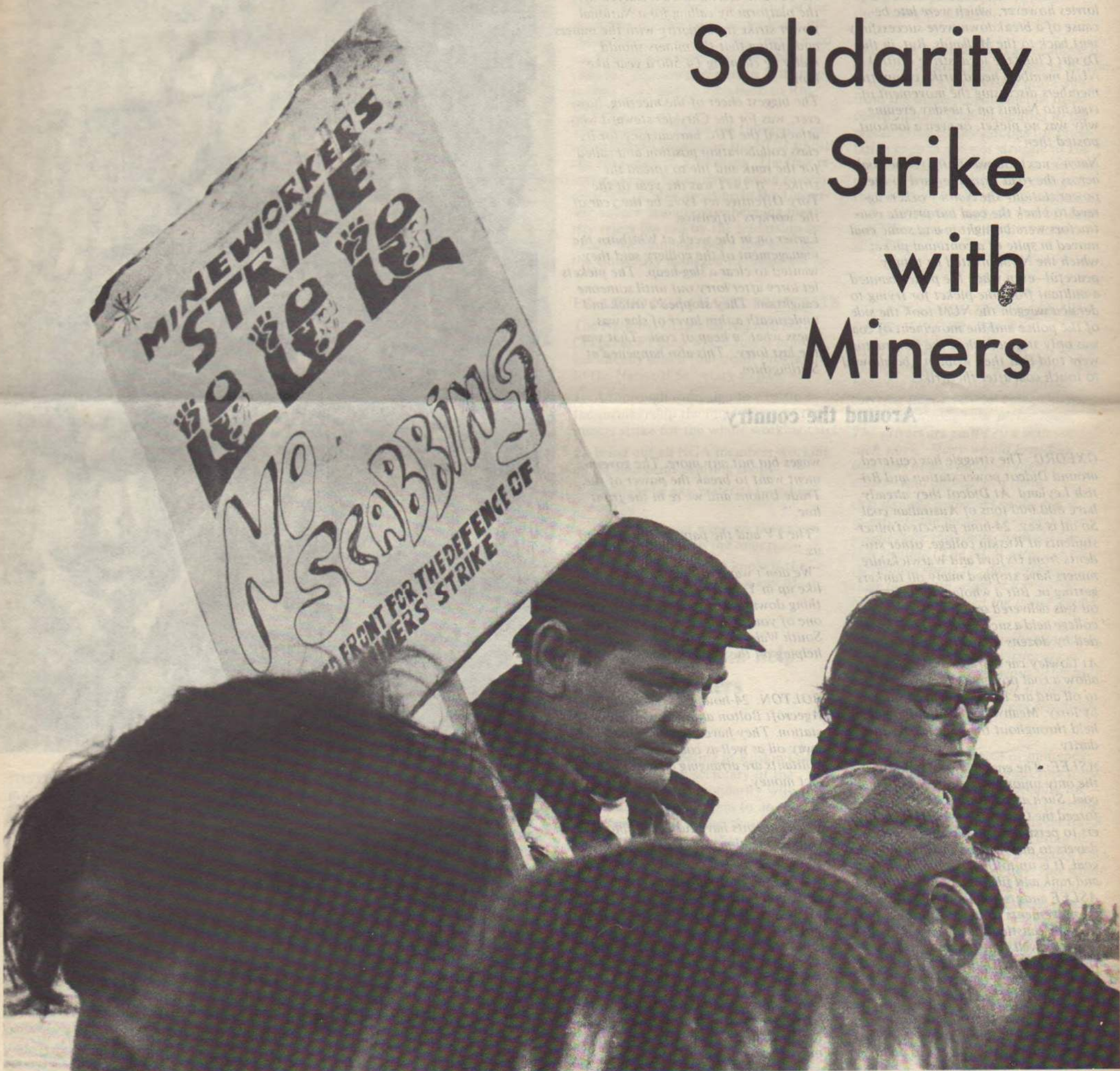


The Red Mole

MINERS' STRIKE SPECIAL No. 2 2p

Turn Power Go-Slow into
Solidarity
Strike
with
Miners



SMASH THE 7% NORM

Scotland

KIRKCALDY — 23.1.72

SCABS IN SCOTLAND

With complete solidarity from unionised labour, at least as far as movement of coal is concerned, the main trouble spot has been at Nairn Williamson and Son's Linoleum Factory where un-unionised labour working for small private contractors and scab labour have been used to haul coal to their yard and from there across Den Road to the factory power station.

