

Mao in the Mines: An Anti-Systemic View of New Communist Movement Activity in
the Appalachian Coalfields, 1962-1978

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ABSTRACT

This thesis deploys world-systems theory to analyze two series of mid-twentieth century wildcat strikes in the Appalachian coalfields: the Eastern Kentucky-based Roving Picket Movement of 1962-1963 and a separate set of unauthorized strikes throughout the region that lasted from 1974-1978, with a particular focus on the Gas Strike of 1974, the strikes surrounding the 1974 Kanawha Country book boycott, and the 1977-1978 contract strike. More specifically, I will examine the New Communist Movement's (NCM) role in these strikes, with special emphasis on the Maoist-inspired Progressive Labor (PL)'s participation in the 1962-1963 strikes and the role of the Miner's Right to Strike Committee (MRSC), a project of the Revolutionary Union/Revolutionary Communist Party in the 1970s wildcats. I argue that PL and the MRSC's divergent experiences demonstrate the shift from the first to the second anti-systemic movement. PL's experience working with the strikers was more typical of the first anti-systemic movement; the MRSC's experience was more typical of the second anti-systemic movement. The two sets of NCM organizers' varying levels of success, different approaches to the New Social Movements, and different interactions with structural forces at play in the world-system all point to the shift in anti-systemic movements.

Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction.....1

Chapter 2: The Development of Underdevelopment in Appalachia.....12

Chapter 3: Progressive Labor’s Intervention in Hazard.....34

Chapter 4: The MRSC and the Wildcat Strikes of the 1970s.....49

Chapter 5: Concluding Remarks.....68

Bibliography.....76

Chapter 1: Introduction

This thesis deploys world-systems theory to analyze two series of mid-twentieth century wildcat strikes in the Appalachian coalfields: the Eastern Kentucky-based Roving Picket Movement of 1962-1963 and a separate set of unauthorized strikes throughout the region that lasted from 1974-1978, with a particular focus on the Gas Strike of 1974, the strikes surrounding the 1974 Kanawha Country book boycott, and the 1977-1978 contract strike. More specifically, I will examine the New Communist Movement's (NCM)¹ role in these strikes, with special emphasis on the Maoist-inspired Progressive Labor (PL)'s participation in the 1962-1963 strikes and the role of the Miner's Right to Strike Committee (MRSC), a project of the Revolutionary Union/Revolutionary Communist Party in the 1970s wildcats. I argue that PL and the MRSC's divergent experiences demonstrate the shift from the first to the second anti-systemic movement. PL's experience working with the strikers was more typical of the first anti-systemic movement; the MRSC's experience was more typical of the second anti-systemic movement. The two sets of NCM organizers' varying levels of success, different approaches to the New Social Movements, and different interactions with structural forces at play in the world-system all point to the shift in anti-systemic movements.

PL's intervention in the Roving Picket Movement contained elements of both the first anti-systemic movement and the nascent second anti-systemic movement. PL split from Communist Party USA (CPUSA) in opposition to what they viewed as the organization's abandonment of class struggle, bureaucratic top-heaviness, and unwillingness to challenge Washington's Cold War foreign policy. PL was similarly focused on opposing complacency and

¹ By the New Communist Movement, I mean the several youth-led, American Marxist-Leninist organizations that emerged in the 1960s and 1970s to oppose the Vietnam War and perceived reformism in the broader U.S. left, especially among the older socialist organizations (e.g. Elbaum 2002, 3-6).

conservatism within the American labor movement. These political concerns attracted PL to the Roving Picket Movement. The picketers excited PL by waging a militant struggle without the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA)'s leadership, which PL viewed as too moderate. To the extent that PL acted against the Old Left and organized labor's passivity, bureaucratism, and acceptance of U.S. hegemony², their organization's practices aligned with that of the second anti-systemic movement. PL nonetheless maintained a very traditional interpretation of the industrial proletariat's role in revolutionary politics. Given that the coal workers of Eastern Kentucky were mostly white and male, PL's Old Left-style approach to class struggle prevented the organization from perceiving and responding to the strike's significance for women and blacks. PL's position that feminist and anti-racist concerns are secondary to working class issues, which was apparent in their activity in support of the strike, was characteristic of the first anti-systemic movement. Finally, PL's sectarianism and hostility toward other radical groups was typical of the first anti-systemic movement; this sectarianism manifested in an opportunistic approach to the Roving Picket Movement.

The MRSC's engagement with the Appalachian wildcat strikes of the 1970s was more consistently second anti-systemic than PL's activity in Eastern Kentucky. Like PL, the MRSC was deeply opposed to the UMWA leadership's conservatism and cooperation with coal operators. The MRSC tried to avoid sectarianism. Although the organization's primary organizers were all affiliated with the RU/RCP, the MRSC was open to anyone who supported union militancy and the right-to-strike. For instance, an MRSC statement insisted that "the

² Arrighi writes that "hegemony" is "the power of a state to exercise governmental functions over a system of sovereign states" (1990, 366). Hegemony is also defined as "those situations in which one state combines economic, political, and financial superiority over other strong states, and therefore has both military and cultural leadership as well" (Wallerstein 2004B, 94). When I speak of U.S. hegemony throughout this thesis, I mean the American state's strength to lead and discipline other actors within the capitalist world-system, including capital, social movements, and other states.

Miners right to strike committee is not a communist organization. The Committee is open to all rank and file miners who want to build a fighting organization in the interests of workers and against companies” (“Miners Committee Responds to Redbaiting” 1977, 3). The MRSC inserted an internationalist perspective into their coalfield organizing by describing Appalachia as a mineral colony and depicting their work as a “broad-based attack” on global energy capitalism in line with anti-colonial movement’s goals (Weinrub 1975, 28; MRSC 1977B). MRSC activist Mike Ely’s nuanced approach to dealing with religious fundamentalism, which entailed a rejection of the miners’ most reactionary expressions of Christian fundamentalism with deep empathy and patience toward religious people, also speaks to his activist group’s nonsectarian stance. These aspects of the MRSC’s nonsectarian internationalism reflect Wallerstein’s vision of a loose, diverse international network of second anti-systemic social movements united against globalized capitalism (Wallerstein 2004A, 632).

Much like their nonsectarian, internationalist organizing practices, the MRSC’s feminist and anti-racist work among the miners aligned them with the second anti-systemic movement. The MRSC promoted feminist and anti-racist politics through their work with the strikers. As they engaged with the miners, the MRSC’s activists also enhanced their own understandings of the independence of racial, feminist, and class struggles. They came to understand that strikes in a male-dominated industry were not particularly conducive to advancing feminism, so they initiated a “two-track” approach to coalfield work that involved promoting women’s issues in other areas of coalfield life than the workplace (Ely 2009A, 15). The MRSC organizers (against their initial expectations) also soon found that black miners were less likely to strike than their white coworkers; the activists then found themselves intervening to prevent racist behavior among white strikers (e.g. Ely 2009A).

Why did the MRSC move toward a more completely second anti-systemic approach to coalfield organizing than PL? Using world-systems theory, this thesis will argue that the U.S.'s declining power within the international system enabled the MRSC's second anti-systemic approach by opening coal communities to more potentially transformative political activity. This section will now move to an overview of world-systems theory's analysis of international relations, a more formal explanation of anti-systemic movements, and a brief description of Maoism.

i. International Relations within the Capitalist World-System

First developed by Immanuel Wallerstein, World-systems theory is a contemporary interpretation of Marxism that views capitalism as a singular, world-wide division of labor, rather than a fragmented set of relations confined only to certain states (e.g. Wallerstein 1974A). While most social scientists distinguish between capitalist and non-capitalist areas, world-systems theorists think capitalism is a global system of production and accumulation that structures economic and social life not only in industrialized countries with all the most recognizable trappings of capitalist relations (such as wage labor, factory-based production, and financial markets), but also in territories that observers typically classify as feudalist or socialist (Wallerstein 1974, 389-390). A division of labor between relatively rich manufacturing-oriented areas (known as the core) and relatively poor areas that specialize in export-oriented agriculture and raw materials extraction (known as the periphery)³ distinguishes the capitalist world-system.

³ The concept of core and periphery, first fully developed by economist Raul Prebisch of the U.N.'s Economic Commission for Latin America, holds that the core (rich, strong states) can dictate terms of trade to the periphery (poor, weak states); these unequal terms of trade benefit the core to the periphery's disadvantage (Wallerstein 2004B, 11-12). Wallerstein conceptualizes the world-system as a global division of labor encompassing and reliant upon both the core and the periphery. Neither the core nor the periphery exists separately; under world capitalism, there must be a periphery in order for there to be a core (Wallerstein 2004B, 16-18).

The core regions develop heavy industry and attain a greater level of wealth than the periphery because the core's states are stronger; using their stronger state apparatuses, the core imposes the protectionist boundaries needed to foster manufacturing. The periphery has weaker state apparatuses, which prevents them from engaging in the state-directed development necessary for industrialism. The periphery also has weak leaders (sometimes known as compradors)⁴ who are more interested in maintaining open borders so that they may import luxury goods than growing their own economies. Thus, the core (through processes like colonialism, mercantilism, and the like) forces the periphery into a state of dependency upon importing manufactured goods from the core while exporting cash crops, raw materials, and low-wage labor to the core. The core's development and the periphery's underdevelopment both stem from the core's firmer political power (Wallerstein 1974, 400-403). As chapter one will detail, not all cores and peripheries are nation states; peripheral areas may also exist within core states as the "internal-periphery" (Nolte 1995; Walls 1978) or "Third World within" the core (Wallerstein 1992, 103).

The relationship between core and periphery is not frozen: some core areas will fall from power and some new regions may rise to the status of the core. Two processes that drive change and evolution within the capitalist world-system are hegemonic succession and semi-peripheral development, in which semi-peripheries replace core states. The semi-peripheries have characteristics of both the core and the periphery. Semi-peripheries are developing areas that use some industrial planning to develop their economies and redress the underdevelopment the core imposed upon them (Hall and Chase-Dunn 2006, 35). Semi-peripheries serve the core by politically manipulating the periphery (Wallerstein 1974, 405). For example, the U.S. uses the

⁴ Mao defines compradors as native capitalists within colonized areas who cooperate with foreign colonizers to enrich themselves (1968, 8) (2002B, 151).

loyal semi-peripheral states of Israel and Saudi Arabia to militarily repress and buy off liberation movements throughout the Middle Eastern periphery (Toth 1995, 6). However, they can also displace core powers in periods of hegemonic succession. Hegemonic succession is how certain core powers come to lead the core for brief periods before falling from power, after which an anarchic period of intense core-core competition ensues, followed by a new hegemon's ascension (Hall and Chase-Dunn 2006, 38). Over the historical course of the capitalist world-system, various core states have risen to power before falling, including Holland in the 1600s, Britain in the 1800s, and the US in the twentieth century (Hall and Chase-Dunn 2006, 38). The new hegemonic states usually replace the falling core powers by rapidly emerging from the semi-periphery during a process called semi-peripheral development (Hall and Chase-Dunn 2006, 49). Semi-peripheral states are able to rise to power during periods of hegemonic succession because, unlike the core, they are not heavily invested in old forms of social organization and, unlike the periphery, they have enough resources to experiment with new institutional processes (Hall and Chase-Dunn 2006, 49). Thus, semi-peripheral states come to dominance in periods of intense competition by developing the new the technological, political, and market processes that bring stability to the world-system (Hall and Chase-Dunn 2006, 55).

