

Mensheviks Teach by Negative Example

RCP Coalfield Work Advances in Struggle

The recent two line struggle in the Revolutionary Communist Party against the revisionist, reformist line consolidated in the Jarvis-Bergman Menshevik headquarters was clearly reflected in the Party's work in the coalfields. The struggle waged against the Menshevik line in this area was significant not because of the influence of the handful (or more closely, a fingerful) of Mensheviks themselves in the work. Their actual role was negligible. It is significant and merits review because the line that was crystallized in the one or two Menshevik followers there did reflect certain erroneous tendencies in the work as a whole. And it was as the Party's revolutionary leadership intensified its efforts to combat and root out these tendencies in the work overall and as they were being corrected in the work in the coalfields that the Mensheviks were forced to jump out more openly to oppose the Party and its revolutionary line.

In a certain sense, the two line struggle against the Menshevik line came out so clearly in the coalfields because the level of struggle of the miners themselves posed some very sharp questions about the road forward and brought into sharp focus the different lines being put forward by the conscious forces. Time and again, in literally thousands of wildcat strikes, and most recently in the '77-'78 contract fight, miners have waged a determined and militant struggle against the profit drives of the capitalists. They have stood up against cops, courts, injunctions, and to a large extent have rolled over union hacks who have tried to block their way. At the same time, communists have played a growing role, linking up with this mass upsurge of struggle, building rank and file organization and helping to give leadership to these battles, while openly targeting the capitalist system itself as the enemy and pointing to proletarian revolution as the goal of the workers' struggle.

But despite the overall strength of the Party's work and the advance for the class represented by the fact that communists and other conscious forces were playing an active role in the miners' struggle, there has been a tendency to get swept up in the pull of the spontaneous upsurge. This went along with a tendency in the Party as a whole to get bogged down in the day-to-day economic struggle.

The two line struggle began to come to a head at the Second Plenary Session of the First Central Committee in 1976, which issued the report: "Revolutionary Work in a Non-Revolutionary Situation." For the majority of RCP cadre and other conscious forces working in the coalfields, the '76 Central Committee Report was a breath of fresh air. Struggle to understand and deepen the line it represented was taken up enthusiastically, and people got a better understanding that it was not the task of communists to be simply the "best fighters around," to go from wildcat to wildcat being the best organizers of pickets or rallies.

As Lenin stressed, left to themselves the day-to-day struggles lead to the rudimentary class understanding that workers need to unite and fight back against their immediate employers. This understanding, while it in some ways may represent an advance, is not in itself a break with the outlook of the capitalist system. And therefore spontaneous struggles like this "naturally" develop as struggles over the terms of the sale of labor

power, not in opposition to the whole wage slave setup. Certainly the working class has to wage the day-to-day economic battles against the capitalists to keep from being driven down to a "mass of broken wretches," as Marx put it. But as Marx says, workers "ought not to forget that they are fighting with effects, but not the causes of these effects"—the whole capitalist system.

In direct opposition to the advances represented by the CC Report were the errand boys for the developing Menshevik headquarters in the Party who called for a retreat. Their fundamental orientation was to pimp off the massive militant struggle of the miners and they saw the Report as a threat and obstacle to their line and their careers. They consciously tried to sabotage its implementation in the work on a daily basis and claimed that the CC Report had "two different lines in it." One "correct" line promoting linking up with the day-to-day struggles, and one "left idealist" line promoting theory over practice—standing on the side and preaching to the masses.

As far as these Mensheviks were concerned, putting forward a revolutionary political line meant that they would be "isolated from the masses." In opposition to the line of the Party they promoted pragmatism—whatever works is what's correct, judge everything by the immediate results. For these people, the masses can learn all they need to know through their particular, economic struggles. Advanced ideas were the exclusive property of a few "hotshots" and "organizers" destined to lead the masses to salvation. Underlying all this was their firm belief that the working class is just too backward to grasp advanced ideas, let alone to make revolution.

In the past year the struggle against this counter-current to the overall advances of the Party's work in the coalfields grew sharper, as it reared its ugly head in every major development of the miners' struggle.