On Wednesday a large contingent of striking miners was interrupted by a Union member who reported that coal was being moved at Nairns—a picket of 40 left the meeting and went to the factory where it was found that 14 lorries (200 tons) had already unloaded—2 lorries however, which were late because of a breakdown were successfully sent back to the Midlands. But in the Dysart Club (the local strike centre) NUM members heard strike committee members discussing the movement of coal into Nairns on Tuesday evening—why was no picket, or even a lookout posted then?

Nairn's next job was to move the coal across the road from the yard to their power station—the Nairn workers agreed to black the coal but private contractors were brought in and some coal moved in spite of a continual picket which the NUM insisted be totally peaceful—even when the police banned a militant from the picket for trying to derail a waggon the NUM took the side of the police and the movement of coal was only stopped when the Contractors were told that they wouldn't be allowed to touch coal after the strike.

Now scabs from England have been brought in at £20 a day and the picket continues, but the coal is still moving and the NUM are still insisting that a passive approach is taken to these class traitors.

WHITBURN

A joint demonstration of about 400 was held on 22nd by Polkemmet miners and British Leyland and Chrysler Lothian strikers in mutual solidarity. The march included workers from Lothian Industrial Cleaners on strike because 2 miners had been taken on by the management. The mood of the meeting which followed was militant and that mood caught Alex Wilson (MP for Hamilton) who just about knocked fellow MP's Judith Hart and Tam Dalyell off the platform by calling for a National power strike in solidarity with the miners and stating that the miners should really be claiming £4,500 a year like him.

The biggest cheer of the meeting, however, was for the Chrysler steward who attacked the TUC bureaucracy for its class collaboration position and called for the rank and file to spread the strike—"if 1971 was the year of the Tory Offensive let 1972 be the year of the workers' offensive."

Earlier on in the week at Whitburn the management of the colliery said they wanted to clear a slag-heap. The pickets let lorry after lorry out until someone caught on. They stopped a truck and underneath a thin layer of slag was guess what? a heap of coal. That was the last lorry. This also happened at Stirlingshire.

Around the country

OXFORD: The struggle has centered around Didcot power station and British Leyland. At Didcot they already have 800,000 tons of Australian coal. So oil is key. 24-hour pickets of miner-students at Ruskin college, other students from Oxford and Warwickshire miners have stopped many oil tankers getting in. But a whole train-load of oil was delivered on the 22nd. Ruskin college held a successful meeting attended by dozens of local shop-stewards.

At Cowley car workers are refusing to allow a coal powered plant to switch to oil and are blacking coal coming in by lorry. Meanwhile meetings are being held throughout the colleges in solidarity.

ASLEF: The engine drivers' union is the only union so far to officially black coal. Such an admirable decision has forced the Government and the employers to persuade non-unionised lorry drivers to dirty their hands with blacked coal. It is up to the NUM leadership and rank and file miners to persuade ASLEF and its members to black all oil movements to power stations. That goes for caustic soda and maybe other things as well. The slogan is simple: **IF IT'S NEEDED—BLACK IT!**

FROM SOUTH WALES

"We're going to fight this one out until either we've won or we've been sold out." "First of all it was about

wages but not any more. The government want to break the power of the Trade Unions and we're in the front line."

"The TV and the papers are poison to us."

"We don't want any of that nastiness like up in Yorkshire. If you try anything down here we won't be arresting one of you; it will be all of you inside." South Wales cop to our comrades helping on the picket line.

BOLTON: 24-hour pickets are out at Agecroft Bolton and Kearsley power station. They have managed to turn away oil as well as coal. Local student militants are arranging a concert to collect money.

"The students have turned up bloody trumps this time. We'll help them when they need it," Bolton miner.

ROTHERHAM: All looks set for the creation in Rotherham of a Strikers' Claimants' Union. SS Office watch out!

BATHGATE—VICTORY AGAINST SS

Spread this one around! Two single striking miners were each paid £6 at the SS Office. So Section 13 can be made to work after all.

The Red

MINERS' STRIKE WA



Issued by International Marxist Group
(British Section of the Fourth International)
182 Pentonville Road, London N.1
Tel: 01-278-2616.
Printed by: F. I. Litho Ltd.

CUT ALL THE CAPIT

Mole

NEWSPAPER No.2 2p.