The U.S. is presently in a process of hegemonic decline and China will probably be the next semi-peripheral country to become hegemon (Wallerstein 2003, 33; Arrighi 2005, 115). The U.S. became hegemon after the Second World War because the conflict destroyed America's core competitors' economies and because war-time statist production guaranteed and enhanced American industry (Wallerstein 2014, 162). U.S. hegemony is in a process of decline as a resurgent Europe and Japan threaten American industry's quasi-monopoly status, as national liberation movements secure an increasingly independent semi-periphery and periphery, as the

U.S. becomes militarily overextended through debacles like the wars in Vietnam and Iraq (Wallerstein 2006, 90; Wallerstein 2014, 164), as the U.S. turns from manufacturing-based production to finance (Arrighi and Silver 2001, 271), and as American industrial promotion wanes and corporations outsource American industry to less-developed areas (Wallerstein 1974, 412). However, as American hegemony sinks, the world-system will not undergo a regular hegemonic shift; the new transfer of power will mark a transition to a new, non-capitalist world-system. The world's unemployment, environmental degradation, overconsumption, and state bureaucracy have reached unsustainable levels and capitalism cannot regenerate itself through another hegemonic transition; a new world-system must emerge (Wallerstein 2014, 167-168). Whether this new world-system will be reactionary and undemocratic or socialist and democratic remains to be seen and depends on the strength and ability of social movements resisting capitalism's upheavals (Wallerstein 2014, 171; Arrighi and Silver 2001, 279).

ii. Anti-Systemic Movements

Capitalism perpetually generates anti-systemic social movement in opposition to its excesses. Anti-systemic movements are "revolts against the system" opposing the exploitation and polarization that characterize the capitalist world-system (Wallerstein 2002, 18; Wallerstein 2014, 158). These social movements' qualities have changed in response to declining U.S. hegemony. Wallerstein marks this change by separating an older family of movements that emerged between 1848 and 1968, which he calls the first anti-systemic movement, from a newer family of social-movements that emerged after 1968, which he calls the second anti-systemic movement.

The first anti-systemic movement developed in the form of nationalism and socialism around the concerns of those displaced by colonialism and the beginnings of industrialism. Two

interlocking historical factors blunted the first anti-systemic movement's revolutionary edge. First, after the failure of the attempted uprisings of 1848 convinced activists that spontaneous uprisings alone cannot displace the system, socialist and nationalist parties turned to bureaucracy and statism to ensure their long-term organization viability. As the first anti-systemic actors became concentrated on conserving their institutional capacity, they pushed certain liberatory priorities into the distant future: "both the social and the nationalist movements argued that asserting an independent role for feminist movements [as well as movements of racial minorities] weakened their cause, which took priority" (Wallerstein 2014, 161). The first anti-systemic actors relegated the concerns of women and minorities to secondary status (Wallerstein 1990, 37)⁵. Secondly, the U.S.'s hegemonic consolidation entailed pacifying the first anti-systemic movement's actors by integrating them into the world-system in such a way that they did not present a challenge to global capitalism itself (Wallerstein 1992, 103). After World War Two, the U.S. facilitated decolonization to moderate the anti-colonial movement (Wallerstein 1992, 103), tolerated social democratic parties throughout Europe and expanded its own welfare state to promote economic and political stability (Wallerstein 1990, 30-33), and entered into an informal set of agreements with the Soviet Union to more-or-less prevent the Soviets from exporting revolution beyond the Iron Curtain (e.g. Wallerstein 2006). Thus, U.S. hegemony

⁵ Two brief examples demonstrate how the first anti-systemic movement relegated feminist and minority causes to secondary importance. At the CPUSA's founding convention, the party adapted a resolution on racism that reads as follows: "The Negro problem is a political and economic problem. The racial question of the Negro is simply the expression of his economic bondage and oppression, each intensifying the other. This complicates the Negro problem, but does not alter its proletarian character" (qtd. Shawki 2006, 129). Such an interpretation of American race relation implies that addressing and uprooting racism is a task best saved for a post-revolutionary society and that radicals should now focus primarily on class (as opposed to race) issues. The Old Left often expressed similar views on women's liberation. The first anti-systemic socialists consistently emphasized "social production as the site of revolutionary consciousness and proletarian agency" thus displacing "women and their concerns" (Buhle 1992, 829). For instance, the early workers' movement supported the "family wage" policy, which guaranteed high enough wages for men to support their wives and children but which also legitimized women's exclusion from well-paid work (Wallerstein 2004B, 70).

allowed gradual advances for the first anti-systemic movement, but as the first anti-systemic actors consolidated some form of state power world-wide, they began to abandon their opposition to the capitalist world-system and dedication to liberating women and minorities.

A new anti-systemic movement appeared as U.S. hegemony began declining in the late 1960s. As American statism could no longer discipline capital, neoliberalism began to turn back the periphery's modest gains in development and the core's modest welfare state expansions. People began to turn on the first anti-systemic movement that was increasingly less able to defend them from capitalism's upheavals (Frank and Fuentes 1989, 1505). People were also frustrated with the USSR and traditional communist parties for acquiescing to American imperialism, failing to live up to their obligations to international solidarity, and developing an elite class of bureaucrats within their own ranks (Wallerstein 1974, 395-397; Wallerstein 2014, 164). As a result, a new series of new anti-systemic movements, including revivalist anarchists, Maoists, the New Social Movements, human rights organizations, and the alter-globalization movement have challenged the old movements. The second anti-systemic movement's actors are typically less statist and bureaucratic, less sectarian, and more internally-democratic (Wallerstein 2014, 164). More open to a diversity of struggles, second anti-systemic actors are less likely than their traditional socialist and nationalist forefathers to cast feminist and anti-racist struggles as secondary to class or national struggles (Wallerstein and Zurkin, 437-438).

With this in mind, it is necessary to point out that the second anti-systemic movement unleashed a series of challenges and setbacks upon global opposition movements as a whole. The first anti-systemic movement, sometimes with good reason, described the second's concerns with particular struggles (of minorities for greater representation, for instance) as divisive and distracting (e.g. Arrighi, Hopkins, and Wallerstein 1989, 88-89). By delegitimizing the Old Left

parties and the classic welfare state, the second anti-systemic movement was partly responsible for neoliberalism's ascension (Wallerstein 2003, 31). By delegitimizing Old Left ideologies, the second anti-systemic movement opened the door for religious fundamentalism and the New Right to gain influence globally, particularly in the periphery (Wallerstein 1990, 43). With reactionary world views increasing in strength after the Old Left's fall from grace, it will take much commitment on the second anti-second movement's part to ensure the new system/s which emerge to replace the capitalist world-system are democratic and not fascistic (Wallerstein 2002, 37-38).

iii. A Note on Maoism

Some radical activists have found Mao's approach to organizing the oppressed useful for their work in Appalachia. Mao's "mass line" process enables the powerless to develop the confidence and farsightedness necessary for revolutionary activity. Mass line organizing requires direct immersion among the masses, patient consciousness-raising, and some degree of tolerance for the masses' religious views. Mao instructs party activists to live and work directly among the masses. Cadre must slowly raise their base's political consciousness by investigating the people's immediate concerns, waiting until the people understand the issues at hand before compelling the people to take action, helping the masses articulate their demands, and organizing the masses to fight for their demands (Mao 1968, 68-72). This process necessitates a flexible stance on religion. Party organizers should not attack the people for their religiosity, but instead work among the masses to slowly persuade them to adopt more progressive views (Mao 2002B, 134-136). The people will abandon religious conservatism through a process of struggle against their oppressors (Mao 2002A, 43) Socialists working in Appalachia have found Mao's advice for merging with and uplifting religious, passive, and exploited people helpful (e.g. Fisher and

Foster 1979, 177). MRSC activist Mike Ely says he followed Maoist strategy to fuse with and lead the people “through struggle, study, and transformation” (2009C).

Wallerstein says Maoism played a brief but important role in the second anti-systemic movement’s development as a challenge to the Soviet Union’s first anti-systemic Marxism. Wallerstein identifies with Maoism’s opposition to bureaucratic elitism within communist parties and focus on the continuity of class struggle even after revolutionary consolidation (1974, 394-395). He likewise says western Maoists played a key role in breaking up the Old Left’s grip over emerging anti-systemic forces during the “revolution of 1968.” However, it was not long before most western Maoist groups replicated the Old Left’s negative qualities, especially narrow sectarianism (Wallerstein 2002, 34). Given that Maoism was as a catalyst of the second anti-systemic movement, it will be useful for me focus on Maoist organizations as I describe how the second anti-systemic movement in Appalachia developed in tandem with U.S. hegemony’s decline. Likewise, given that hardliner communist organizations are what Andre Gunder Frank and Marta Fuentes call “consciously anti-systemic” (that is, aware of their role in opposing the capitalist system itself, rather than just some aspects of this system) (1987, 1508-1509), the RU/RCP and PL will serve as more useful markers of the anti-systemic movement’s development than other, less explicitly anti-systemic organizations (like the early SNCC and the Black Lung Association) who also played important roles in the wildcat movements this thesis covers.

Chapter 2: The Development of Underdevelopment in Appalachia

i. Introduction

This chapter deploys dependency and world-systems theory to explain how a process of internal-colonization has historically underdeveloped Appalachia and how Appalachia's dependent status has shaped the two anti-systemic movements' evolution within the region. Borrowing from Andre Gunder Frank, this chapter explores how the core internally-colonized Appalachia as Northern land speculators quickly swallowed the region's mineral resources after the Civil War and hindered its development by encouraging overspecialization in extractive industry. The chapter then argues against critics of Appalachian internal-colonization theory who point out that Appalachia's economy was capitalist well before the Civil War; as Frank points out, it is possible for the leadership of some capitalist colonies (such as Australia and Israel) to achieve development by splitting from their mother countries. Appalachia's status as an internal-colony leaves the region subject to overspecialization in coal production, debilitating surplus extraction, unfavorable terms of trade, boom and bust cycles, environmental exhaustion, and degraded cultural and educational standards.

Appalachia's status of dependency within the world-system has directed the anti-systemic movements' regional development. Wallerstein writes that during the postwar period of stable U.S. hegemony the U.S. government promoted labor harmony in the core through corporatism and moderated the periphery's anti-colonial movements with developmentalist schemes (1992, 103). In the Appalachian periphery-within-the-core, these co-opting processes moderated the region's first anti-systemic movement by moving the UMWA and other social movements into a position of cooperation with the government's developmentalist initiatives. In the process, the UMWA eschewed their previous combative position toward capital and willingness to fight for

miners' jobs. Wallerstein further insists that as U.S. hegemony began declining in the late 1960s, the bureaucratic first anti-systemic movement did not possess the necessary militancy to resist a nascent neoliberalism; a second anti-systemic movement then developed in opposition to the more conservative first. In Appalachia this process played out in the form of a series of wildcat strikes that emerged in opposition to the UMWA's conservatism and the inadequacies of the government's ongoing developmentalism. Appalachia's peripheral status shaped how the second anti-systemic movement developed in the region. Like other peripheries and semi-peripheries around the world (and unlike the core), the Appalachian coalfields witnessed increased labor insurgency in response to the neoliberal offensive.

ii. The Internal-Colonization of Appalachia: Land and Mineral Rights Acquisition

Frank and Wallerstein argue that, within the global capitalist system, the development of some areas requires the underdevelopment of others (Frank 1975, 73; Wallerstein 1974, 401). All areas that manage to attain development do so by integrating other areas into global capitalism through such processes as colonialism, imperialism, mercantilism, and the like (Wallerstein 1974, 392; Frank 1975, 2). Some scholars of Appalachia echo this argument by claiming that absentee corporations based in more powerful areas and their local cronies enrich themselves by pushing the region into a state of economic dependency and weakness. Caudill, for example, notes an inverse relationship between the broader U.S. economy and Appalachia's economic strength: as the U.S. economy was doing relatively well in the 1950s, the Appalachian economy was in crisis; as the Appalachian coal industry began recovering in the 1970s, the U.S. economy stagnated (1976, 74). Malazia makes this argument more explicitly by claiming that "unequal relationships between overdeveloped and underdeveloped regions" cause Appalachian underdevelopment (1973, 132).