Mensheviks "Prepare" for Contract Fight

Over a year ago, the Miners Right to Strike Committee, in which Party members have played an active and leading role, began building for the contract battle. Party members united with other members of the Committee around the significance of this battle, why it was important to the capitalists and why it was important to the whole working class. Committee members united around what demands would be stressed, particularly the right to strike, and what forms of agitation would be used.

There was considerable discussion and unity around why the main demands of the rank and file put forward by the Committee were key. But from the beginning of the work around the contract battle—even before the first national rank and file contract meeting was called by the Miners Right to Strike Committee in March of 1977, those who eventually landed with both feet in the Menshevik swamp actively tried to sabotage the thrust of the Committee's work.

In building for this national meeting the Committee put out a call in its publication, RANK AND FILE UNITY, which laid out its line on the contract fight. To the Mensheviks, even using a publication with the Miners

Right to Strike Committee's name on it—let alone with its line—was said to be "too advanced" for the masses in their home UMWA district. They thought the Committee's reputation was too hot and wouldn't unite the biggest number of workers possible. They couldn't see the essence of the controversy around the Miners Right to Strike Committee: that in the last four years it has been the one rank and file organization consistently fighting in the interests of rank and file miners; that it was "hot" exactly because it had a reputation of consistently building the fight against the companies; because it raised the larger questions facing miners and all workers; and because some of its members were communists. So instead of using RANK AND FILE UNITY, these guys published a rag called THE MINER.

Not only did this publication turn its yellow back on the Miners Right to Strike Committee, it turned its back on the overall correct political line the Committee represents. THE MINER put forward the upcoming contract fight as just another battle. "Well, it's contract time again..." they said. The demands of the rank and file were put forward as a hodge-podge wish list and the key importance of the Miners Right to Strike Committee, of which they were allegedly a part, was not stressed at all. It was just another ho-hum fight on the endless treadmill.

After sharp struggle went on around the publication of this rag and what it stood for, the Mensheviks finally agreed to use RANK AND FILE UNITY, but their line was far from smashed.

The Fight Against Health and Welfare Fund Cut

The 40% cutback in miners' medical coverage which came down in July 1977 was a major attack on miners and their families, pensioners and widows. The UMWA Health and Welfare Funds' trustees blamed these outrageous cuts on "losses in coal production due to wildcats." The anger of the rank and file over this attack exploded into a powerful wildcat of over 90,000 miners. The Miners Right to Strike Committee played an important role, not only in building the strike, but in getting out the truth about the fund cuts. It exposed the lies of the capitalists that the miners were to blame.

Committee members got out the facts that the contract negotiated by the union and the companies did not come close to guaranteeing royalties to cover the skyrocketing cost of medical care and the increased number of beneficiaries—that bankruptcy was written into the funds from the start. But even more important, the Miners Right to Strike Committee, and the Party members within it, exposed the fact that the real aim of the cuts was not simply an attack on miners' rights to health care, but was an attack on their rank and file movement, and their very ability to fight back. The capitalists were using the funds to blackmail miners into knuckling under to the companies' efforts to stop the wildcats and increase productivity at any cost.

Again, the Mensheviks found this analysis just too controversial. They claimed they needed a "local supplement" to RANK AND FILE UNITY to pass out in districts near them because the UNITY didn't deal with enough "particulars," a favorite Menshevik term for narrowing the scope of the struggle. Now the Committee members didn't think there was anything wrong with members from different districts using a local supplement, but these guys ended up not passing out UNITY at all, only using their "supplement" which didn't put out the Miners Right to Strike Committee's analysis of the cuts. They said the cuts were simply an attack on health care—going right along with other "cutbacks in social services." Nothing about the blackmail that the cuts really represented.

The fact is that these were controversial questions. The bourgeoisie in general—and especially during the health benefits strike—worked overtime to spread their summation of the wildcats: that miners only hurt themselves by these strikes. These ideas are bound to get over with a sizable number of miners, which is exactly why it's crucial for conscious forces to get out as boldly as possible with a correct analysis of the situation, to arm the masses so they can combat these capitalists' lies. But that was just too hard for these Menshevik cowards.

