

why

every MINER  
should be a  
COMMUNIST

The  
**WORKERS**  
(Communist)  
**PARTY**

What it is  
What it stands for  
Why every MINER  
should join

By- John Pepper



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# Why Every Miner Should Be

## A Communist

By JOHN PEPPER

*Who are the "Reds," "Communists," "Bolshies"?*

The Workers (Communist) Party is an organization of militant workers who want to fight for the betterment of the conditions of the working class and against the domination of the coal operators and all the other bosses, who want to eradicate misery and oppression forever, to eliminate exploitation of man by man, and to build a new society in which there will be no bosses, in which there will be no poor and no rich, in which the workers themselves will run the industries as well as the Government.

Every miner has heard the word "Communist," has heard the expression "Bolshevik." The operators, the newspapers, the churches, the schools have tried and are trying to paint the most terrible pictures about the frightful "Reds," "Communists," "Bolshies." We turn now to the miners themselves and request them not to believe the operators and their allies. They know themselves, from their own experience, that the operators are spreading lies about the miners, are slandering everybody in the union or in the mines who dares to resist the onslaught of the coal barons. We turn now directly to the miners for the purpose of telling them who these "Reds" are, what the "Communists" stand for, what the program and aims of the "Bolshies" are.

### *The Struggle of the Miners*

The Communists are workers who think that the struggle of the miners is their struggle and ought to be the struggle of the whole working class. There has never been a more heroic struggle than the present fight of the hundreds of thousands of miners. They are fighting against the whole world. They are up against the coal operators, who have a close alliance with the big railroad companies and are backed by the Government, and are betrayed by their own leaders. The operators have every advantage in that struggle. They own the mines—the miners do not own anything. If they do not work for the operators, their only alternative is starva-

tion and misery and ruin. The miners have nothing of their own but their labor power. They are forced to sell the only thing they own—their muscles and limbs—if they want to keep alive. The operators want to smash the union. They dictate wage-cuts. They lengthen the working hours, worsen working conditions. The workers demand decent wages, which would make it possible for them to feed and clothe themselves and their families, and to send their children to school. The arrogant answer of the operators is: "We have to cut your wages. We cannot grant you a decent human living, because the industry is in a crisis, because there is more coal produced than can be sold on the market." We must raise the question: who is responsible for the present crisis in the coal industry: the workers or the operators? Facts show that the workers cannot be responsible for the crisis because they are working just the same as they used to do. Driven by the speed-up system, they are turning out today a larger amount of coal and are producing more wealth for the operators than ever before.

#### *Crisis, Anarchy, Competition in the Industry.*

There is a crisis in the industry, but responsibility for it lies on the operators, who nevertheless try to have the workers, the miners, bear the costs of the crisis. What are the causes of the crisis? The basic cause of the crisis is that the industry is unorganized. Anarchy prevails everywhere. Production in the coal mines is not regulated. The aim of the operators is not to meet the prevailing needs. There are 7,000 companies. Each produces as much as it can. Each tries to sell as much as possible. One does not know what the other is doing. There is a murderous competition for markets. Each tries to undersell the others. New machinery is introduced every day, which enables the mines to produce more and more coal. The yearly consumption of bituminous in this country is 550 million tons, but the producing capacity of the mines is not less than 1,000 million tons. The mines are able to produce today twice as much coal as the industry and consumers can absorb. The operators are closing down mine after mine, creating heavy unemployment. At the same time new labor-saving machinery is introduced, aggravating the unemployment situation everywhere. The miners are being forced

to increase their daily output by speed-up methods and longer working hours, thus making themselves in growing numbers superfluous. The operators say the industry is faced with the problem: either it must get rid of its superfluous coal or of its superfluous miners. They are driving out 250,000 miners from the industry.

Every miner must raise the question: Is it an accident that such a crisis has occurred in the coal industry, or is it an unavoidable necessity? Our answer is: Such a crisis is not inevitable. If the whole industry and the whole of society were organized on a different basis, then such crises would never occur. If the mines were not the private property of the 7,000 coal companies, if these thousands of coal companies did not compete against each other, if there were a unified, systematic plan of running the industry, then there would not be any reason for a crisis. The basic reason for the crisis is the fact that the mines and other means of production are the private property of the coal companies. These coal companies do not produce coal because they want to fulfill the needs of consumption, but only for their own individual profit. Their aim is not to produce coal but to make money. The remedy for the crisis is to organize the industry on a unified basis, to eliminate competition and to adjust production to the needs of consumption. Crises, unemployment, fight for markets, murderous competition are inevitable in a society in which the workers who produce do not own the means of production and in which those who own the means of production—the mines, factories, machines, etc.—are interested in production only because they want to make as large profits as possible. In the present society, which is a capitalist society—we call it capitalist, because the big bosses, the owners of capital, dominate it—the only way of adjustment is competition, which means that the big companies eat up the small ones and that the biggest ones are growing ever more powerful. A thorough re-organization of the coal industry is necessary. The question is: who shall pay for it? The operators want to reorganize the industry; they want to form big trusts; they want to regulate selling; they want to eliminate competition — all at the cost of the workers. The interest of the workers runs in the opposite direction. The workers also want the re-organization of the industry, want a