Despite its location within the U.S., outsiders have colonized Appalachia using roughly similar tactics to those found in typical international colonization; this makes Appalachia an internal-colony (Frank 1975, 73). Frank believes the U.S. Deep South to be an internal-colony, denied the ability to assert control over its own economic development in the immediate post-Civil War period (74). He also explains that a common tactic of colonizers is forcing native people off their land to push them out of subsistence farming and into mining and cash crop production (1975, 24-25). In parallel to the internal-colonization of the Deep South, a colonial process of land acquisition and reemployment unfolded in the Mountain South. According to Paul Nyden, a few Northern firms controlled by the Morgans, Rockefellers, and Mellons rapidly seized the railroad and mining interests within “the Deep South and Appalachian South” immediately after the Civil War (1979, 36). Corporations cajoled mountain people into selling their land for much less than it was truly worth, often gobbling up mineral rights for twenty five to fifty cents an acre (West 1973, 6; Gaventa 1980, 53-55). While purchasing the mineral rights, the corporations’ representatives rarely explained to people living on the property the land’s true value or how the company could later expel them from the land to access underlying coal (Caudill 1976, 29). The massive post-war land acquisition process created a lasting pattern of inequality in land ownership: as late as the mid-1970s, two thirds of West Virginia’s privately held land was absentee controlled (Nyden 1979, 36) and strip miners were still slick-talking naïve locals out of their mineral rights for a pittance (Caudill 1976, 16-17). In 1970, eighty five percent of the Clear Fork Valley subregion’s land was owned by one coal company, The American Association (Gaventa 1980, 128). Newly separated from their land, the former farmers were without means to support themselves and became a source of cheap labor for the emerging coal industry (Gaventa 1980, 86-87). Malizia takes this interpretation of Appalachian

history even further, insisting that the region did not actually become capitalist until after its post-war colonization (1973, 135). All of this amounted to a form of early internal-colonization.

Several scholars have pointed out significant holes in the above-mentioned telling of Civil War history in Appalachia. Billings and Blee reject the notion that Appalachia was somehow isolated and pre-capitalist before the Civil War (2000, 48) as Lexington, Kentucky was already a thriving commercial center deeply involved in global trade by the late eighteenth century (2000, 43). Dunaway further challenges Appalachian internal-colonization theory's proponents by claiming that the global fur trade and inter-imperialist conflict between France and Britain drove European settlement of Appalachia (1996, 10-14). Absentee landowners began speculating on Kentucky's land long before the civil war (Billings and Blee 2000, 38-39) and this rampant speculation was displacing poor Appalachian settlers by the late 1700s. By 1800, the majority of the region's land was already controlled by outside capitalists (Dunaway 1995, 52). The Appalachia scholar Stephen Pearson dismisses the argument that white Appalachians are colonized by pointing out that white Appalachians themselves colonized Native Americans. Pearson compares Appalachia's early settlement to the Israeli settler-colonial project. Just as the Israeli and British colonizers conflicted over who should dominate the Palestinian land and economy, so are white Appalachians and outside capitalists in conflict over who should administer and profit from the Native American's territory (2013, 167 and 175).

However, despite these valid criticisms of the internal-colonization theorists' historicizing of Appalachian underdevelopment, the interpretation nonetheless holds weight for two reasons. First, as Dunaway acknowledges, in spite of the area's much longer history of exploitation by outside speculators than internal-colonization theorists typically acknowledge, absentee capitalists did not begin speculating on Appalachian mineral interests in earnest until

the 1860s (1995, 66). This suggests that, even though the region's antebellum residents for the most part did not control their land, they were not yet dependent on coal extraction, one of the central problems internal-colonization theorists point to. Secondly, Frank claims by reference to Australia and Israel that it is possible for colonizers, despite their capitalist orientation, to develop interests contrary to their mother country and push for independent control over their own economic affairs (1975, 8). Like Israel's anti-British colonizer capitalists, the Appalachian people would need to assert local control over their own economy to attain development⁶. Pre-Civil War Appalachia was capitalist, but the region's economy did not become overspecialized in coal extraction (and begin experiencing recognizably colonial problems resulting from this overspecialization) until after the Civil War. White Appalachians' are responsible for the colonization of Native Americans, but non-indigenous Appalachian residents nonetheless experience underdevelopment resulting from an absentee elite's economic dominance.

The preceding section has established that northern capitalists, who already owned a large portion of Appalachia's land, seized the region's mineral assets and began to subject many of the area's people to low-wage work in extractive industry after the Civil War. This crystallized Appalachia's status as an internal colony and guaranteed that locals, despite the fact that they were already accustomed to capitalism, would remain unable to achieve robust economic development for their communities until they asserted independent control over their economy. The chapter will now turn to an explanation of how the region's dependent status within world capitalism leaves it overspecialized in extractive industry and subject to surplus

⁶ Wallerstein says a semi-peripheral area can only become a core area by breaking its own labor and resources free from the control of outside states and corporations so that it can develop independently through its own mercantilist policies (1974, 413).

drain, boom and bust cycles, unfair terms of trade, environmental exhaustion, government corruption, and poor cultural and educational standards. This chapter will describe these problems as they manifested in the 1960s and 1970s, the period of anti-systemic activity with which I am presently concerned. These problems, however, remain in place even today.

iii. The Internal-Colonization of Appalachia: Overspecialization and Related Problems

The most recognizable problem stemming from outside capitalists' control over Appalachia's economy is overspecialization in coal production. Frank notes that foreign investment in the periphery develops only the "most monopolized sector;" other sectors do not receive the investment necessary to foster a strong, diverse regional economy (1975, 17). Much like a Third World colony, Appalachia's economy is oriented toward producing coal to fuel other more developed and industrialized areas (Dix 1970, 25). By the 1970s, one fourth of employment in nine West Virginia counties was concentrated in the coal industry (Nyden 1979, 35) and "raw materials production and resource-oriented output" accounted for fifty percent West Virginia's economic activity (Dix 1970, 26). Coal's dominance over Appalachia's economy prevents other industries from developing because the coal companies own most of the land on which alternative economic practices could take place (Weller 1978, 51) and coal companies actively resist "local developmental investment that might reduce access to coal," thereby stifling diversification (Perry 1981, 196-197)⁷.

⁷ Scholars working outside of the world-systems framework have also noted the negative results of overspecialization in resource extraction. Criticisms of the "resource curse" (e.g. Collier 2010, 42-46), the "commodity trap" (e.g. Rodrik 2011, 156), and "stovepipe sectoral concentration" (Weisband and Thomas 2010, 46-47) also speak to the problems facing Appalachia's coal industry. However, because world-systems theorists emphasize how opposition movements emerge to redress dependent underdevelopment (e.g. Dos Santos 1993, 202), world-systems is better for an analysis of wildcat strikes and other forms of resistance within the Appalachian periphery.

The dramatic level of surplus extraction involved in the Appalachian coal industry similarly limits diversification and development. Frank writes that in underdeveloped regions most of the surplus either goes to waste or flows into more developed areas; local comprador elites mostly consume whatever economic surplus stays in the periphery (1975, 12). The people of peripheral areas do not control the surplus, so they cannot reinvest it locally and develop independent, self-propelling economies (Frank 1975, 38). Appalachia has enough resources to be rich, but the wealth these resources produce serves the needs of corporations outside the region (Malazia 1973, 137). An extremely regressive tax system allows big business to extract surplus from the region. In the mid-1960s, eighty five percent of all West Virginia's state income taxes came from sales taxes and coal companies' land was taxed at a lower rate than other forms of property, including farms (Nyden 1979, 137). As of 1966, the biggest company in Kentucky's Harlan Country, US Steel, was taxed only \$34,000 for its property valued at \$9,300,000 and Harlan's coal companies managed to pay only \$2 in taxes an acre on land worth \$200 to \$300 dollars an acre (Millstone 1972, 181-183). In 1967, the Appalachian Regional Commission recorded a net capital outflow of over \$54,000,000 from the region (Dix 1970, 27). All of this surplus drain leaves Appalachia's manufacturing and agricultural sectors "capital starved" and weak (Nyden 1979, 35).

Corrupt local governments enable absentee corporations' surplus extraction. World-systems theorists claim that the peripheries' comprador elites oversee weak state institutions and cooperate with outside capitalists to ensure that goods, capital, and surplus flow in and out of the underdeveloped regions' borders without running up against protectionist state barriers (Arrighi, Hopkins, and Wallerstein 1989, 22; Wallerstein 1974, 401-403). Ironically, while peripheral states maintain weak economic regulations, the compradors often install authoritarian leaders to

put down any disenfranchised locals' challenges to their dependent and corrupt business practices (Frank 1975, 38). Such corruption is "particularly blatant in West Virginia," as Mingo county had more registered voters than its voting age population throughout the 1970s; this rampant election fraud perpetuated the coal industry's control over local society (Nyden 1979, 36). People are afraid to challenge big coal interests electorally because they fear losing their jobs and welfare benefits, which companies and their political allies distribute selectively as a form of political patronage (Gaventa 1980, 140-145). Coal interests maintain control over police and state militias (and have at times directed private militias) to put down popular challenges to their activity (Nyden 1979, 36). Subsequent chapters will further detail the violence and intimidation big coal's agents have used to suppress anti-company activity, especially in Hazard, Kentucky in the early 1960s, where the local police were egregiously thuggish toward student activists. Government corruption hinders the region's independent growth as coal's "influence on government makes the political climate for industry uncertain" (Perry 1981, 196).

Alongside government corruption, Appalachia's dependency leaves it at the mercy of unfavorable terms of trade and wild boom and bust cycles. Capitalists limit the underdeveloped areas' growth by rapidly moving production and investments from one periphery to another as resources become exhausted and global commodity markets fluctuate (Frank 1975, 17). Appalachia has long suffered from boom and bust cycles very similar to those in Third World countries (Perry 1981, 197) and has experienced two major depression as coal declined, one lasting from 1922 to 1930 and the other lasting from 1948 to 1965 (Nyden 1979, 35). Without a diverse economy and alternative forms of employment, shifts in the price of coal cause serious economic dislocations. For example, the mechanization of the coal mines in the 1950s and increased competition from other fuel sources led to a loss of twenty percent of West Virginia's

non-agricultural private sector jobs (Dix 1970, 26). Appalachia is likewise at a disadvantage shared by many colonized areas because it exports relatively cheap raw materials and imports expensive manufactured goods (Nyden 1979, 35). In the U.S., the price of coal rose by only eight percent between 1940 and 1960 while the price index for manufactured goods rose by thirty three percent (Dix 1970, 26).

Much like their inability to regulate the coal industry, local elites' dependency on outside coal interests leaves them unable and unwilling to promote strong educational standards or foster a diverse, robust, and independent culture. Frank argues that colonization is "morally corrupting" for its victims, who often develop passive and reactionary attitudes; this manipulation of local culture is "a critical contribution to the development of underdevelopment" (1975, 25). Local leaders encourage superstition, irrationalism, excessive traditionalism, and anti-intellectualism because it keeps people from developing the critical capacities needed to challenge entrenched power interests (Schrag 1978, 222; Caudill 1976, 11-13). The coal industry has "discouraged education:" the average adult in Appalachia has four less years of schooling than the national average (Weller 1978, 51), two thirds of central Appalachian high school students drop out before graduating (Nyden 1979, 37), and one fifth of Kentuckian adults are illiterate (Caudill 1976, 46). These low education standards have benefited the coal industry because schools do not teach students about the sources of their region's poverty and contribute to a brain drain by encouraging bright, would-be reformers to move out of the region in search of decent jobs (Caudill 1976, 38). Local clergy are partly responsible for this state of affairs as churches and religious schools, which are typically funded by rich outsiders, have failed to stand up to exploitation (Weller 1978, 53). However, as this thesis will later elaborate in a section on the Kanawha County textbook controversy, certain elements of traditional Appalachian culture,

although elites may cynically manipulate them, are potentially useful for resisting colonization under the right circumstances (e.g. West 1973, 11; Gaventa 1980, 130-131; Fisher and Foster 1979, 182).

