused to carry out a commitment entered into at the end of the national steel strike two years ago to introduce a 39-hour week from this month.

Instead of any pay rise at all, which with inflation at its present level represents a 15 per cent wage cut, there will be bonuses tied to locally-negotiated 'productivity' deals which is simply the polite name for sackings. With the US taking action to prevent European steel from being imported and with the EEC insisting on further cut-backs of steel production, the BSC will be using 'productivity' deals to sack even more workers than the 15,000 already announced and such plants as Port Talbot, Llanwern and others will be threatened with

closure - in spite of the fact that they are fully as productive as any steel plants anywhere.

Thatcher claims that all these sackings and the BSC's double dealing are intended to make British Steel competitive. She lies in her teeth. It is all simply part of her grand design to weaken unions and destroy public sector industry so that any worker in the land who still has a job will hold it solely on the sufferance of an employer who will fix wages at whatever suits his greed for profits.

In the last two years 93,000 jobs in steel have been lost - nearly half the entire workforce.

The ISTC general secretary sees what use is being made of the 'productivity' drive. As he says: "At Corby 24 per cent overtime is being worked while thousands of our members are walking the streets."

Within 48 hours of the ISTC overtime ban being announced, McGregor like some ancient Druid soothsayer, looked at the sky and saw even greater portents of disaster. A little snow was likely to shut many plants causing irreparable damage,

leading to job loss and hey presto McGregor can on the most pathetic of excuses justify his 15000 redundancies. But BSC statements have indicated that throughout the bad weather 98 per cent of normal production has been maintained, so the fictions of McGregor & Co. are seen to be paper thin. BSC have also commented that the severe weather has caused furnaces to cool and crack, repairs being very expensive or impossible. The question must be asked what has caused the most damage - the closure and permanent cooling of Consett, Corby, Shotton, etc by Thatcher-McGregor's dictat or climatic conditions most sane people identify as being of the season 'Winter'.

What has to be realised by steel workers - as by all of us - is that we are engaged in a war of survival. The steelmen's battle over working overtime is only part of a campaign to defend the whole industry from Thatcher's destructive hand; and saving the steel industry is only part of the war that has to be waged alongside miners, railmen and, indeed, our entire working class, to put an end to unemployment finally by sacking Thatcher and the bosses for good.

Photo: John Sturrock (Report).

LT strike considered to stop fare rise

PUBLIC transport fares in London will double on March 21, with the promise of a further 100 per cent rise later in the year. Future effects, a possible 40 per cent cut in services, and loss of 30 to 50 per cent of passengers, remain to be seen.

What was chiefly evident at the GLC meeting which voted by a narrow majority to comply with the Law Lords' ruling was the Tory disarray. Afraid to be publicly linked with such a preposterous increase, they had envisaged either abstaining or amending, only to be told that any vote which was not in direct line with the Law Lords' ruling would render them as liable to punitive action as any Labour councillor.

It fell to the Social Democrats who espouse public transport subsidies to vote against. Yet Labour desertions to the SDP were lower than predicted, for Ken Livingstone's policy has united his party, and opens up the way for a concerted trade union offensive, already under way.

The Joint Trades Central Committee of London Transport initiated a campaign against the Thatcher Law Lords within days of the judgement. Some

500 Transport Workers demonstrated their concern at County Hall. This followed a decision taken by the Joint Trades Central Committee on Friday 17th December.

Support for action

In addition, the following Resolution was carried:-

"The Joint Trades Central Committee having heard the decision of the House of Lords consider a disastrous situation faces our industry. We declare that we are fully in support of the policies for London Transport as implemented by the Greater London Council and are prepared to take every action necessary to prevent the reversal of these policies. We call for every section to indicate their support for this declaration of intent in any way they consider fit in the meantime." The TUC Transport Committee have met and agreed to a campaign. They have no authority to instruct a Trade Union, although instruction does not appear to be needed. The General Council of the TUC are calling urgent meetings with the Association of Metropolitan Authorities to discuss the Law Lord's decision. A statement issued after the

General Council meeting said it believed that, at a time when local democracy is already under attack, the Law Lord's decision will have the most profound and serious consequences. The TUC Local Government Committee will be urgently considering the judgement, which could restrict the ability of Local Authorities to conduct their own affairs and meet the needs of their areas.