unified plan of running the industry, but at the expense of the operators. We want the reorganization of the industry in such a form that it should belong to the commonwealth, to the whole of society and not only to a few capitalists.

As it is today, and that must be so in a capitalist society, the workers who produce all the wealth are poor, are suffering starvation and misery. The bosses, who do not produce anything, but own the mines, the factories, and the mills, are growing ever richer and enjoy all the luxuries of life. The operators are fighting the workers not because they are defending the interests of the industry but only for the purpose of defending their own profits, their own wealth. It must be a horrible world in which such things can happen as were stated in the testimony of Rockefeller and Schwab before the Senate Investigation Committee. These big magnates declared that they owned the bulk of the shares of the biggest mining companies but did not have the faintest knowledge of conditions there and did not understand the coal industry at all. The miners produce the coal and understand the industry, and their only reward is misery and starvation. The owners of the shares, the bosses themselves, confess that they do not understand the industry, that they do not produce, and their "punishment" is luxury and power.

#### *Coal and Railroad Conspiracy*

The basis of the wealth and power of the operators and the other bosses is that they own the mines and other means of production, but that is not the only source of their power. The other source is that they stick together, organize, and at the same time try to divide the ranks of the workers and prevent them from organizing their forces. The miners have to face today not only the coal operators but the railroad companies and the banks. Virtually there is a nation-wide conspiracy of all the bosses against the struggling miners. The open-shop drive is conducted not only by the coal companies but by big business generally. All documents show and all facts unearthed by the Senate Investigation Committee prove that there is a sinister conspiracy of all capitalists, of all the owners of the mines, mills, factories, and banks, to crush the miners.

#### *It is a Fight of Class against Class*

The miners must understand that that conspiracy is a result of the present capitalist society, that the fight between the miners and the operators is not a fight of individual workers and individual operators, even not only of the coal operators and miners, but much more. It is the fight of all the bosses against all the workers. It is the fight of one class against the other. It is the struggle of the capitalist class against the working class. The workers can win this struggle only if they realize that it is a class war, if they become class conscious, if the fight of each strata of workers becomes the cause of the whole working class.

#### *The Government—the Instrument of the Operators*

Wealth and misery are not the results of individual diligence or laziness but are the consequences of private ownership of the mines, factories, and other means of production; in other words, are inseparable from capitalist society. Private property and exploitation create the class struggle. The bosses conduct the class struggle not only by wage-cuts and open-shop drives, not only in the mines and factories. The bosses, as a class, have organized the most powerful weapon to fight for their common interests—the Government. Every miner knows from his own experience what the role of the Government is in the present strike. The Government is mobilizing everything against the miners. Courts, injunctions, the National Guard, State constabulary, judges and sheriffs are at the service of the operators. Why is that? The explanation for that is that the Government is in the hands of the operators, is the organization of the bosses. To mention only a few examples: the Secretary of the Treasury, Mellon, a member of President Coolidge's cabinet, is one of the biggest share-holders of the most unscrupulous Pittsburgh Coal Company. The Governor of Pennsylvania, Fisher, was a member of the Board of Directors of the Clearfield Coal Company. And it is so everywhere. The officials of the Government are either the bosses themselves or their paid agents. The present Republican administration is nothing but an administration of the operators, but a Democratic administration would be just the same. Both parties are organized by the bosses and run by the capitalists. Both are instruments in the

class struggle against the miners, against all the workers. The operators talk about constitutional rights and democracy in this country, but these liberties and constitutional rights are only for the operators. For the workers they remain only on paper. Reality shows that the miners have to live in company towns, in which the coal operators own everything: land, streets, buildings, stores. In the company towns the operators exercise directly State power in the form of the Coal and Iron Police and company gunmen. The local judges and sheriffs are paid by the operators, as has been proved by the Senate Investigation Committee. The Senate Investigation Committee tries to put up a fair face, tries to appear impartial. In reality it is nothing but a smoke screen to deceive the workers, to create illusions in the minds of the miners. The Senate Investigation Committee will not do anything to help the miners win the strike or to defeat the sinister plans of the operators. The miners have no constitutional rights in the "freest" country in the world. And there cannot be any real democracy and freedom in a society in which a few own everything and the masses do not own anything. There cannot be any real equality—if we mean equality in practice, not only on paper—in any society in which one class has the power to exploit and oppress the other, in which one class is defending its wealth and profit against the other.