Strip mining, which produces environmental problems like land slides and flooding, reflects Appalachia's status as an internal colony on several levels (Nyden 1979, 33). Strip mining parallels other processes inherent in Appalachian internal-colonization because it displaces people from the land their families have lived on for generations (Caudill 1976, 26) and reinforces overspecialization because the pollution it creates makes the region less appealing to other business interests (Perry 1986, 196). Such spoilage exemplifies Frank's statement that a good deal of underdeveloped regions' surpluses are wasted (1975, 12) often in to form of environmental degradation and exhaustion (1975, 17). Strip mining degrades the region's culture and by polluting the land to which the people feel an attachment, poisoning the streams they once fished and drank from, and contributing to the outmigration of the area's brightest and most ambitious residents (Gaventa 1980, 134). Finally, local governments' unwillingness to regulate strip mining illustrates the governmental corruption that accompanies dependency and underdevelopment (Gaventa 1980, 230-236)⁸.

iv. Evolution of the Second Anti-Systemic Movements in Appalachia

This section explains how the second anti-systemic movement emerged to challenge an increasingly hostile economic elite and complacent first anti-systemic leadership in Appalachia.

⁸ Of course, this depiction of Appalachia's overspecialization in mineral extraction does not capture all of the issues that world-systems theorists associate with peripheral production processes. Theotonio Dos Santos relates peripheralization to monoculture, weak currencies, a debilitating urban-rural divide, and subjection to international financial institutions (1993, 196-201). Wallerstein emphasizes the prevalence of competitive, non-monopolized production within the periphery (2004B, 93). These elements of peripheral economies may impact the region's underdevelopment, but they do not receive much attention in the Appalachian internal-colonization literature.

The first anti-systemic movement crystalized as a stabilizing force in the world-system after the Second World War in the form of a moderate welfare state, concessions to industrial unions, and a developmentalist consensus, all of which served to integrate the working poor and disenfranchised peripheral masses into the global economy without challenging capitalism itself (Wallerstein 1992, 103). This liberal framework developed around American hegemony and was enabled by the U.S.'s post-war economic growth and stability. In Appalachia this framework manifested in the form of corporatism to stabilize labor relations in the coal industry, an elite-backed labor democratization campaign to stave off union militancy, and economic developmentalism in the form of the Appalachian Regional Commission and War on Poverty initiatives.

As increased global competition and declining American hegemony began threatening American capital in the late 1960s and 1970s, elites regrouped to reverse the first anti-systemic movement's gains. The movement's leadership, by now used to compromise and acquiescence with capital, was unprepared to respond with needed militancy. Around 1968, a second anti-systemic movement came into being to redress the first's inability to fight back against an increasingly hostile capitalist offensive (Wallerstein 1992, 102). This process played out in Appalachia as the coal industry responded to increasing international competition and weakened American power with massive centralization and aggressive anti-unionism, to which the UMWA's leadership responded by redoubling their support for outmoded corporatist projects. The rank-and-file miners and their communities, politically radicalized through participation in previous struggles and unwilling to settle for a gradualist consensus that failed to defend them from a neoliberal onslaught, responded with militant rank and file strikes in opposition to coal companies, liberal politicians, and their unions' leadership.

As the U.S. consolidated post-war hegemony, American leaders attempted to co-opt the global first anti-systemic movement by providing developmentalist aid so as to moderate the anticolonial movements and granting welfare concessions to assuage working class militancy (Wallerstein 1992, 103). U.S. hegemony was necessary to seal in place a Cold War international system capable of disciplining global capital, spurning moderate growth, and providing just enough economic redistribution to ensure political stability (Arrighi and Silver 2001, 262). Wallerstein is critical of the developmentalist programs the core superpowers implemented. The U.S. and USSR both deployed development aid to the periphery in order to facilitate a smooth transition from colonialism to post-colonialism in the periphery that would not disrupt the inter-state system. In providing this aid, both core states projected a linear view of economic development onto the periphery, assuming that poor countries must transition from a state of underdevelopment to development by replicating the core's industrialization⁹. This linear view ignored how development is a non-linear process: not all states develop in the same direction because, under capitalism, developing one area requires the underdevelopment of others. Peripheral economies cannot attain development by integrating with the world-system more tightly; they must rather break their chains with the world-system and assert independent control over their own economies (Wallerstein 1993, 217-221). As I explain below, the federal

⁹ Wallerstein claims that W.W. Rostow's book *The Stages of Economic Growth*, which provided an ideological rationale for Western developmentalism, exemplifies this linear thinking. Rostow believed every nation state must evolve toward a state of development by imitating Great Britain's industrial revolution. In Rostow's framework, each country evolves toward developed, prosperous liberal-capitalism in parallel by following the same processes (Wallerstein 1993, 219). Wallerstein similarly criticizes the Soviet Union's development projects, which combined provision of aid to the developing world with an ideological belief in "stages" of advancement toward socialism. The Soviets held that each country must evolve from feudalism to liberal democracy before building socialism. The Soviets' contention that each country approaches socialism in stages led many communist parties in Latin America to support conservative, bourgeoisie politicians as a first step toward socialism (2004B, 12). Wallerstein insists that both sides' views of Third World development failed to account for how the core's development requires the periphery's underdevelopment and backwardness; countries do not altogether move toward growth and development (Wallerstein 1993, 226).

government's development programs failed to redress the causes of Appalachian underdevelopment (dependent integration into the world economy) and thus could not enable the much need break from absentee capitalist control.

After violent strikes by unemployed and disenfranchised Eastern Kentucky miners (a phenomenon the next chapter details) frightened Kennedy into expanding aid to poor mountain communities to pacify the situation (Muncy 2009; Cleaver 1975), the U.S. government began implementing anti-poverty programs in Appalachia that closely resembled U.S.-backed developmentalism in other peripheries. Kennedy viewed Appalachia as "an underdeveloped country in the tradition of the Alliance for Progress" (Sinclair 1968, 20). Dix explicitly compares Kennedy and Johnson's Appalachian Regional Commission to Third World developmentalism and, echoing Wallerstein, notes that the commission cannot resolve Appalachia's underdevelopment. Just as "foreign aid will not (and some say cannot) promote fundamental changes between Third World and advanced capitalist countries," Dix notes, the federal aid to Appalachia is woefully inadequate (1970, 29). The development initiatives suffer from the same type of linear thinking that characterizes international aid programs. The Appalachian Regional Commission expects a regional business and political elite to modernize the region; they do not understand that the area will remain backwards so long as its elite remains dependent upon absentee business interests. The commission is unwilling to consider bold solutions, like community and worker control of local industry, or address the real sources of the region's underdevelopment, such as absentee ownership of land and resources (Walls 1978; Gaventa 1980, 163-164). Even War on Poverty welfare programs in Appalachia furthered the region's dependency because local elites threatened to withhold welfare payments from their political challengers (Gaventa 1980, 1621; Wiley 1968, 29).

Along with the provision of development aid, the U.S. government pacified the first anti-systemic movement by overseeing the creation of a corporatist collective bargaining system in the coal industry. The government enabled the UMWA to gain much stronger contracts for their members while reducing the union's militancy. In 1946, UMWA president John Lewis called for a major strike to force coal operators to establish a healthcare and retirement fund for his workers. After some mine owners refused to go along with the union's demands, Truman's interior secretary Julius Krug seized the mines and then negotiated a national contract with Lewis. This contract established the Welfare and Retirement Fund, the U.S.'s most comprehensive and generous post-WWII employer-funded health care plan (Muncy 2009A). Despite the fact the Fund provided much-needed funding for local hospitals and support for retirees, it had a major flaw: the employers financed the Fund by paying a royalty for each ton of coal mined. Declining coal production (as a result of downturns and/or long strikes) would damage the fund's financial viability. As such, the Fund served to increase Appalachia's economic dependency on coal companies (Cole and Rose 1978, 14). Shortly after the Fund's creation, the government used threats of a future government takeover of the coal industry to induce the coal operators to form a national collective bargaining arrangement with the union, in which the union would meet regularly to set national contracts dealing with wages, hours, and other labor issues alongside the coal employers' association, the Bituminous Coal Operators Association (Muncy 2009A). These negotiations "abruptly and permanently brought hostilities between union and management to a close," with the union refusing to call any national strikes for the next twenty years (Nyden 1970, 203) and becoming increasingly hostile to wildcat strikes (Green 1978, 14).

However, despite the appearance of labor peace, this attitude of compromise between the union and management was not to the benefit of most miners and class discontent remained. The operators of the largest coal companies (who controlled the BCOA) and their new ally Lewis began conspiring¹⁰ to put smaller coal companies out of business in order to end the industry's anarchic overproduction. The union's leaders and their new allies in the largest coal companies, in particular Consolidation Coal, intentionally eliminated three hundred thousand coal jobs between 1945 and 1960 (Moody and Woodward 1978, 18) by jointly funding mechanization and setting contractual obligations on wages and benefits they knew small mines could not afford (Nyden 1970, 206; Muncy 2009A). This intentional sabotage of the miners' employment provoked the roving pickets of the early 1960s (the next chapter's subject). The UMWA at this time also became increasingly corrupt and authoritarian: Lewis's successor Boyle publicly praised Consolidation Coal even after the company was directly responsible for a 1968 disaster that left seventy eight workers dead, gerrymandered union locals to prevent legitimate reformers from gaining any say in the organization's affairs, opposed rank-and-file attempts to win adequate compensation for black lung, and had his electoral opponent Jock Yablonski assassinated (Hopkins 2010, 350).

In response to the UMWA's overt corruption, an organization called Miners for Democracy (MFD) formed to replace Boyle's bureaucratic, aloof, and complacent leadership

¹⁰ In 1968, a federal court ruled that the UMWA and Consolidation Coal had jointly conspired to push small coal companies out of business by boycotting coal operators who had not signed the union's contract. The union and large companies had set wages in this contract very high in order to prevent small operators from being able to fulfill the contract's obligations, thereby giving the UMWA and their industrial partners an ostensibly legitimate reason to push the small companies into bankruptcy (Nyden 1970, 206). The union's bank, the National Bank of Washington, provided the biggest coal corporations loans with very low interest rates to bankroll the mines' mechanization; the union never gave small operators such financial assistance (Black 1990, 112). Despite the resulting unemployment, Lewis and Boyle wanted to put small mines out of business in order to stabilize the coal industry by reducing competition and to benefit the major corporations with which they had extensive political and financial connections (Black 1990, 111-112; Nyden 1970, 202-204)

with progressive reformers. MFD had some qualities characteristic of the second anti-systemic movement: their leader Arnold Miller initially had some forward-thinking views on environmental politics (Montrie 2000, 92), they opposed a bureaucratic elite within the first anti-systemic movement, and they struggled for a more democratic and combative union. However, the liberal wing of the U.S. elite acted to coopt these goals and strip Miller and other progressive voices within the UMWA of their radical potential. From the outset, the Rockefeller foundation and other liberal organizations funded the MFD and Miller had support within the Democratic Party (PL 1978B, 24; Seltzer 1985). Legal support from liberal lawyers and foundations was essential in convincing the Labor Department to oversee the 1972 UMWA presidential election which Miller, now uninhibited by the Boyle machine's illegal ballot stuffing and voter intimidation, managed to win (Hopkins 2010, 361).