The sickening ending to this one episode of Menshevik betrayal of the working class came when their chief follower in the coalfields arrogantly responded to what he had to admit were correct criticisms of their line by saying: "When you work with workers, sometimes you have to sacrifice line." In other words, to this so-called Marxist, you can't struggle politically with workers to grasp anything but the narrowest outlook. To top it off, it later came out that it was this creep himself who had written the "supplement" and that he was trying to blame his own backwardness on the masses.

Menshevik Line on Building the NUWO

In the work to form the National United Workers Organization (NUWO) the Menshevik headquarters in the Party jumped out further to oppose the revolutionary line of the RCP. All along the leading Mensheviks in the Party, who styled themselves heavy working class organizers, opposed the formation of the NUWO. They claimed it was "too early," that



Workers demonstrate at the State Capitol in Indianapolis, organized by the National United Workers Organization in support of the miners strike. The NUWO chapters had to fight and break the Mensheviks' opportunist obstructionism in building class-wide support for the miners.

Continued on page 5

Coalfields . . .

there was no basis for it, that workers couldn't possibly be united around such an advanced organization.

But when it was clear that there was momentum developing behind building the NUWO and that it would grow despite their opposition, it was an easy flip for them to jump on and try to lead the bandwagon, especially when they saw there was the potential to grab up some good positions to build their own personal careers. Above all they jumped on to make sure the NUWO would not be an advance for the working class. They even tried to use the NUWO to liquidate the Miners Right to Strike Committee, arguing that it should be known just as the miners' section of the NUWO, thus hoping to get around and bury the Miners Right to Strike Committee and its "too hot" reputation.

Their line on what the NUWO should be boiled down to making it a more militant AFL-CIO instead of an organized center uniting active fighters among the workers who see the need to take up the battle against the capitalists on all the major questions in society.

On the speaking tour to build for the NUWO in the East before the founding convention, this line came out clearly in relation to the miners' struggle. The Mensheviks promoted the miners' struggle as important mainly because the miners are "tough fighters" who turn over trucks and use guns. The Miners Right to Strike Committee was given importance not because of the political line it fights for and the leadership it represents, but mainly because it had led a lot of tough fighters. Speakers on the tour from the Committee were told by these Menshevik hotshots to "talk more about small forces leading big battles," and "tell more gun stories"!

The militance of the miners is something which is and should be an example and inspiration to other workers and the stories of their militancy should be

told. But that is not the essence of the significance of the miners' struggle. What holds important lessons for the rest of the working class is the extent to which the miners' struggle has broken through the limits the bourgeoisie tries to place on the workers' struggle, including the fact that a rank and file mass organization which has the aim of uniting miners to take up the fight against all oppression is playing an important role in these battles.

In addition, it is significant that the Party is playing a leading role in these battles and in the course of them raising the class consciousness of the rank and file and pointing out the historic mission of the working class.

Workers assembled at the founding convention of the NUWO voted to make building support for the upcoming miners' contract battle one of the new organization's first major campaigns. But as soon as the convention was over, a couple of the Menshevik opportunists who held important positions within the leadership of the NUWO tried as best they could to sabotage actually taking up this campaign.

At the National Steering Committee meeting of the NUWO in November 1977, representatives from the Miners Right to Strike Committee made a report further developing the reasons why the miners' contract battle which was shaping up was crucial for the whole class and why broad numbers of workers should be mobilized to stand with the miners. But to the Mensheviks, this was just more "left idealism."

The flip side of their line that the miners' struggle is significant because the miners are "ba-a-ad" led to their arrogant position that if the members of the Miners Right to Strike Committee could not guarantee that there would be a strike and that it would be "big and militant," the NUWO couldn't promise to put out a lot of effort into it! If the miners can't deliver, to hell with them. The self-appointed NUWO president warned against the "idealism" that the miners strike would "automatically" be a major battle for the working class. "We can't set up the NUWO [and my career, of course] for a failure by agreeing to make a campaign out of this battle before we know for sure that it will

Continued on page 15

Coalfields . . .