Freedom and true democracy for the workers is possible only if the workers themselves run the Government. A Government of the workers will defend the interests of the working class, because it will have as its basis the organization of the workers. The mines, factories, and shops will elect delegates and send them to local, state, and national councils.

### *The Role of the Lewis Machine*

The miners must win the present strike. To win the strike means higher wages and better conditions. But they cannot win the strike, if they do not get rid of their present leadership. The Lewis machine is nothing but an agent of the bosses in the union, is selling out the struggle of the miners to the operators as well as to the Government. The Lewis machine does not want to win the strike. It has criminally neglected the necessary preparations for the strike.

It has sabotaged the organization of the unorganized. It has signed up individual agreements. It has betrayed the cause of a national agreement. It is trying to split the movement by ousting everybody from the union who wants a militant struggle. It is cutting off relief from every striking miner who dares to criticise it; it is trying to enforce a yellow-dog pledge of starvation. It is imperative that the miners shall save the union from the onslaught of the coal operators and from the treachery of the officialdom of the union. The Communists are against the Lewis machine. We consider the Lewis machine and the whole officialdom of the A. F. of L. as the deadly enemies of the working class, as agents of the bosses and the Government. The whole trade union movement is bound to perish, if the organized workers are not able to free themselves from these misleaders of labor, if they are not able to take over the control of the unions into the hands of the rank and file. The bulk of the working class is outside of the unions, is unorganized. It is decisive in the present struggle of the miners, as well as in every other coming labor struggle, that the vast mass of the unorganized workers should be organized. But the miners must know that even the best trade unions under a good, honest, militant leadership cannot achieve more than higher wages, shorter hours, and better working conditions. Trade unions and trade union struggles alone are not able to overcome the exploitation of the workers by the capitalists. Trade unions, well organized and under militant and honest leadership, are powerful weapons in the hands of the working class, but they have their limits and cannot put an end to economic exploitation and political oppression. Only the elimination of private property in the means of production—factories, machines, mines; the elimination of classes in society; the establishment of a society which is able to create order instead of anarchy, which will overcome the present chaos, organize the industries, eliminate competition—a society in which the means of production will not be in the hands of individual capitalists but in society itself—can emancipate the working class. Such a society would be a Communist society; the working class would be the ruling class. The workers themselves would run the industries, and a workers' government would run the country. Such a society cannot be achieved by

purely trade-union methods. The workers must use political methods as well. The workers must enter on the road of revolutionary struggle. Only a revolution, only the overthrow of the present government of the bosses can create the prerequisites for a Communist society.

### *Nationalization of the Mines*

The Communist Party supports the Save-the-Union movement, endorses its program and policies. Only such honest and militant leadership as the Save-the-Union movement will enable the miners to win the strike and defeat the open-shop drive of the operators. But the Communist Party has a much more far-reaching program than the Save-the-Union movement. The aims of the Save-the-Union movement are only the improvement of working conditions, shorter hours, and higher wages. The aim of the Communist Party is to put an end to the exploitation of the workers by the bosses, to the political oppression of the working class by the Government of the capitalists. The program of the National Save-the-Union Conference puts forward the slogan of the nationalization of the mines. The Communist Party considers it as its duty to destroy all illusions which such a demand might create in the heads of the miners. The nationalization of the mines, if it were carried out by the present Government, would mean no betterment but worsening of the conditions of the miners. Nationalization of the mines by a capitalist government would simply mean that the mines would not be in the hands of individual capitalists but of the capitalists as a class. The Government of the capitalists, which is nothing but the Executive Committee of the bosses as a class, would run the mines. That would not eliminate the exploitation of the workers. It would eliminate only the competition of the coal operators—at the expense of the working class. The capitalists as a class would even be much more powerful against the workers than today. They would be even more successful against the setting up of any organization of the workers. The miners must understand that the nationalization of the mines would be a real remedy only if the government were not a government of the operators but a government of the workers themselves.

But again it would be an illusion to think that the workers

can have their own government, can overthrow the present capitalist government by elections. The capitalists would never surrender their power peacefully. There is only one way that the workers can get into power, and that is the way of revolution, a revolution of the working class against the bosses as a class. Only by means of revolution can a workers' government be established, and only a workers' government can carry out the nationalization of the mines. Even the nationalization of the mines alone would not solve the problem, because the mines depend upon the big railroad companies and the big railroad companies depend on the banks, so that a workers' government would be compelled to nationalize—to take away from the capitalists—not only the mines but also the railroad companies, banks, factories, plants, and shops of all industries.