In power, Miller was hardly the change in direction for the union many progressives had expected. Miller was close with Labor Department officials like Landon Butler, who helped Miller select representatives for his negotiations with the BCOA (Cole and Rose, 31; Seltzer 1985, 151-152) and encouraged him to adopt a conciliatory "labor peace" attitude toward the operators (Cole and Rose, 25). The Labor Department's representatives convinced Miller to appoint Harry Huge as the UMWA's chief negotiator during the 1977-1978 contract negotiations. Seltzer says Huge was responsible for the contracts' initial drafts, which stripped the miners of the right-to-strike (1985, 151) (see also chapter three). Under pressure from conservative Boyle-era holdovers within the UMWA (Montrie 2000, 89-92), government officials [the Carter Administration was decidedly opposed to the wildcats (Seltzer 1985, 160-161)], and increasingly anti-union coal operators [who could manipulate the union's leaders through their joint control over the Fund (Cole and Rose 1978, 14) and ability expand coal

extraction in the non-unionized western U.S. (Moody and Woodward 1978, 85)], Miller distanced himself from his earlier reformist positions. Within a few years, Miller abandoned his early opposition to strip mining (Montrie 2000, 92), began encouraging miners' to accept dramatic cutbacks on their healthcare services (Moody and Woodward 1978, 12-13), condemned wildcat strikes (Cleaver 1974), and dismissed his progressive staff members (Moody and Woodward 1978, 32). Despite his early opposition to union bureaucratism, corruption, and complacency, Miller ultimately stayed within the first anti-systemic movement's orbit. Miller's turn from progressive reformer to conservative bureaucrat illustrates Wallerstein's contention that the presence of bourgeoisie cadre within anti-systemic movements, despite their clerical skills, tends to sap the movements of emancipatory potential (1983, 26-27). The assistance MFD received from Washington professionals prevented the rank-and-file group from maintaining a radical course.

U.S. hegemony contained the first anti-systemic movement in post-WWII Appalachia with a corporatist labor system with leadership ranging from the clownishly pro-business Boyle to the gradualist liberal Miller and developmental aid and welfare reforms meant to contain working class militancy. These concessions never adequately addressed the internal-colonization of Appalachia that caused the region's anti-systemic activity, so when U.S. hegemony began declining in the late 1960s, the second anti-systemic movement (which in this time and place took the form of a series of spontaneous wildcat strikes against the government, the operators, and the union's leaders) emerged out of the first movement's failures.

Frank and Fuentes see the second anti-systemic movement in part as a reaction to inadequate welfare state provisions. People understood that the periphery's weak, dependent local politicians could not defend them from the upheavals of global capitalism, so they sought

other sources of liberation than the state and the Old Left (1989, 1505-1506). The wildcat strikes of the 1970s in Appalachia were a reaction to the failures of the Old Left's War on Poverty programs in Appalachia. The expansion of state benefits within the region was intended to quell working class anger over poor social services and encourage people to develop middle class attitudes and work ethics. However, corruption prevented the efficient administration of the new welfare programs and the aid did not resolve Appalachia's dependency. The wildcats expressed the people's disappointment with the programs and expanded the coalfield struggles from fights for increased benefits to a battle for community control over public resources: people called strikes over the lack of decent public healthcare and to challenge corrupt local politicians. The Kanawha County textbook affair and the Gas Strike of 1974 (both covered in chapter three) are two examples of wildcat strikes over political issues (Cleaver 1975). Moreover, the aid programs expanded the communities' militancy, as public daycare services enabled women to participate in the wildcats with renewed vigor and food stamps allowed miners to conduct longer strikes (Cleaver 1975).

Much like the struggles surrounding welfare rights won very limited gains but nevertheless increased the fervor of regional protest activity, the MFD experience, despite its limitations, empowered miners to become even more militant in opposition to the UMWA hierarchy. Harvey writes that in the 1970s the Old Left responded to capital's increasing assertiveness by redoubling their support for the corporatist schemes they had helped build, even as these schemes posed less and less of a threat to capital (2007, 12-13). As the anti-union climate of the 1970s became more intense, the UMWA's leadership became even more moderate: Miller negotiated a new contract in 1974 that was "widely hailed as ushering in a new era of cooperation between management and labor" (Bleiberg 1977, 7). Although the official

leadership that came out of MFD appeared increasingly milquetoast, rank-and-file miners who had participated in MFD used their new contacts and confidence to mount militant strikes against Miller and the operators (Moody and Woodward 1978, 34). The most militant miners were also inspired by the Black Power movement and disillusioned by the Vietnam War, two signals of declining American dominance in the world-system (Green 1978, 15; Turl 2010).

Declining U.S. hegemony likewise led to the breakdown of the system of collective bargaining and union/company negotiations and the fragile labor peace that this system insured. World-systems scholars have shown that as U.S. hegemony began falling due to increased competition from Japan and Germany, the OPEC crisis, and the Vietnam War and other anti-colonial struggles, the state had increasing difficulty containing and rationalizing capital (Wallerstein 2006, 80-81; Hinnebusch 2012, 21). The U.S. faced increasing difficulty subduing the periphery's militancy, exercising leadership over its core competitors, and chaining capital within its borders. As welfare state services, the price of labor, and taxes increased in the core, multinationals underwent a period of "massive centralization" and increasingly moved labor-intensive industry from the core to the periphery (Arrighi, Hopkins, and Wallerstein 1989, 47-49). The increased investment in manufacturing in the periphery transformed and retrenched traditional relations of dependency and provoked massive, second anti-systemic labor uprisings in the periphery. The consolidation of the U.S. coal industry and accompanying second anti-systemic movement activity demonstrate these processes.

Three symptoms of declining U.S. hegemony (a drawn-out war in Vietnam, assertive anti-colonial movements in Africa, and the OPEC oil embargo) spurred the coal industry's consolidation and increased corporate control in Appalachia. The U.S. government's public spending on the quagmire in Vietnam produced inflation, which in turn bit into the American oil

and steel corporations' overseas profits. Such developments led these corporations buy up coal companies as a stable investment in a volatile market (Moody and Woodward 1978, 18-19). National liberation movements in Southern Africa threatened Gulf Oil's investments, which led the company to subsequently plant more money in Appalachian coal as a supposedly safe investment (Nyden 1978, 28). Arab national liberation movements' challenge to imperialism through the OPEC oil embargo similarly drove major energy companies to invest more in coal as an alternative to oil (Moody and Woodward 1978, 24-25; Pugh and Zimmerman 1974, 4). Consolidation was rapid. Independent coal companies' share of production of Appalachian coal declined from thirty two percent to 10.6% between 1962 and 1969 (Cleaver 1975) and by 1976 only three of the top fifteen largest coal producers were independent (Nyden 1978, 28). The consolidation transformed relations of dependency in the region. Many Appalachian coal companies became captured suppliers (Cleaver 1975), a phenomenon consistent with what world-systems theorists describe as a shift from intrastate to intra-firm dependency (Arrighi, Wallerstein, and Hopkins 1989, 48) or the emergence of "multinational dependency" (Dos Santos 1993, 195).

An increasingly sophisticated and intense anti-union hostility marked this new development in Appalachian dependency. The BCOA took a more hardline stance toward the UMWA in negotiations after steel and oil companies seized control of the largest coal operations (Moody and Woodward 1978, 38). U.S. Steel even appointed Heath Larry - chair of the Council on a Union-Free Environment - as a top negotiator (Nyden 1978, 28). As chapter three will detail, the BCOA began pushing to dismantle the UMWA's hard-won safety regulations and healthcare benefits at this time.

Rank-and-file miners responded to their employers' hostility with a militant wildcat strike movement. There was an average of 1,500 strikes a year in the Appalachian coalfields from 1971-1974 and 3,000 strikes a year from 1975-1977 (Brett and Goldberg, 465). Remarkably, throughout the 1970s, the UMWA and to a lesser degree the teamsters were the only American unions to maintain and expand their union militancy; most unions became less combative in this decade (Elbaum 2002, 204; "UMWA in Fight for its" 1977, 1). The ongoing militancy of the UMWA's rank-and-file throughout the 1970s reaffirms world-systems scholars' observation that deindustrialization decreased labor militancy in the core while increased foreign investment drastically increased the periphery's labor militancy (Silver 1998, 9; Arrighi, Hopkins, and Wallerstein 1989, 105). Global economic restructuring exacerbated labor antagonisms in the Appalachian periphery.

v. Conclusion

This chapter has explained how Appalachia's status as an internal-colony has shaped the historical development of anti-systemic movements within the region. Despite the fact that Appalachia has been capitalist ever since Europeans began settling the area, one may accurately describe the region as an internal-colony because for centuries (and especially since the 1860s), outside capital has kept the region overspecialized, dependent, and underdeveloped. Just as Australia and Israel became more developed (while nonetheless remaining capitalist) by shaking off their mother countries, Appalachia's independent bourgeoisie's interests are contrary to those of the core's bourgeoisie and Appalachia's own weak, dependent comprador elite. Appalachia's dependent condition leaves the region with a broad range of social, economic, and environmental problems.

The first antisystemic movement in Appalachia became institutionalized around two reformist practices. The first was a system of corporatism marked by union hostility to labor militancy and indifference to the rank-and-file's needs. The second was a developmentalist consensus that did not address the true cause of Appalachian underdevelopment, absentee control of the region's economy and resources. American hegemony within the world-system reinforced and benefitted from both of these practices.

As U.S. hegemony began declining as a result of Vietnam War, inflation, and increased international competition, a second anti-systemic movement emerged to challenge the first's complacency. In the Appalachian coalfields, waning U.S. hegemony corresponded to a less disciplined capitalist class unwilling to cooperate with the old corporatist framework and weak union leadership unable to contain the working class's militancy. These changes sparked a new anti-systemic movement in the form of a series of wildcat strikes challenging mainstream liberals, coal operators, and complacent union bureaucrats. The upsurge in labor militancy in Appalachia was characteristic of labor relations throughout the global periphery since the 1970s.

Chapter 3: Progressive Labor's Intervention in Hazard

i. Introduction

The last chapter revealed how Appalachia's dependent status within the world-system left the region with an unstable and undiversified economy, few employment opportunities for women, corrupt local governments, and complacent union bureaucrats. These issues precipitated East Kentucky's Roving Picket Movement of 1962 to 1964. This series of wildcat strikes responded to and, in a limited and contradictory way, challenged all of these structural problems. However, as most oppositional forces involved in the strike were within the first anti-systemic movement's orbit, even the strike's most radical actors were unable to fully break with the coal industry's institutionalized labor practices so as to fundamentally challenge the region's dependency.

The Progressive Labor Movement's attempts to radicalize striking workers in Hazard, Kentucky during the Roving Picket Movement illustrates an early phase of the second anti-systemic movement, at which point the movement was hardly differentiated from the first anti-systemic movement. PL's attempts to undermine conservative union bureaucratism and provide a more radical alternative to the supposedly revisionist CPUSA showed that the early NCM was inching toward a second anti-systemic approach. PL's sectarian style and resultant opportunistic practices in Hazard as well as their neglect of the feminist and racial issues inherent to the Roving Picket Movement indicates how the NCM's partisans had not yet firmly differentiated themselves from the first anti-systemic movement's actors. This chapter will provide a brief history of the Roving Picket Movement, stressing how the movement had the potential to advance anti-bureaucratic, feminist, and anti-racist politics, but did not develop in such a

direction because of its participants' attachment to traditional labor politics. The chapter will also contrast PL's work with other progressive groups' involvement in Hazard, noting SNCC and SDS's attempts to integrate anti-racist politics into the movement, their promotion of grassroots democracy, and their openness to inner-movement cooperation. Finally, this chapter explains how none of these groups, least of all PL, elevated the strike's latent feminist issues to a central focus. Altogether, these elements of PL's intervention in Hazard demonstrate the NCM's initial half-step from first to second anti-systemic movement practices.

ii. Historical Background

The Roving Picket Movement was a year-long series of wildcat strikes in Eastern Kentucky protesting the UMWA's corruption and mismanagement of the Fund, regional unemployment, and poor wages and working conditions. The movement also spawned several organizations' attempts to empower the local communities impacted by the roving pickets to take control of their local government, eliminate corruption in their local governments' handling of development aid, and come to more radical understandings of political change than those offered by traditional trade unionism.