Continued from page 5

spin"—meaning, will we be able to make a big splash with this campaign.

Even in advance of a strike—and in the absence of any "guarantee" that the miners would succeed in waging one—it was important for the NUWO to take up the contract battle, build it as strongly as possible and sum up developments for the broadest number of workers. But even while these Mensheviks were slipping around like a bunch of street corner hustlers waiting to see if the strike was going to "spin," it was clear that the miners would strike and that it would be an important battle for the working class.

The Mensheviks failed to see what was at stake for the working class in this battle. What they did not grasp was that the aim of the bourgeoisie was to break the resistance of the miners—both in order to increase their profits and productivity in the coalfields, and to make an example of them to the whole working class.

What they ignored or distorted was that the major questions facing the miners are the same ones that workers all over are coming up against—and will even more sharply in the future. "Can you fight such a powerful enemy? Can the workers unite their ranks? Can we win? Can we break through the chains of sellout union leadership? Can't we just make peace with the capitalists? What is the road forward for our struggle?"

Given their outlook, it is not surprising that for almost two months after the NUWO steering committee meeting the Mensheviks blocked any nationally organized work around the miners contract battle. Some local chapters of the NUWO did break through this and took the initiative, but nationally the work was pretty well sabotaged while a couple of hotshots watched for indications that things were "spinning" in the coalfields.

Building "Support" on Trade Unionist Basis

When the strike did develop into something the Mensheviks could term "big and bad"—something they thought they could pimp off—they did take up building support for it among other workers. But their idea of "support" was to timidly go out to the working class on the narrowest, trade union basis. One glowing example of this was in a leaflet they put out to steel workers. The leaflet said they should support the miners because the UMWA donated \$1,000,000 to help the United Steel Workers of America organize back in the '40s and therefore steel workers "owe it to the miners."

The miners' fight for the right to strike was important, according to these opportunists, not because the struggle and victory on this issue would strengthen the whole working class in its ongoing battles with the capitalists, but because if miners got it, it would be easier for the steel workers to get it. Of course they couldn't believe that workers would come forward to support the miners on the basis of their broad class interests, they had to be appealed to on the basis of their narrowest self-interest. Hey, listen up, George Meany, you've got some faithful pupils here!

As the strike started, the Menshevik followers in the coalfields always tried to take the line of least resistance to the capitalists. They began by deciding in advance that the miners weren't going to get out there

and do anything, and that it was too risky for the Miners Right to Strike Committee to take any advanced actions—like a picket line or rally.

While there was some confusion within the Miners Right to Strike Committee on how to begin organizing rank and file struggle at the beginning of the strike, and while the idea that a contract fight should be waged by the union leadership in Washington had some currency among the masses, it was clear what was needed—and that was not to tip-toe behind the hacks. But for the Mensheviks it was too dangerous (politically and to their careers) to do anything unless they had the guarantee in advance of big turnouts and broad support. Consistent with their line, in the course of the fight and afterwards, they gave a big play to district and local union officials who they credited with providing leadership for the strike. How much more respectable and "legitimate" they think they must seem by being able to praise officials!

As the strike went on and the struggle inside the RCP came to a head, the narrowness and pragmatism of the Mensheviks in the coalfields degenerated into outright crimes against the masses, in a desperate effort to build their own puny clique. Their "big gun" (actually he was more like a toy pistol) misappropriated Committee funds, dishonestly tried to raise money in the name of the Committee (putting a different address out as that of the Committee), tried to build actions in direct opposition to events and actions that had been democratically decided on and planned for by the Miners Right to Strike Committee as a whole, and backed off and tried to change the Committee's stand on the main demands of the rank and file as soon as he saw that it meant a real fight.

He was finally expelled from the Committee when all of his outrageous nonsense came out after the strike. As the resolution of the Committee on kicking him out summed up his role: "It adds up to a real attempt by a self-seeking misleader to take a fighting rank and file organization and turn it to the purpose of building his own self and his little group of sidekicks. The working class, the rank and file miners, and the Miners Right to Strike Committee have no use for this kind of low-life. And it's on this basis that we expel him. Good riddance!"