TONYPANDY 1910, was a lockout that turned into a massive strike against the coal owners and the state. It began in the Ely pit in a struggle by seventy colliers for a new piece rate on a particularly difficult seam. The coal owners responded by locking out, not only the 70 men involved in the dispute, but the whole 800 men in the Ely pit. The men throughout the coalfield were outraged. The owners were answered by the South Wales Miners' Federation who called out on strike 12,000 men of the Cambrian Combine, as they said, "to teach that particular company that tyrannical action over certain men to influence others was not a paying policy". Strikes spread to the Aberdare Valley and Ogmore Valley. By the end of the first month of the strike in November there were some 12,000 miners out in the Rhonda Valley, and 11,000 out in Aberdare Valley. By mid-winter there were some 30,000 locked out or on strike.

Throughout the coalfield the miners stormed the mines to force the officials and stokers out. Then as in the present miners strike, the men had to face the whole power of the state behind the coal employers. It was not long before troops were sent in. The Tonypany miners were the most militant and stubborn in their resistance. During the rioting that broke out in their Valley the police were stoned and suffered heavy casualties. But what frightened the government most was the political ideas which gave that part of the strike its specially militant flavour. As Churchill's agent in the Rhonda reported, "...the strike committee consists of half a dozen fanatical socialists, strongly impregnated with the theories of Karl Marx"

Essex shows the way

Essex University: The first university to be occupied in solidarity with the miners. But January 19th was different for another reason: 180 miners from Yorkshire occupied the university as well. Their job was to stop coal from Rotterdam being unloaded at the small East Anglia ports and to picket the power stations in the area—principally Ipswich.

For the Tories this was an ominous sign. Mr. John Stokes MP thundered about the revolutionary implications of miners occupying a university.

An exaggeration unfortunately. But that occupation was very important. It gave the miners a permanent base of operations and plenty of willing hands to help; it removed encrusted layers of distrust built up by years of bullshit in the mass media about long-haired louts, etc. Moreover, in that first foray they forced (at Rowhedge) away a collier which couldn't find another port in Britain to unload, and had to limp back to Rotterdam.

The Government and the University put tremendous pressure on the NUM to call the men back to Yorkshire. The first response to the bureaucracy was a resounding NO! A mass meeting in the University square saw an overwhelming majority reject the call by the leadership to vacate the campus. But a few days later, the University managed to pressurize the

local Labour Party into providing accommodation for the bulk of the 100 miners left. This showed the true collaborationist policies of the organization which had been totally incapable of mobilizing any support for the strike in the area. So the occupation proper ended with 25 odd miners still on campus or in student accommodation elsewhere. But the university continues in its role as a Red Base for conducting the strike in the locality. Joint meetings of the Colchester United Front for the Defense of the Miners' strike and the miners themselves are held every day to discuss strategy and tactics at the picket, etc. And miners and students have been able to thwart attempts to drive a wedge between them by developing close personal ties to add to their unity in struggle.

The Essex occupation is an example to other universities and colleges in Britain. It represents a progressive move away from the limited, spontaneous mass-confrontation student politics to the practical use of the campus for proletarian ends in a major struggle of the working class. We say now is the time to use every university and college in the country to organise mass solidarity with the miners, both on and off campus. We say now is the time to generalize Essex.

F.I. LITHO NGA CHAPEL PROPOSALS

The National Graphical Association Chapel at FI litho where this is printed has already sent a four point programme to the National Secretary as follows:

1. A thorough campaign to explain to the membership the importance of the miners strike for the whole working class.
2. Bring out all NGA members working on NCB in-plant printing shops.
3. Blacking of any material issued by the NCB.
4. A 50 p levy per week on the entire membership to go to the miners.

The chapel does not yet know if the Union Executive will act on any of these points.

You too can help the miners

In Oxford at a meeting in Ruskin College Tom Jackson, secretary of the UPW announced his solidarity with the miners and his willingness to do anything to help. He added that he did not think there was much that his union could do. He is wrong.

Solidarity action can be carried out in thousands of different ways by many sectors of the working class. For example, the first thing the UPW could do would be to black the Coal Board—no letters in or out. They could also instruct their members to deliver all NUM mail free of charge. The postmen would be very happy to do this. NO MAIL FOR THE COAL BOARD. Then there is the NUR. Well this has not yet officially blacked coal yet and

GUARDIANS OF THE PEACE OR OF PRIVATE PROPERTY?