Mismanagement of the UMWA's Welfare and Retirement Fund and the union's failure to defend jobs in Eastern Kentucky provoked the roving picket movement. Recall from Chapter One that the union and the BCOA jointly established the Fund in 1946, that the employers financed the Funds through royalty payments for each ton of coal mined, and that this Fund provided much-needed modern medical services to underdeveloped Appalachian communities (Muncy 2009A). Also remember that the union intentionally backed the mechanization of large mines, even as this mechanization (along with increased competition from other fuel sources)

increased regional unemployment (Black 1990, 111-112). The resultant increase in unemployment was particularly severe in Eastern Kentucky, which lost 27, 000 jobs over a period of less than fifteen years after Joe Lewis began encouraging mechanization. The small mines in East Kentucky could not afford to compete with larger, mechanizing mines while paying the high wages and coal royalties required by the union's contract. The union and operators found a temporary solution to this problem with so-called "sweetheart agreements" in which the operators could pay low wages so long as they continued financing the Fund. The strike began in September of 1962, when four thousand Kentucky miners abruptly learned that the union's administrators had revoked their membership and cancelled their health benefits because their employers refused to continue paying royalties. Without the necessary funds, the union refused to maintain the four hospitals they had operated in the area (Russin 1963). The Hazard-based, seasoned organizer Berman Gibson immediately took charge of a picket, which soon spread over several East Kentucky counties and eventually involved thousands of protestors (Muncy 2009A).

Operating without the support of the UMWA, which condemned the movement, the picketers hoped to convince the UMWA to return, represent them once more, reinstate their medical benefits, and lead their protest against uncooperative local operators (Black 1990, 115; Russin 1963). The miners started their strike by calling walkouts to shut down all nonunion mines and mines that had failed to pay royalties (Black 1990, 115). The strikers' tactics quickly escalated from mere work stoppages to violence. Strikers bombed several nonunion mines a week, dynamited a coal operator's home (Russin 1963), and roughed up four truckloads of scabs (Nyden 1970, 206). Although the union itself, in its aloofness from East Kentucky and closeness

to the industry's managers, was at least partly to blame, the strikers focused most of their energy on attacking operators (Black 1990, 114; Nyden 1970, 206).

The federal government and local operators eventually issued small reforms to halt the strike. The most immediate solution to the protests came in October of 1962, when the major operators together formed a "paper company" which subtracted the royalties to the Fund from each ton of coal the smaller mine owners sold to them. This allowed miners to collect the Fund's benefits, even though it did not resolve the ongoing problems of unemployment and poor work conditions (Russin 1963). The federal government created the Unemployed Fathers Program [and colloquially known as the "Happy Pappy" program (Cantrell 1987)] to provide jobs and training for unemployed miners. The program's success was compromised by local government corruption as the local democratic party used it as way to distribute political patronage (Sinclair 1968, 19; Wiley 1968, 29) and only a few miners managed to find the types of jobs they retrained for (Wakefield 1963).

The strikers' attachment to old fashioned, labor-oriented protest tactics prevented them from adequately addressing certain problems facing Eastern Kentucky, including political corruption and unemployment. The roving pickets began as a traditional union fight for industrial rights, which yielded some begrudging responses from operators and the state. However, in waging the struggle Gibson and his confidants learned that some of the real issues at hand were not strictly related to the workplace (as many participants were unemployed anyway). Moreover, the roving pickets did not operate in a democratic fashion: Gibson had developed his skills organizing the UMWA alongside John Lewis in the 1930s and imitated Lewis's domineering style of direction over strike activity (Sinclair 1968, 6; Waters 1969). This made the roving pickets as they existed in their early phases a poor arena for developing political

demands. For these reasons, Gibson shifted his strategy and engaged with a local activist group called the Appalachian Committee for Full Employment and the New York-based Committee for the Miners to establish a jobless movement oriented more toward participation in local government than union politics (Sinclair 1968, 5). The Appalachian Committee for Full Employment called on two outside student organizations, SDS and SNCC, to organize an action project among the unemployed in the summer of 1964 (Levy 1994, 34-35). The next section explains how SDS and SNCC interacted with the local community in hopes of empowering the jobless.

iii. SDS and SNCC in Hazard

The student activists in SDS and SNCC believed they could use their literacy and education to help the strikers and unemployed articulate their political instincts (Sinclair 1968, 3). The UMWA had never prioritized assisting the unemployed in seeking better representation and benefits from their local government; the UMWA's leaders feared this would encourage people to seek democratic representation within their own union (Sinclair 1968, 6). As many miners thus had little experience participating in democratic politics, the students figured they could make themselves useful by helping the miners articulate their latent political grievances (Sinclair 1968, 12). The students also hoped that through participation in their local government, the locals would come to realize the limitations of reformism and gradually develop radical demands for community ownership of industry (Wiley 1968, 30).

Furthermore, civil rights-minded white students considered the strike significant for American racial politics. White SDS and SNCC members wanted to establish a "new populist alliance" between poor blacks and working class whites and viewed their Hazard organizing as

the white equivalent of the Mississippi Freedom Summer (Sinclair 1968, 4). Sinclair summarizes the students' interpretation of the movement's inherent racial politics:

[the students] adhered to the notion encouraged by SNCC...that the civil rights movement had to develop its own cadre of Negro organizers and that white southern students could best work to organize white southern support for the movement...this white southern constituency might come from the white unemployed and they had to be organized to preempt the destruction of the civil rights movement by elements of whites morally supporting integration, but jealous of the assumed Negro threat to their jobs (Sinclair 1968, 9).

The students were taking hold of an idea that would later become central to SNCC's approach: the primary responsibility of white activists is to go among their own communities to teach anti-racism; black activists must organize independently so that they can develop their own views and practices (Detwiter 1966, 1). White activists within SNCC followed this imperative, many of them enthusiastically applying the skills they had developed within SNCC to organizing Appalachian whites (Fager 1967, 90)¹¹. Gibson himself frequently pointed out the connection between his own struggle and the ongoing civil rights cause. In the spirit of Martin Luther King, Gibson threatened a miners' march on Washington if federal aid to East Kentucky was not forthcoming, saying that miners "are just going to have to get out on the streets like the colored people" (qtd. Muncy 2009A) and calling for ten thousand "negroes to demonstrate in downtown Hazard" (qtd. Clark 1964, 12).

SDS sent student organizers to live with the coal miners in Hazard over the summer of 1964, learn the people's most urgent concerns, and help them organize around these issues. The students found the locals' most common complaints to be over bad school lunches and facilities, poor school busing, bad roads, inadequate medical care, and "problems over Public Assistance,

¹¹ The students were, of course, drawing from Malcolm X's notion that working "separately, the sincere white people and sincere black people actually will be working together." (1964, 434)

Social Security and Workman's compensation type claims (Sinclair 1968, 15). The SDSers thus decided to organize a campaign to elect new school board members who opposed Dennis Wotton, the corrupt school superintendent of the previous eleven years. As the deeply-hostile local sheriff and mine owner Charlie Combs frequently attempted to stifle local organizing efforts by surrounding SDS's meetings and intimidating their potential supporters, the students' attempts to galvanize the unemployed to seek better schooling from their government were mostly unsuccessful (Sinclair 1968, 14-18).

Among the students' more successful actions in Hazard was their support for miner Brack Hensley's attempts to improve the distribution of federal unemployment aid. Hensley went to SDS's Hazard headquarters to complain that local officials had not fulfilled the Happy Pappy program's mandate. This program promised laid-off fathers free tools, lunches, and transportation and one dollar an hour working in small mines. Hensley wanted to receive the federal minimum wage of \$1.25 an hour and reported that miners were not receiving all of their promised benefits. The students helped Hensley write a letter to the governor expressing his grievances. Although local officials tried to interfere with Hensley's campaign with threats and intimidation, with SDS's help he managed to meet with state-level officials, who saw to it that Hensley and his coworkers receive their deserved benefits (Sinclair 1968, 17-18).

This overview of SDS and SNCC's work in Hazard reveals that they were in the process of developing a second anti-systemic approach. They were very open to the independent role of black voices in the struggle. Where the first anti-systemic movement sometimes viewed the needs of minorities as secondary to those of the traditional proletariat (Wallerstein and Zurkin 1989, 21-22), SDS and SNCC activists went to Hazard to exercise their conviction that minorities must play an independent role in the struggle.

iv. PL in Hazard

PL's intervention in Hazard illustrates the evolution of the second anti-systemic movement and its contradictory process of breaking free from binds of the first. PL was a hybrid of both the first and second anti-systemic movements, deeply critical of the bureaucratism and complacency of the official organized labor movement and larger leftist groups, but nonetheless unable to recognize the important, independent role of women and minorities in the struggle for a better world. One Oakland PL leader acknowledged this tension in the organization's approach, saying "we have as much in common with the new groups as with the old" (qtd. Jacobs and Landau 1966, 44). These contradictions were acutely visible in PL's intervention in Hazard.

The early PL did have some views characteristic of the second anti-systemic movement. PL split from CPUSA in the 1961 to oppose what they viewed as the CPUSA's conservatism and fecklessness. They were particularly upset with the CPUSA's failure to push their contacts in the labor movement further left and believed that this failure contributed to many unions' embrace of the U.S.'s Cold War militarism (Waters 1969). PL's founder Milt Rosen opposed the USSR's 1950s position that socialism could develop through electoral change instead of violent revolution and was incensed with the CPUSA's pacifism (Dann and Dillon 1977). PL was additionally open to some elements of the nascent Black Power movement, supporting black militants like Robert Williams and the Nation of Islam for their opposition to Kennedy's Cold War policies, identification with the oppressed in the Third World, and base among working class youth; PL believed these elements of the Black Power movement could evolve in socialist directions (Scheer 1963, 11; Rosen 1963). These views reflect the second anti-systemic movement's acknowledgement of the necessary independence of minority struggles from those of the traditional industrial proletariat and the second anti-systemic movement's disappointment

with the USSR and CPUSA's failure to challenge U.S. hegemony and promote revolution (Arrighis, Hopkins, and Wallerstein 1989, 88; Frank and Fuentes 1987, 1509; Wallerstein 2006, 82).

Nonetheless, the early PL's ideology remained within a traditional first anti-systemic movement framework. They constantly pressed for an armed proletarian revolution as the ultimate end of movement organizing (Jacobs and Landau 1966, 44; Levy 1994, 215), a goal inconsistent with later anti-systemic understandings of political change¹². They likewise subsumed organizing around women's liberation and civil rights under promoting "a revolutionary dictatorship of armed workers" (PL 1966, 182). Rosen explicitly opposed the idea (common among 1960s radicals) that the black struggle was America's most radical and should therefore take precedence over labor organizing (1963) and PL denounced what they viewed as the Civil Rights Movement's nonviolence and lack of working class demands (Scheer 1963, 11). They made overtures toward Malcolm X's anti-colonial internationalism, but wanted him to promote a more orthodox view on class struggle (PL 1964, 7-9) and subordinate his demand for independent black political institutions to the demand for socialism (Scheer 1963, 11). Finally, the early PL did appeal to combating overt male chauvinism because it impedes women workers' organizing (Jacobs and Landau 1966, 191), but they nonetheless denounced feminist concerns that were not explicitly socialist as "divisive" (qtd. Ignatin 1967, 390). By 1969 PL even opposed feminists' demand for universities to hire more female professors as too middle class in orientation (Waters 1969). As such, elements of the early PL's practice exemplify the first anti-

¹² Although Wallerstein does not directly say that armed overthrow of the state is incompatible with a second anti-systemic approach, he does not consider it a central concern. For instance, he says that the Zapatista uprising, one of the most complete expressions of the second anti-systemic movement, had "no interest" in seizing power from the state and was more eager to "withdraw from the state" to independently develop new organizational forms (2014, 169). He writes that activists should only try to seize state power as a last resort to resist the far right; otherwise they should not prioritize the attainment of state power (1992, 108-109)

systemic movement's characterization of women's issues and minority rights as less important than the pursuit of state power (Wallerstein 2014, 161).