Key Importance of Line

Since the RCP was formed the revisionists emerging inside the Party complained and whined about how the revolutionary communists in the RCP were "too concerned about line." One of their biggest criticisms of the Party's work in the Miners Right to Strike Committee was that it suffered from what they panned as "correct-linism," their term for the struggle to grasp and put forward a line which represents the fullest interests of the proletariat, rather than their own narrow, self-serving drivel.

Soon after its formation the Party's revolutionary leadership unfolded struggle and education aimed at combating the economist and pragmatist trend—particularly through a series of articles and campaign around the mass line—stressing that the mass line is not a mirror to reflect the masses' spontaneous understanding, but a weapon based on revolutionary science and the underlying laws of class society. Taking up the struggle to grasp Marxist-Leninist theory and repudiate opportunism is a key element in enabling the Party to develop the correct political line and lead the masses forward.

But, for the Mensheviks, taking up the theoretical struggle was merely a "diversion." They couldn't

in all arenas of the class struggle. Further developing this role goes hand in hand with further strengthening the Party as the revolutionary vanguard of the working class. Now that our Party has won an important victory in smashing the Jarvis-Bergman clique we can continue to learn from their negative example, root out similar tendencies in our own understanding, and move forward in this important task.

In the book *The History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union*, Stalin said, "A whole generation of the revolutionary proletariat was reared by *Pravda* [a mass working class paper of their party]." (p. 153) While this does not describe today's situation in our country, the future holds vast potential. With the victory against this Menshevik clique and its petty reformist and thoroughly revisionist line, through deepening our grasp of the correct line and revolutionary work based on it, and with the further development of the objective situation, we can make big strides. On this question—no doubt earning again the label of "idealists," a label we proudly wear when pinned on us by revisionists for fulfilling our responsibilities as the proletariat's revolutionary vanguard—we would like to quote Lenin:

"We should dream . . . There are rifts and rifts . . . My dream may run ahead of the natural march of events or may fly off at a tangent in a direction in which no natural march of events will ever proceed. In the first case my dream will not cause any harm; it may even support and augment the energy of the working men . . . The rift between dreams and reality causes no harm if only the person dreaming believes seriously in his dream, if he attentively observes life, compares his observation with his castles in the air, and if generally speaking, he works conscientiously for the achievement of his fantasies. If there is some connection between dreams and life then all is well." Of this kind of dreaming there is unfortunately too little in our movement." (*What Is To Be Done?*, Chapter 5, Section B) ■

understand the '76 CC Report when it said, "The role of theory in building the revolutionary movement of the working class is crucial . . . Because capitalism cannot be overthrown and abolished with spontaneity, by the working class on its own, without theory to guide it, and the Party cannot lead the working class in achieving this without waging the theoretical struggle, together with the economic and political." Without this understanding, the "linking up with struggle" that the Mensheviks yell about can only mean tailing along with their eyes glued firmly to the backs of the masses.

The article "Miners' Struggle at a Crossroads," in the December 1977 issue of *REVOLUTION*, particularly incensed them. This article was a real contribution to the work of communists and other conscious forces because it was an accurate summation and concentration of the key problems and questions that had arisen out of the struggles of the miners themselves and of the work of Party members to develop the struggle of the miners as part of a class conscious and revolutionary movement of the working class. The Mensheviks in the coalfields would have been too exposed at that point to oppose the article altogether.

Instead they criticized it by saying, "It's OK as far as it goes, but it doesn't give enough particular guidance on building the struggle." Their "criticism" exactly missed the point of the "Crossroads" article, that the crucial thing that miners and the whole working class have to grasp is not just that you have to fight the effects of exploitation, but that the fight must become increasingly a class conscious fight against the whole capitalist system, that under the leadership of communists the struggle must become a struggle against all oppression and the system of wage slavery itself.