Readers in the North might not know of the goings on in Dover. There have been big fights to stop scab lorries carrying imported coal being driven (literally) through the picket lines. The drivers are paid £20 a shift for such work. Many would brandish iron bars at any picket-student or miner—who approached them.

One day the police asked the NUM to call off the picket. They said they would close the wharf 'to avoid further trouble.' The NUM agreed. And the miners spent the day gritting their teeth with anger as lorry after lorry was let through the police carrying coal!

Warning! There is now only a token picket at Dover. Many lorries are getting through. A previous offer by the NUM of free buses for students down to the docks has been scrapped.

given Sid Green's degree of militancy, it never will. But how about free travel for striking miners and especially for the flying pickets? The NUM is having to spend thousands of pounds on travel expenses. If the NUR won't bring its members out on strike in solidarity then this is the least they can do. This would also apply to the buses and the underground. FREE TRAVEL FOR ALL FLYING PICKETS.

We could continue, for instance, dustmen could black all the coal boards, so too could, night cleaners, electricity supply workers, milmen, etc. Journalists could black all Tory and NCB propaganda in their papers and expel any of their members who peddle such dirt.

ALISTS POWER SUPPLIES

The Myth of Nationalisation

The miners' strike brings into sharpest focus the whole question of nationalisation and with it the question of the nature of the state.

Twenty three years ago the miners welcomed the nationalisation of the mines as a victory. Now virtually every miner in the land—and hundreds of thousands of other public sector workers as well—must wonder what is so different about working for the state instead of for a private employer. What is so special about nationalisation? What has it got to do with socialism?

If we look at the prices of coal, gas train fares, postage, etc., we notice something which is the key to the whole question of nationalisation. Prices are much lower for industrial concerns than for private individuals. Nationalisation does not mean running an industry for the 'public' (we will come onto the question of running it by the workers later). It means on the contrary making the 'public' to subsidize the main users—private industry.

What all the nationalised industries have in common is a) they are essential to the running of any economy; b) they are very unattractive for capital investment. Huge sums were needed to modernise them and the return on that capital is a long time in coming and anyway much smaller than can be obtained by investment elsewhere; c) at the time of nationalisation plant had been completely run down.

Nationalisation has resulted in the following: 1) instead of expropriating the capitalists who had let the various industries run to seed, the state paid and is still paying them millions of pounds for negligible assets—broken down pit-

winding gear, old fashioned steel plants, etc. This money was then invested either abroad or in those areas of industry which were expanding and highly profitable; 2) through direct taxation, mainly on the working class itself, or through bank loans at huge interest rates, the bourgeois state has the ability to channel millions of pounds into the state owned industries in an effort to provide a modern infrastructure which would enable British capitalists to compete on favourable terms with their international competitors; 3) any idea that the workers themselves would control these industries were quickly laid to rest. On the contrary, the rule is and always has been that the larger the capitalist is against whom the workers have to fight the harder it is to win. Private capitalists are hit by strikes where it hurts most for them—the profit sheet. The state need not be so worried by such considerations. It can hold out much longer than any private capitalist—compare the strikes in the Post Office and at Fords last year. Besides if the worst comes to the worst the state owned industry can always raise prices—and incidentally use this threat to try to isolate the striking workers from the 'public'. So workers in the public sector have often found that they bear the brunt of any 'Incomes Policy'; the state clobbers them first, as over the last year and a half and during this strike. Yet their unions are least capable of defending them; 4) in Britain the Trade Union structure is such that each nationalised industry has a separate union for the workers in it (NUM, UPW, ETU, NUR, etc.) From the start every government's policy has been to try to pull the leaderships of these unions into the decision making process (only now are they giving them no room for

manoeuvre by refusing them even that). The most notorious of these leaders, Les Cannon of the ETU, became completely at one with the management chiefs. The Union instead of being the fighting arm of the workers turned into its opposite, an instrument for policing the workers. Not just conciliation but downright collaboration was the order of the day.

It is clear that such participation by the Unions in the running of the nationalised industries has not helped the workers at all. But that does not mean that all attempts to wrest sectors of control from the management are useless. Very clearly what it does mean though is that any participation by union leaders in the affairs of an industry will only be useful if the workers themselves control these leaders and control their unions. In the Steel Industry the union, BISA-K-TA, works hand in glove with the management but it does not relay any information back to the rank and file, it does not prepare them to fight redundancies but actively assists in muzzling its membership and demoralising them. For too long this has also been the case in the NUM (pit closures) and the UPW too ('rationalisation').