These contradictory elements of PL's line played out in their intervention in Hazard. Consistent with their embrace of imminent armed revolution, Rosen viewed the miners' decision to take up arms against the operators as an indication of the strike's revolutionary potential and proof that advanced capitalism had not, as some claimed, pacified the working class (1963). PL was also thrilled that the miners were taking on the conservatives within the labor movement. PL criticized the UMWA, which they viewed as a tool of the operators against workers' militancy (Chispa 1963, 9-10), and hoped that a new socialist union would emerge from the struggle (Rosen 1963) and lead the workers to seize the mines as their own (Chispa 1963, 10). PL also read their criticisms of the Civil Rights Movement's pacifism and reformism into the strike. PL thought the East Kentucky strikers were like the Black Muslims in their skepticism of mainstream union leadership (Scheer 1963, 12) and compared the Roving Picket Movement to the Harlem riot, describing both as uprisings of the unemployed facing heavy state repression (PL 1965). PL's interpretation of the Hazard rebellion thus reflects their old left understanding of class struggle and new left criticisms of union conservatism.

PL's campaign in support of Hazard was short-lived but energetic. Upon learning of the strike activity, PL sent a member to Hazard to interview Gibson, who informed them that he wanted "an all-out solidarity and relief campaign" (PL 1975). PL then held a mass rally in New York in support of the strike on January 24th of 1963, which drew eight hundred supporters and raised money for the strikers ("Comrade Milt Rosen" 2011). PL purchased a mimeograph for the miners so they could get their message out separately from the pro-company local press (PL 1975). After initially trying to work with other groups through the Committee for the Miners, PL

decided the committee was too reformist and instead sent PL members to Hazard to try to directly win over workers to communism (“Comrade Milt Rosen” 2011). Some PL members went to Kentucky armed (Levy 1994, 215), presumably because they wanted to assist the miners’ violent moves against the operators. In Hazard PL distributed their newspaper, which accused local officials of taking bribes from the coal operators and coal operators of using child labor and failing to pay the full minimum wage (“Libel or Truth?” 1963, 9).

PL’s presence provoked a very negative response from Hazard’s elite and, eventually, Gibson himself. Predictably, PL “drove the local elite into a frenzy,” with the local paper, the Hazard Herald, using PL’s intervention as an excuse to red bait¹³ the Roving Picket Movement (Black 1990, 127). Hazard police arrested the twenty year old PL activist Stephen Ashton, seized his three hundred copies of Progressive Labor’s newspaper, and charged him with libel (Luigart 1963, 9). Although Gibson (who had previously said he was not a communist but would accept aid from anyone who wanted to help) initially had a decent relationship with PL, the red baiting forced him to disavow the organization (Waters 1969). Even after PL left, the ensuing red baiting created a debilitating atmosphere of distrust among the miners, who were unsure of how to vet incoming groups of outside supporters to determine their politics (Wakefield 1963).

With this in mind, it is clear that PL’s involvement in Hazard was not productive for the Roving Picket Movement. I argue that PL’s ongoing attachment to the first anti-systemic movement (particularly their sectarianism and Old Left perspectives on race and gender) prevented them from supporting the strike in a more successful way. Waters says PL’s

¹³ I define “red baiting” as the act of attempting to discredit someone by referencing his or her real or perceived socialist sympathies and/or connections. Red baiters often present their opponents’ views in a sensationalized manner in order to appeal to unreflective anti-communism.

Stalinism¹⁴ contributed to their poor, sectarian strategy in Hazard. Waters says that Stalinism leads to opportunism because Stalinists do not trust the masses or grassroots activists, so they try to manipulate the masses. Instead of engaging in more productive activities like collecting food and money for the miners or working within the Committee for the Miners (which would not have subjected the strikers to red baiting), PL decided to “manipulate” a legitimate struggle toward narrow, sectarian ends. PL’s activity in Hazard was, in Waters’s view, a cynical and irresponsible attempt to increase their organization’s notoriety (1969). Wallerstein says that the second anti-systemic movement is marked by increased cooperation among diverse oppositional groups (2014, 169; 1990, 52), so PL’s sectarian unwillingness to participate on the committee and foolhardy attempts to promote their own group at the expense of others is a mistake characteristic of the first anti-systemic movement.

Noel Ignatin points out how PL’s inability to appreciate the independent role of racial politics in progressive struggles also damned the organization’s activity in Hazard. With their comparisons between the Harlem Riot and the Roving Picket Movement, PL presented the white miners’ struggle as a parallel to the black workers’ struggle. PL suggested that white workers experience repression and exploitation (albeit to a lesser extent than their black counterparts) and both racial groups can advance the working class by rejecting racism and fighting their own exploitation. However, Ignatin explains, such an approach does not recognize the distinct nature of Blacks’ struggle. Merely encouraging to white workers to sympathize with the Civil Rights Movement without consciously linking to it will not adequately prepare them to eschew racism

¹⁴ Although a comprehensive overview of PL’s views on Stalinism is beyond this chapter’s scope, Stalin’s writing supports Waters’s conflation of Stalinism with sectarian opportunism. Stalin insists that communist parties must strive to exercise political leadership over “every other form of organization of the proletariat” and “induce these organizations to carry out [the party’s] line” (1965, 288-289). Whether or not Stalin’s work influenced PL’s decision to avoid cooperation with other groups in Hazard, their actions were consistent with Stalin’s attitude toward non-party organizations.

and submit to black leadership in the struggle (Ignatin 1967, 361-363). Ignatin explains that teaching white workers to take directions from black leadership was of critical importance because black-led groups like the Mississippi Freedom Labor Union were exercising the most skillful and innovative leadership over the multiracial working class (1967, 371-372). White SDS and SNCC activists who prioritized working with poor Appalachian white communities at the advice of SNCC's leadership, unlike PL, were acknowledging the important and distinct role of black revolutionaries and, as Ignatin encourages, following their lead. Thus, PL's first anti-systemic views on race (especially their inability to grasp the independent role of racial politics) prevented them from realizing and acting upon the strike's significance for American race relations.

Though not considered a direct cause of the roving pickets, the union's decision to cut aid for miners' widows fueled the anger behind the pickets. Though the Fund initially provided modest aid for widows over fifty and their dependent children, the Fund's managers decided in 1953 to account for over costs by eliminating medical assistance and other payments to widows and the disabled (with the exception of a funeral allotment at the time of miners' deaths) (Muncy 2009A). Josephine Roche, a labor feminist and UMWA organizer (Muncy 2009B, 64) who played an instrumental role in designing the Fund, had included the original compensation for widows precisely because she knew that it was extremely difficult for women to find decent employment in rural Appalachia and, without extra income from the Fund, widows would feel pressured to find new partners (Muncy 2009A). Women "were active in the Roving Picket Movement and, in fact, a woman, Lola Moore, was the later financial secretary" of the Appalachian Committee for Full Employment (Black 1990, 120). At least five hundred women participated in the picket lines (Cantrell 1987). However, despite the prominent feminist issues

inherent to this strike, neither PL nor their rivals in SNCC and SDS seem to have prioritized this important dynamic. Had they developed a fully second anti-systemic viewpoint of the independent significance of feminist issues (e.g. Wallerstein 2014, 169) perhaps these organizations could have done more to articulate the feminist anger behind the Roving Picket Movement.

v. Conclusion

This overview of PL's intervention in the Roving Picket Movement reveals how PL was inching toward a second anti-systemic movement orientation. Nonetheless, PL's analysis of the situation was second anti-systemic in nature because the organization vigorously opposed the UMWA's conservative bureaucratism and complacency. PL's interpretation of the situation remained first anti-systemic because they continued promoting traditional, industrial class struggle as the most important cause; they viewed women's and racial minority's struggles as secondary to class issues. PL's sectarianism likewise prevented them from embracing the inter-movement dialogue and cooperation characteristic of the second anti-systemic movement. This chapter has made PL's views on the relationship between race and class struggles apparent by contrasting PL's intervention in the Roving Picket Movement with SNCC and SDS's approach to organizing in Hazard. PL, SDS, and SNCC all stayed within the first anti-systemic movement's boundaries to the extent that they did not address the latent women's issues motivating the Roving Picket Movement. PL's first anti-systemic approach was to be expected because U.S. hegemony, which held up the global first anti-systemic movement's position within the world-system, remained firmly in place. The next chapter will demonstrate how threats to U.S. hegemony allowed the NCM's coalfield organizing to take on a more consistently second anti-systemic character.

vi. The Later PL

As the second anti-systemic movement became a much more developed force later in the 1960s, PL regressed into an even more first anti-systemic movement-style of organizing. Ironically, their involvement in Hazard, rather than convincing them of the error of their ways, propelled PL into an even more traditionalist and crude interpretation of class politics. PL believes the central lessons of the Roving Picket Movement are that workers are generally more prepared to take up arms than radicals realize, that typical workers will enthusiastically engage in revolutionary activity if they are in touch with strong leaders, and that communists must immediately develop firm roots in working class communities to prepare for imminent armed revolution (PL 1975). Given their crude reading of the Hazard strike, PL was only a hair away from late-1960s jingoistic antics for which they are most famous, such as dismissing all Black Nationalism as counterrevolutionary and condemning the Vietcong for engaging in peace negotiations with the U.S. (Waters 1969; Elbaum 2002, 70-72).

Chapter Four: The MRSC and the Wildcat Strikes of the 1970s

i. Introduction

The Miners' Right to Strike Committee (MRSC) was an NCM effort to apply Maoist praxis in the Appalachian coalfields. Recall that Maoist strategy requires cadre to go among the people to learn from and lead them, patiently synthesizing their own ideas with the people's ideas through a process of mutual engagement in political struggles. The MRSC began while the NCM was entering a phase of "proletarianization," in which student activists began dropping out of universities to take up jobs in heavy industry and integrate themselves into the proletariat (Ely 2009B). Activists affiliated with a Berkley-based SDS splinter group called the Revolutionary Union (RU) [which became the Chicago-based Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP) in 1975 (Green 1978, 12)] sought employment in the coalfields both "to help organize a distinct, self-conscious core of radical struggle among miners and to connect them to larger plans for a socialist revolution in the U.S." (Ely 2009A, 4). Some RU members had already developed connections to the region through their work as VISTA volunteers and SNCC organizers (Ely 2009B). The RU/RCP responded to the Appalachian wildcats of the 1970s by sending activists to unite with the miners with the "intention of swinging a section of coal miners into the revolutionary movement if the possibility of overthrowing the system emerged" (Ely 2008B). The intentions of the MRSC, which formed during the Gas Strike of 1974, were less partisan than PL's had been in Hazard. The MRSC organizers viewed themselves as filling a leadership vacuum among the most militant miners, but they were focused on advancing the miners' issues, not establishing a new union or single-mindedly promoting their party line. By 1977, the MRSC had between thirty and forty members and a "few hundred supporters" (Green 1978, 12-14).

Most importantly for this paper's purposes, MRSC activists, through patient practice and reflection, came to an understanding of the 1970s coalfield wildcats that closely world-systems scholars' depiction of the second anti-systemic movement. Consciously responding to the same structural factors that the world-systems perspective identifies as causes of the second anti-systemic movement's emergence [such as declining U.S. hegemony, increasingly aggressive transnational corporations, and a decrepit Old Left (Wallerstein 2006, 80-83)], the MRSC took on several features of the second anti-systemic movement. These features included an increased appreciation for the relative autonomy of racial, sexual, and class struggles; an understanding of the need for transnational, inter-movement cooperation; and an increased awareness of the need to abandon the gradualist standpoints and bureaucratic organizational forms of the Old Left in order to seriously challenge regional dependency. Thus, the MRSC's approach to coalfield organizing was more characteristic of the second anti-systemic movement than PL's approach. The MRSC moved toward this more second-antisystemic approach in response to the above-mentioned structural factors.