The article spoke directly to many of the questions miners were raising about what the hell they were accomplishing by their constant guerrilla war with the coal bosses. It explained the vital importance of these day-to-day battles that the working class must fight to keep from being driven down to the level of a "mass of broken wretches." It made clear that it is not enough to "build the struggle, build the struggle." "It is exactly in the tremendous upsurge of struggle that it becomes clear again that building the day-to-day struggle as an end in itself is a dead-end. The problems of workers everywhere are not solved by one piecemeal reform after the other, but by building an increasingly revolutionary workers movement that recognizes the face of its enemy, recognizes and struggles against all oppression and aims at the overthrow of the system itself."

The Mensheviks complained that this was just more "left idealism," that the "Crossroads" article did not give enough "particular guidance" for the work and merely left the cadre demoralized and thinking they should not be involved in the day-to-day struggles of the working class. Bull! They knew what the Party's revolutionary leadership was calling for—and they opposed it.

Their line was to keep the workers riveted to the day-to-day economic battles. They opposed the slogan "Workers Unite to Lead the Fight Against All Oppression" and in fact dropped it as soon as they left the Party. They opposed any real effort to point to the system of capitalism as the chain around the necks of the workers.

In a rag they fraudulently call the "Worker" the Menshevik headquarters did not even mention the capitalist system in their so-called "sum-up" of the contract strike. The significance of this strike is summed up as being simply that the miners fought hard and resisted the bosses' attacks. Then they run out their gem on what the lessons of this strike are for the miners: "What the strike pointed out was the need to fight in an organized, unified way . . . The need for rank and file mine-to-mine organization has never been clearer. The need to strengthen the union, roll over the bloated toads at the top and fight in the miners' interests remains." Certainly true, but left there how is this summation any different from militant trade unionism?

Finally, they conclude that the miners strike was a "glimpse of the future." What was this future they envisioned for the working class? A future of endless, bigger and badder trade union struggles. Not one word which would assist in building these struggles in a way that will lead to the smashing of the treadmill of capitalism and the overthrow of the capitalist class.

The irony of the Mensheviks' line of "build the struggle, build the struggle" is that their contempt for the masses—their unshaken conviction that the masses can't grasp revolution—leads them to backing off from the struggle altogether. These misfits never did do any work in their home UMWA district. In the face of heat from the union hacks and the bourgeoisie, their response was to run off, often hundreds of miles away, under the pretext of "leading the struggle."

Unity of Opportunists

Not surprisingly, these Mensheviks have a great deal of unity with other opportunists and agents of the bourgeoisie masquerading as "communists"—in particular the revisionist Communist Party (ML), but also the older revisionist CP and something called the Communist Labor Party (formerly CL). Not only do they unite with the CP and the CP(ML) in slandering the Miners Right to Strike Committee and the work of the Party, they do it from the very same basis.

Continued on page 16

Party Press . . .

Writing a few months later in an internal document in an area under the grip of these revisionists, a glib-tongued, empty-headed hack in their clique wrote the following about the "progress" on their local *WORKER*, which he headed up: "In the [1976] CC Report, it says we are not good enough at exposure, and that our low theoretical level holds us back. This is true. But the gaining of theory can't be separated from fighting idealism and metaphysics. The paper had to root itself in the real world, the objective contradictions and struggles. Only by doing this could the question of theoretical level be raised in a real and not abstract way." (emphasis added) That was one big "but." This hackneyed honcho was openly opposing the line of the Central Committee, and expressing this clique's characteristic hatred for the theoretical struggle. Any form of rational knowledge is just "abstract" to them, and ideas—at least correct ones—are "idealism."

For this reason this clique never seriously took up the theoretical struggle in general, nor did they take a revolutionary approach to the theoretical journal—though they would occasionally dabble in it. Their social base was an unholy alliance of pragmatists plus a few dilettante intellectuals who would flit about, gathering a smattering of knowledge and isolated facts to impress others with their "expertise" and produce an incredible mishmash of various schools of bourgeois thought with a "Marxist" coloration. Jarvis and Bergman personally combined and concentrated both pragmatism and dilettantism. As Marx said of Proudhon, "he seeks to be the synthesis, he is a composite error."

The Party's press is a potentially powerful weapon

Coalfields . . .