To fight against the Union Chiefs becoming agents of management there is clearly no other course but the formation within the trade unions of a revolutionary tendency capable, while maintaining the unity of the trade union movement, of struggling for a class policy in all dealings with the management.

The second thing which cannot be repeated too often, is that workers' control, even in a state owned industry is not at all the same as workers' power. It is possible to imagine a situation

where workers in a factory, even a state owned one, have a great deal of control over work practice, speed, etc. But so long as they produce for the market for exchange, they will be forced to obey the laws of the market. Moreover, as we have tried to show, nationalization has been carried out in the interest of the capitalists' class who control the state. State owned industries produce for that class, serve that class. Anyone who says that nationalisation is a measure, in the interest of the working class is either consciously fooling the working class, or has not seriously thought about the role of the state which controls the industries plays. To achieve workers' power we have to overthrow that state and replace it with a state directly accountable to the working class, only then can there be real workers' control of the nationalised industries.

It is clear by now that united class action in solidarity with the miners can achieve victory. This in spite of the betrayals of the TUC (see miners' special No.1) the rightward shift of most union leaders into verbal pledges and stony inactivity, and the pathetic comings and goings between Gormley, Feather, and Carr.

But such struggle must include more than wage claims alone. Workers must organise and fight on a whole series of issues which limit the power of management and change the relationship of forces in these institutions

Students March on the Coal Board



This Red Mole Broadsheet is the second produced by the International Marxist Group (British Section of the Fourth International) on the miners' strike. The Red Mole itself (12 X pages) comes out fortnightly and costs 7½ p. Bulk orders (over 12) cost 5 p per copy, cash in advance, and are post-free. Subscriptions cost £1 for 6 months and £2 per year.

The IMG makes an urgent appeal for funds to cover some of the cost of our work during the strike. We ask all non-miners to buy this broadsheet for as much as they can afford. Or they can send donations as quickly as possible to the following address:

The Treasurer, IMG, 182 Pentonville Road, London, N.1.

We will receipt any amount at/or over £1.

For more information about the IMG write to the secretary IMG, same address.

NAME
ADDRESS
UNION

At the end of the National Union of students' demonstration in London, 5,000 students plus representatives from DATA No.5 Division marched on Hobart House, the NCB headquarters, to express their solidarity with the miners. But that march did not take place without a fierce struggle.

The NUS demonstration was called in response to the Government's proposals on students unions, which if passed would emasculate them by cutting off their funds and preventing them from playing any positive role in the class struggle. Students have no economic power like workers, but they do have the power to get across certain political ideas and take certain political actions. That demonstration was a perfect opportunity to show what students can do in this way—not to divert students away from the question of union autonomy, but to show what the autonomy must mean in practice.

The problem was that the CP-led executive of NUS would have none of it—all they wanted was a comfy afternoon

stroll of 'protest'. They talked of course about solidarity; they even had Kent miners' leaders and CP member Jack Dunn on the platform. But when it came to solidarity in action, that was another thing altogether. They would not even allow a rank-and-file miner onto their platform before the march.

The Left wing, chiefly the International Marxist Group and the I.S., work in the NUS through the Liaison Committee for the Defence of Students Unions. They were committed at their national conference to making the march one of solidarity with the miners, to bring out the real meaning of union autonomy. But even here there were cold feet. A proposal at the committee to try to change the route of the march so as to go via Hobart House was defeated—by the I.S.!

The IMG then decided to go ahead and try to organise this anyway, believing that this decision contradicted that of the conference, that it was necessary to differentiate the Liaison Committee quite clearly from the purely verbal solidarity of NUS, and that this move

would win wide support from students. The response proved us to be correct—in particular from those students, like those at Canterbury and Colchester, who have been most active on the picket lines. It should be noted that a contingent from DATA also marched to the Coal Board. Does the CP and the IS think this union is ultra-left? The march to Hobart House was not counterposed to work on the picket lines; on the contrary it was intended to reinforce it by demonstrating to a mass of students rather than the converted few the importance of the strike. Not to have led that march would have been to fail to try to extend the support among students for the strike at a time when the miners need every kind of support they can get. The role which students can play in the strike is relatively small compared to the potential power in action of the trade unions. Nevertheless, as many miners already realise, it is by no means insignificant, and every effort must be made to extend it and involve as many students as possible.