



UKRAINIAN MINERS

Weary Ukrainian miners in Donetsk exit from their mines, wearing outdated equipment, and well aware of the daily dangers posed to their lives when they descend into the old and hazardous mineshafts. Over the past few months, an exceptional number of disasters in these mines have taken the lives of many dozens of their mining comrades. When they are paid, Ukrainian miners can receive up to \$100 US monthly, which is up to ten times the average wage in Ukraine, and still can only afford to live in shanties. These are the same miners whose persistent strikes for better pay and safer conditions in the past years have brought down Soviet and Ukrainian governments. The mines still use Soviet equipment and require an infusion of capital for new Western technologies and technical know-how.

The Donbass coal mining region of Eastern Ukraine contains some 10,000 mines which have existed for centuries. The city of Donetsk itself is so riddled with underground tunnels that approaching trains are required to slow down in order to minimize underground cave-ins. It is also ironic that, in spite of the fact that the city of 1.1 million rests on a basin of coal, it is pitch black after dark. *(Photo credit: Guy Tessier/CRCS)*