A meeting of all representatives of Trade Unions within London Transport has been called and will take a collective decision.

A day's stoppage of work throughout London will be considered as the serious beginning of the struggle against Thatcher and interference from the non-elected Law Lords. Hatred of Thatcher alone (and that's already been shown) will not deflect these attacks.

Our class has to stamp its authority on what should happen in London. Shop Stewards' Committees, Office Committees, all Workers Organisations will have to muster opposition to these attacks.

The struggle for a transport system for Londoners is a struggle for class power, a fight for Revolution and an end to the Thatchers and the like.

Nurses head call for action on pay

WHEN Britain's nurses meet in Trafalgar Square on 24 January for their national rally against the Government's four per cent limit, they will be making a significant break with the pattern of past years, in that they have launched their attack before the claim date rather than several weeks after it.

This has a special significance in that it indicates that nurses are willing to think and fight for themselves. This is in marked contrast to last year when their own claim hung fire whilst, for no logical reason, they waited to see what the doctor and dentist pay review body had to say about the pay of those professions.

Furthermore the early start is a recognition of what they are up against: Thatcher. In packed regional meetings of the Royal College of Nursing the particular callousness of this government has frequently been noted.

Nurses are only too conscious that when the profession takes industrial action in furtherance of better pay and conditions the national press rush to call them "callous" and "murders".

Yet those who do the caring and see the deterioration as a result of government policy know the opposite is true. A poorly



Members of the Royal College of Nursing meeting before lobbying

Parliament over pay and conditions.

paid nurse, working long hours in short staffed hospitals is not compatible with good standards of nursing care.

Over the past months two issues have become increasingly clear. One is that the only people who can fight for nurses' pay are nurses. In order to win against Thatcher the old hopes of

allowing NHS ancillary staff to do the "dirty work" or waiting for a favourable "comparison" with another profession are not enough.

The second thought is that no other Government has shown such ruthless disregard for the profession and the service they work for, than the present Government.

Photo: Mike Abraham

University teachers prepare to fight redundancy plans

IT IS now six months since the letters detailing the cuts went from the University Grants Committee to individual universities. Fifteen per cent of income has been chopped from the recurrent budget. One fifth fewer home students than expected last year are being admitted to degree courses. Yet not one redundancy has yet been successfully declared; there have been some attempts to issue redundancy notices, and each time they have been withdrawn after intervention by the AUT.

However, it may well be that a case will be fought in the Royal National Orthopaedic Institute, and there are very many universities queuing up to be the second institution to declare a redundancy; both the Government and the AUT are trying to ensure that the first case is one that will set the right precedent when the legality of tenure is tested in the courts and finally in the House of Lords.

It was in these circumstances that delegates from the various universities met at Reading in December at the AUT Winter Council to plan the continuation of their campaign. While Council was in session, the House of Lords' ruling backing the Denning decision over London Transport was announced, and, as the President pointed out, this should give cause for thought to anyone who believed that we could fight for our jobs through the law courts.

There is an understanding that we shall have to be prepared to take industrial action if we wish to save jobs; indeed, quite a detailed plan of action was drawn up for when the first

major redundancy is declared, and a section of the executive report which claimed that more extended strike action had no place in universities was removed.

The AUT in many universities has been advocating an "alternative economic strategy" to cope with the cuts, imposing a freeze, raising alternative sources of finance, selling off assets and so on. While the spirit behind these plans is laudable - people do not believe that the destruction of higher education at the hands of the Government is inevitable - such plans propose no solutions to the problems, as we saw at Council, with many delegates admitting that their plans had not offered a way out.

It would be much more to the point if the effort had gone into discussing how to support the TUC's Alternative Economic Strategy, since the problems have to be tackled at a national level.

Delegates passed a motion which decried the idea that you could save jobs by cutting down on salaries just in case our negotiators do manage to bring off such a deal! Delegates narrowly voted for a redundancy scheme to be negotiated, but overwhelmingly passed an amendment to the resolution making it a "voluntary" scheme, which everybody knows the vice-chancellors will now accept. Plenty of abuse was heard for "Tebbit the Ferret", but little criticism of Thatcher directly.

The task is now on in every campus to unite the forces against these cuts which, as one delegate pointed out, amount in total value to about ten feet of one Trident missile.

WILL THE MINERS TAKE ON GOVT

Continued from Page 1

one half.