### *Economic Struggle and Political Struggle*

The strike of the miners is an economic struggle. Without such fights, without building unions and conducting strikes, the workers would be unable to improve their living conditions, hours and wages. But no permanent gain can be achieved by the weapons of a mere economic struggle. The most powerful trade union can be paralyzed by the almighty government of the bosses, by its troops and injunctions. The workers may be robbed even of the results of a successful strike, because increasing costs of living can nullify higher wages. Economic struggle cannot free the workers from exploitation and oppression. Political struggle is also necessary, but it must be political struggle in the interests of the working class and carried out by the political organizations of the working class. Many workers also participate in political struggles, but on the side of the bosses. Today the bulk of the workers—even those who economically in their trade unions, by their strikes, fight the operators—support the political parties of those same operators, the Republican and Democratic Parties. This is a fatal mistake, because it means that the workers themselves help the capitalists to hold their grip on the State power. Those workers who still remain in the camps of the Republican and Democratic Parties are helping the operators to be the bosses of the courts, to use injunctions and armed forces to crush the trade unions and paralyze the

strike movements of the workers. In Pennsylvania and some other mining regions the miners and other workers have already established Labor Party organizations which are carrying on political action against the old capitalist parties. The Communist Party supports the formation of such labor parties which are based on the trade unions and other organizations of the working class. It is willing to participate in the formation of such labor parties, because it considers this the first decisive step toward independent political action by the working class, the first step of the workers to break away from the parties of the bosses. At the same time the Communist Party considers it its duty to tell the miners frankly that a Labor Party has its limitations and that it will not be able to lead the workers in their final struggles. Only a Communist Party can do that; only under the leadership of the Communist Party can the American working class emancipate itself from the double yoke of capitalist exploitation and oppression. We call upon every miner: Affiliate your trade union to the Labor Party and you yourself join the workers (Communist) Party.

#### *Social Legislation*

The bosses and their press are all the time boasting about the prosperity and high wages in this country, but they forget to tell one thing to the workers. They do not say anything about unemployment, sickness, accidents, and premature old age. The truth is that the high wages in America are many times only seemingly higher than those in Europe or in other countries, because all European countries have a widespread net of social legislation, while the American workers must maintain themselves when unemployed, sick, or old. The European workers, who many years ago broke away from the capitalist parties and have put up independent political fights, have been able to force the capitalists to establish social legislation, social insurance. The workers of Soviet Russia, who did not stop at independent political action but entered the road of revolutionary struggles and conquered State power, in running their own country have the most complete, the most far-reaching system of labor protection and insurance covering unemployment, sickness, old age, and accidents. It is vitally necessary that the American workers should put up the same fight and should demand immediate relief for the

unemployed, maintenance for the sick and old workers, and protective measures against accidents.

#### *American Imperialism and the War Danger*

The bosses who exploit and oppress the working class of this country are exploiting and oppressing scores of peoples of other countries which are not so well developed industrially, of the so-called "backward" countries. The miners and other workers of America have no interest at all in supporting the Government of the bosses in its intrigues, interventions, and wars against the peoples of other countries. What have the miners gained by the fact that today American imperialism is all-powerful in all Latin-American countries? The tightening stranglehold of American imperialism over nations, such as the Latin-American countries and China, which are struggling for their national freedom, has been and still is only a source of degradation and starvation for the American miners. The more powerful the American army and navy becomes, the greater the war danger, the mightier is the weapon in the hands of the bosses to crush not only the working people of foreign countries but also the strikes and unions of the American working class.

#### *What is the Communist Party and What Does It Stand For?*

The Workers (Communist) Party is the political organization of those workers who want to conduct the class struggle against the capitalists today, who want to organize the workers into unions, to struggle for the betterment of the conditions of the miners and all other workers. But the Communists at the same time know that it is necessary to go further, that the exploitation and oppression of the workers by the capitalists can be terminated only by the overthrow of the present system of government and the establishment of a government of the workers.

The operators and their helpers try to mislead the workers by throwing the mud of lies and slander at the Communist Party. One of the most dangerous allies of the bosses is the officialdom of the A. F. of L. and the U. M. W. A. These "fat boys" are mere parasites on the body of labor, are agents of the operators in the ranks of the working class. The other ally of the capitalists within the labor movement is the Socialist Party. The Socialist Party claims to be a working-

class party, but in reality it has ceased to be the champion of working class interests, has degenerated into a vacillating, shilly-shally party of the middle class. These misleaders of labor are even much more dangerous than the capitalist parties, because many honest workers follow them, believing that they are following genuine champions of the working class.