Now the Mensheviks put down the Miners Right to Strike Committee as a "small rank and file committee [the RCP] was backing." In the April 10 issue of the *CALL*, the CP(ML), like the bourgeoisie and the hacks, try to claim that the Miners Right to Strike Committee is a small irrelevant handful and try to deny its role and influence. (Just the sheer number of times and the virulence with which the hacks and the bourgeoisie repeat this would make people think the Committee's role must be fairly significant.)

Like the Mensheviks, the CP(ML) says that the Committee is "sectarian," "splittist" and "divisive." They are a "small but destructive force within the miners' movement . . . fueling anti-communism among the miners." The older revisionist CP had about the same thing to say shortly before the strike began.

What the Mensheviks and their blood brothers mean is that to raise anything but trade unionism will "cause trouble and be disruptive." For them it's OK to attack some of the hacks, sometimes. But only in the context of putting themselves forward as the new saviors.

Sure the Miners Right to Strike Committee is the subject of much controversy in the coalfields and sharp red-baiting attacks from the capitalists and their agents in the union. Before and during the strike the bourgeois media and the union misleaders waged a frenzied red-baiting attack in the media throughout the coalfields against the Committee and the Party. The Committee has not backed off on the fact that there are RCP cadre in it, nor have Party members backed off of the question of communism.

Many miners, including members of the Miners Right to Strike Committee and miners who work with it, recognize that the basis for the attacks is the fact that the capitalists see the Committee and the Party as a real threat. It's no accident that anyone connected with the CP(ML) has for the most part stood outside this controversy, despite their implications to the contrary.

There is no way that genuine communists or an organization that has communists in it can escape being controversial. The point is that communists must take advantage of the opportunities created by this controversy and turn it into a good thing. (As for the CP(ML)'s own work in the coalfields, their only whisper of it in their sum-up article on the strike is the following: "During the recent strike the CP(ML) has been active in the coalfields . . ." This would come as a real surprise to virtually all coal miners!)

In fact, the Mensheviks even stand a bit to the right of the CP(ML)—difficult though that may be. In con-

trast to the Mensheviks, the CP(ML) at least talks about the need to fight the capitalist system—in their paper. But these opportunists all have a fundamental unity when it comes to a program of struggle for the miners and what the road forward for their struggle actually is.

The way the CP(ML) puts it is "The Labor Movement Needs Revolutionary Leadership." What they mean is that the "Labor Movement" needs them as its leaders. The problem, say these "revolutionaries," "is that there is a whole bureaucratic apparatus, a union hierarchy of which Miller is just the current boss. The whole apparatus crushing the rank and file must be smashed, and the agents of the coal operators driven out of the union. *Only then* [emphasis added] can the initiative and leadership of the vast majority of mine workers be brought into play in running their own union organization . . . With a correct and far sighted leadership [like the members of the CP(ML)], this movement can educate and rally the majority of miners to build a fighting UMW based on a clear program of class struggle." The Mensheviks put it only slightly differently. Their whole riff reeks of "elect me and I'll do a job for you. Elect the right leaders and everything will be fine."

It is clear that these puffed-up penny-ante stepchildren of John L. Lewis couldn't possibly lead miners—or the working class as a whole—on the high, hard road to revolution. They're too busy stuck in their rut trying to figure out which way the wind is blowing. A sure sign of opportunists on the make is the line that only once good leaders are elected can the struggle be waged. Reality is just the opposite. It is only by building the class conscious understanding of the rank and file about the nature of the enemy and the battles that they face that unity and struggle can develop in a way that will break the stronghold of the top union officials and in the process fight to turn these unions into weapons in the hands of the working class.

The treason of the John L. Lewises of the labor movement, who these opportunists sound so strikingly familiar to, is not principally that they don't fight militantly for reforms on occasion, but that they limit the struggle of the working class to those reforms, condemning the workers to perpetual wage slavery.

The repudiation of the Mensheviks and the struggle to root out revisionism in the Revolutionary Communist Party has been a major victory for the working class and its vanguard in blowing away yet another obstacle the bourgeoisie would like to place in the path of the working class struggle to stick to the revolutionary course, to build the revolutionary, class conscious movement of the working class to liberate itself and all mankind from the slavery of capitalism. ■