4. An overall reduction in the working life of mineworkers, including a shorter working week, and a reduction in the age at which early retirement can be taken.

5. A service bonus scheme. The union stated that their main priorities were as follows: wages - shorter working week - other facets of the claim.

A realisation of the importance of the increase on basic pay is long overdue within the NUM. It is ironic that while productivity and output was at its highest level last year, pit closures too were at the highest level for six years. The NCB has closed 10 pits and partially closed 2 more with a loss of 1000 jobs and more redundancies are on the way. The workforce has fallen

by 12,000 over the past year due to much lower staff recruitment and higher redundancies. At the start of last month there were 216,400 workers on colliery books compared with 228,400 at the same time in 1980.

It is apparent that not one job will be saved by compromising on a fight for wages, this is as true in the mining industry as in any other industry. How the above figures correlate with the "expansionist Plan for Coal" much advocated by Gormley, one is left to wonder. Today in Britain there are no cosy agreements possible between the ruling class and the working class.

The miners will not shy away from strike action and the inevitable direct confrontation with the Government that entails. The Government al-

ready shaken by the election of Scargill, an overwhelming anti-government vote, and remembering bitterly their defeat by the South Wales miners last year, will not relish this fight, but for the working class to stand and fight now is crucial for our future.

Hidden toll of the mortality rate

BRITAIN is faced with the effects of some of the worst weather conditions in decades but who is really to blame? Who knows how many fatal road accidents could have been avoided if resources had been available to make Britain's roads safer? Many hospitals have had their supply of crutches for out-patients seriously depleted because of the overwhelming demand due to accidents caused by treacherous conditions underfoot. One leading researcher into hypothermia claimed, last week, that figures for cold-related deaths were being concealed from the public and that, in his estimation 700 deaths a day were due to the present bad weather.

The media is talking about Britain's worst natural disaster for years, but surely the situation is made worse by the callous indifference of the Government and particularly the evil eye of the storm - Thatcher.

* IN BRIEF

DR. BRUNO Kreisky, the Austrian Chancellor, already highly critical of the US over its attitude to Poland's troubles, has compared the Roman Catholic Church's attitude to Poland with the "cold and unfeeling attitude" displayed by the Papal nuncio in 1934 when Austria was threatened by home-grown Nazis in an attempted coup which included the killing of Dollfus the Chancellor of the time.



Public Meetings

LONDON

Friday, Jan. 29, 'Fares Fair - the Londoner's Right' Bellman Bookshop, 155 Fortress Road, NW5, 7:30pm

Friday, Feb. 12, 'Make War on the Warmongers - Thatcher Out', Tottenham Community Project, High Road, (Nr. Bruce Grove), 8.00pm N, 17

Friday, Feb. 26, 'Thatcher's Rule is Outlaw Rule', Bellman Bookshop, 155 Fortress Rd. NW5, 7.30pm

Bookshops

- Bellman Bookshop 155 Fortress Road, London NW5
- Brighton Workers Bookshop 87 Gloucester Road, Brighton
- Clarion Books 15 The Precinct, Stanford-le-Hope, Essex
- Basildon Bookstall Tues, Fri, Sat Marketplace
- Northern Star Bookshop 18A Leighton Street, Leeds

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Victory in Sealink strike

HAVING won major concessions from the Sealink Company over the future of Channel services and the removal of redundancy threats, the 1200 members of the Merchant Navy and Airline Officers'

Association called off their strike.

The company has agreed to withdraw redundancy notices issued to 48 officers on the Sealink ferry which sails between Newhaven and Dieppe, to allow time for further negotiations. The occupation of the Sealink will continue pending talks with the French Channel Services and British and French seamen's unions.

Redundancy notices have also been withdrawn at Harwich while discussions about the future of Harwich services to the continent continue.

The Company undertakes to provide the officers' union with full information about future plans and to negotiate new conditions of service agreements covering redundancies, recruitment and disciplinary proceedings including a three month consultation period before workers are made redundant.

Railways

Continued from Page 1

daily grind. Behind all this propaganda has been a traitor capitalist philosophy unfolding since Beeching and before, that railways and railway workers in Britain are useless, old-fashioned and finished. The power of the railway unions however must be broken before the process of dismantling can be completed. This time the train drivers, albeit in retreat, have said enough is enough. They have decided to stand and fight. The ideological mould of railway life is broken.