*"The Communists Are a Bunch of Foreigners"*

Such a statement is a typical capitalist lie. Indeed, it is true that there are many foreign-speaking workers among the Communists, but that is only because the bulk of the workers in the basic industries, such as steel, mining, etc., themselves are foreign-speaking workers. If there are foreign-speaking workers in the Communist Party, it is so only because the Communist Party is the only true party of the working class, regardless of language, race, or nationality. The Communists are as good Americans as anybody, but certainly the Communists are against such American nationalism which despises the Italian, Slovak, Polish, or Hungarian workers.

*"The Communists are Russian Agents"*

This is a silly accusation. We American Communists are in this struggle because we want to fight for the interests of the American working class. That is our only aim. At the same time, of course, we do not restrict ourselves in our expression of solidarity and comradely spirit to the American working class. The Communists are for Soviet Russia for the very reasons that all American workers are for Soviet Russia. The Communists recognize that the workers' and farmers' government of Soviet Russia is the only working-class government in the world and is fighting the most heroic struggle for the interests not only of the Russian working class but also of the workers of the whole world. The American Communists are nobody's "agents," but agents of the American working class in the truest sense of the word; and if they want to unite with all the workers of all other countries and nations, it is just because they know that the American working class cannot emancipate itself except by participation in the international struggle of labor. The Communists are proud of the fact that they belong to the

Communist International, which is the leader, organizer, and champion of the struggle of the workers and oppressed nations of all countries.

*"The Communists Are Disrupters of the Labor Movement"*

This is the most often-used and the most vulgar slander. Just the opposite is true. The Communists stand for the unity of labor. If anybody, the officialdom of the U. M. W. A. is responsible for the crisis and disruption in the union. The Lewis machine is responsible for sabotaging the organization of the unorganized. The Lewis machine is carrying out a policy of expulsion against all militants, against all spokesmen of the rank and file in the union.

*"The Communists Are Impractical Dreamers"*

This is the favorite argument of the more sophisticated misleaders of labor who try to keep the miners away from the Communists. Life tells us that this accusation is nothing but bunk. It is possible to overthrow capitalism and emancipate the working class. The example of Soviet Russia shows that this is not a dream. It is a fact—and a fact which looms big in the history of mankind—that under the leadership of the Russian workers a nation of 150 million, not less than one-sixth of the earth, has been able to do that and has maintained power for over ten years in spite of all the capitalists of the world.

*The Demands of the Communist Party*

The Communist Party endorses the whole program of the Save-the-Union movement. Our slogan is: Save the union from the onslaught of the operators and from the treachery of the Lewis machine.

The six-hour day, the five-day week.

Immediate State and Federal relief for the unemployed miners.

Social insurance for unemployed, old, and sick workers.

The cost of unemployed relief and social insurance should be covered by taxes on high income and capital.

Down with race discrimination against Negro workers. Equal pay for equal work.

Protection of foreign-born workers.

Fight for a militant union. Mass picketing, mass violation of injunctions against the workers and the union.

Solidarity with Soviet Russia, with the country of the first workers' government in the world.

Solidarity with the people of Latin America and China who are struggling against American imperialism.

Class struggle, class consciousness, relentless fight against the present capitalist system until the victory of the workers' revolution is achieved.

Our final aim is the establishment of a workers' government in America, based on the organization of the workers themselves in the form of workers' councils, the abolition of private ownership of the means of production, the elimination of classes, and the erection of a Communist society.

### *How Can a Miner Join?*

The Workers (Communist) Party calls upon every miner, every man and woman living in the mining camps and struggling against the ruthless operators, to join the Communist Party. Every worker who accepts the above program, who understands the lessons and conclusions we draw from the present heroic struggle of the miners, should and must join the Communist Party.

An application blank for membership is printed below. Every miner who does not want to stop in the middle of the road and understands the necessity of carrying out the fight until the final victory, until the emancipation of the working class, every miner who wants a better future for himself and for his wife and children should join the struggling army of the Communist Party.

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### **Join the Workers (Communist) Party of America**

Application for Membership in Workers (Communist) Party

NAME .....

ADDRESS .....

CITY ..... STATE .....

OCCUPATION .....

(Fill out this blank and mail to Workers Party, 43 E. 125 St., N. Y. C.)

If you are on strike or unemployed and cannot pay initiation fee please check this box. [ ]

UNEMPLOYED AND STRIKERS ADMITTED WITHOUT INITIATION and receive dues exempt stamps until employed.

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