This chapter examines the MRSC's activity in three wildcat strikes, the Gas Strike of 1974, the strike connected to the Kanawha County book protest of 1974, and the Contract Strike of 1977 to 1978. In each strike, the MRSC developed an understanding of their situation that overlaps with second anti-systemic movement ideas. The MRSC explicitly depicted the Gas Strike of 1974 as a reaction to declining U.S. hegemony (Pugh and Zimmerman 1974; Ely 2009A) and envisioned their activity as part of a "broad-based attack" on global energy capitalism that connected them with Arab and African national liberation movements (Weinrub 1975, 28). This depiction of the strike overlaps with world-systems thinkers' envisioning of the

second anti-systemic movement as an international convergence loosely-connected movements in opposition to globalized capitalism (Amin 2012; Wallerstein 2004A, 632).

The Kanawha County textbook controversy involved conservative religious fundamentalists encouraging miners to strike in opposition to local schools' use of books by progressive, black authors (Billings and Goldman 1983). The MRSC prevented this strike from spreading to other parts of West Virginia. However, at other times the MRSC benefitted from religious fundamentalists' assistance (Ely 2008A; Ely 2009B). This illustrates the second anti-systemic role that religious fundamentalism plays in the periphery and the possibility that fundamentalists can act toward either progressive or reactionary ends (Wallerstein 1990, 43; Wallerstein 1992, 108-109).

The Contract Strike of 1977-1978 entailed a much more aggressively anti-union BCOA under the direction of centralized transnational corporations negotiating with weak, passive UMWA leadership (e.g. Moody and Woodward 1978, 12). The MRSC consistently acted to oppose Miller's union bureaucracy ("UMWA in Fight for its" 1977) and proposed alternative forms of leadership through loosely connected, community-oriented, and internally-democratic grassroots organization (Fisher and Foster 1979, 188; MRSC 1977B). The MRSC's participation in this strike thus illustrates the types of organizational forms the second anti-systemic movement takes on in opposition to the first (e.g. Amin 2012). In each of these three strikes, the MRSC, in spite of their Old Left political heritage, came to emphasize the independence of race, gender, and class oppressions.

ii. The Gas Strike of 1974

The Gas Strike of 1974, the MRSC's first major action, was a protest against the restrictions on gasoline usage the West Virginia state government imposed in response to the OPEC embargo of 1973-1974. The RU's interpretation of the strike aligns with world-systems theory approaches to international politics on two levels. First, the RU interpreted the strike as a signal of declining U.S. hegemony, a theme world-systems scholars also emphasize. Secondly, the MRSC reflected world-systems theorists' appeal to cross-national second anti-systemic organizing by consciously linking the miners' strike for access to fuel to peripheral national liberation movements' opposition to western oil interests. The MRSC further approached a second anti-systemic standpoint by developing an appreciation for the relative autonomy of racial, sexual, and class struggles through their engagement with the strike.

The strike began in February of 1974 after West Virginia's governor Arch Moore decided to preserve oil by banning people from purchasing gas when they had a fourth of a tank or more left. This ban was a significant issue for coal miners because they sometimes drive over one hundred miles to get to work (Pugh and Zimmerman 1974, 32). Miners valued the ability to drive such long distances because it had enabled them to escape the conditions of company towns, in which coal operators often controlled all local institutions (Ely 2009A, 7). The strike, which the union's leadership immediately condemned, began at Consolidation Coal's Maitland mine and soon spread from Welch County to all of southwest West Virginia, eventually involving 27,000 miners (Ely 2009A, 13-14; Pugh and Zimmerman 1974, 32). Although the governor quickly offered to end his quarter tank rule for those who drove particularly long distances to work, the strike continued until he eventually scrapped the restrictions in their entirety for fear that the armed miners would endanger his national guardsmen (Ely 2009A, 23; Pugh and Zimmerman 1974, 32).

The MRSC seized upon the strike as an opportunity to criticize multinational oil conglomerates' rapid consolidation. The RU argued the energy crisis was not really a crisis by pointing out a Department of the Interior report that claimed the U.S. had enough energy resources to sustain the country's consumption for well over a century and noting that the U.S.'s total oil imports were actually increasing throughout the time of the embargo. Rather, oil companies were manipulating the embargo to increase their profits, an imperative the oil monopolies felt increasingly as they became more and more expansive (Pugh and Zimmerman 1974, 2-4 and 19). The oil companies further responded to the OPEC crisis, increased competition from Europe and Japan, and inflation by purchasing large swaths of the U.S. coal industry and pressuring mine managers to cut safety measures to increase productivity (Pugh and Zimmerman 1974, 6-8). The MRSC did not think coal miners should have to suffer for the oil companies' crisis and pointed out that the strike started at a mine owned by Consolidation Coal, which was a good target because it was one of Gulf Oil's holdings (Pugh and Zimmerman 1974, 32).

The MRSC also eagerly linked the strike to Third World national liberation movements' attempts to liberate their oil resources from western oil interests. The RU noted that the oil embargo (which was directed against Israel and Israel's supporters in the U.S., South Africa, Portugal, and the Netherlands) bolstered the cause of Palestinian liberation¹⁵ and threatened U.S.

¹⁵ The RU conceded that Saudi Arabia and other oil exporting states involved in the embargo were reactionary, but nonetheless lauded the Arab people's ability to move their governments to act on the cause of Palestinian liberation (Pugh and Zimmerman 1974, 4). Most world-systems theorists hesitate to describe the embargo as a liberatory act, noting that it increased reactionary Saudi Arabia's political influence and that the U.S. struck a deal with Saudi Arabia shortly after the embargo in which the Saudis agreed to plant their oil revenues in American banks. This deal restricted the periphery's independence by catalyzing the 1980s Third World debt crisis (Harvey 2007, 27; Wallerstein 2005, 1264-1265). However, world-systems analysis implies that the OPEC crisis contributed to U.S. hegemony's decline in the long run because the U.S.'s maneuvering for control of Middle Eastern resources and oil revenues leads to American military overextension (Maguire 2010, 144; Wallerstein 2003, 34-35).

hegemony (Pugh and Zimmerman 1974, 4). Pugh and Zimmerman (1974) also pointed to anti-colonial movements in Angola, Puerto Rico, and Vietnam's attempts to liberate their oil supplies and redirect them toward populist ends (26) as another challenge to the oil corporations that drove the oil companies to increase their pressure upon American coal miners in the form of speed ups and cuts to safety standards (6). The MRSC tried to make the connection between national liberation movements and the political situation in Appalachia clear to the miners by stressing the relationship between conditions in the Third World and Appalachia (Ely 2009A, 7), describing Appalachia as an internal colony and calling for popular control of energy resources (MRSC 1977A), and hosting forums in coal mining communities on the revolutionary movement in Iran (Ely 2009A, 25).

During the 1974 strike itself, the MRSC also reassessed their views on the relationship between class struggle and racial and gender oppression. At the time, the RU/RCP assumed women and minorities would be reliably militant actors in workplace-based industrial struggles. The party's literature on industrial organizing states that the Black Power movement of the 1960s, while inspirational and positive, lacked a sufficient working class basis and organizational discipline; the job of communist organizers was thus to channel the black masses' political energy into workplace organizing (RCP 1977, 24). The RCP also assumed that industrial organizing was the most reliable way to combat racism and sexism because the working class's strategic position in opposition to capitalism made it the "most consistent opponent of oppression in all its forms" (RCP 1977, 30). Such sentiment is recognizably characteristic of the first anti-systemic movement.

MRSC activists wanted to use Mao's mass line approach to inject anti-racist, anti-sexist, and internationalist politics into the miners' movement while learning from the miners (Ely

2009A, 15). The MRSC organizer Mike Ely soon found, however, that the coalfield's strict gendered division of labor made this quite difficult. Although RU member Gina Falls did manage to attain a leadership position in her local chapter of a rank-and-file group called the Black Lung Association (Ely 2009A, 4), the activists found that they could not advance a progressive sexual politics while only organizing among employed male workers. The MRSC in turn developed a "two-track" approach, in which they would focus on trade union politics in their workplace activity and try to develop other struggles through their May Day and International Women's Day campaigns outside of the workplace (Ely 2009A, 15). Ely also recounts noticing the contingency of the relationship between women's concerns and class struggle: mine managers and their supporters in the local press promoted a "bucket or suitcase" campaign in which miners' wives would tell their husbands to either return to work (with a lunch bucket) or leave their family (with a suitcase) (Ely 2009A, 19).

The MRSC also came to better understand the autonomy of race and class struggles through their engagement with this strike. Inspired by the 1960s Civil Rights Movement, Ely believed black workers would be among the most politically advanced and militant in the strikes. For this reason, he chose to seek employment in Keystone, West Virginia, which had a high proportion of black miners. He quickly learned, however, that black miners, while generally more aware of broader problems with racism and exploitation, were actually less inclined to strike than their white counterparts. While white workers could bounce from mine to mine seeking employment, discrimination limited black workers' maneuverability (Ely 2008B). Ely likewise came to understand the contingency of overlap between racial and class struggles. He at one point had to intervene to prevent white strikers from burning down a bar frequented by black miners who refused to participate in the strike (Ely 2008A, 21). On the other hand, black union

representatives close to the mine's management acted to prevent the bosses from firing the troublemaking Ely (Ely 2008B). These experiences pushed Ely to emphasize the complexity of the relationship between race and class struggles¹⁶.

Altogether, the MRSC's activity in this strike indicates that the organization embraced several aspects of the second anti-systemic movement. The MRSC interpreted the OPEC oil embargo (and related factors like national liberation movements, increasing core-core competition, the increasing centralization of transnational capital, and declining U.S. hegemony) as a trigger for a loosely-linked internationalist movement against global energy capitalism. This interpretation matches world-systems' scholars contention that these same structural and economic issues of the 1970s prompted the second anti-systemic movement (Hinnebusch 2012, 21-22; Wallerstein 2006, 78-84) and their depiction of loosely-connected, multivalent resistance movements in a globalizing world (Wallerstein 2004A, 632; Amin 2012). The RU's conception of Appalachia as an internal colony sharing interests with national liberation movements also fits well alongside world-systems conceptions of Appalachia as an internal-periphery (e.g. Walls 1978). The MRSC's enhanced understanding of the independence of race, class, and gender oppressions parallels the world-systems position that feminism and minority rights are no longer secondary to class struggle in the second anti-systemic movement (Wallerstein and Zurkin 1989, 437-438; Wallerstein 1990, 40-43).

iii. The Kanawha County Book Boycott of 1974

¹⁶ For example, in a piece that reflects upon the political complexities of the MRSC's work, Ely notes that struggles of African American communities and undocumented meatpackers, while both worthy and progressive causes, may not always conveniently work together (2010A, 20-22).

During Kanawha County's book boycott of 1974, religious conservatives attempted to sabotage school administrators' efforts to introduce books by progressive black authors into West Virginia curriculums. The fundamentalists encouraged the miners to engage in a wildcat to pressure the county to remove the books from the schools. The MRSC (with the support of many black miners) acted to prevent the strike's spread from Charleston to southwestern West Virginia by pointing out the racist views of many of the books' critics. The book boycott was an unmistakably conservative cause, but some observers believed the fundamentalists drew from legitimate class rage that progressives could potentially have helped the local people articulate toward more productive causes. This view of the strike overlaps with world-systems scholars' ideas regarding the role of religious fundamentalism in the second anti-systemic movement. Wallerstein and others have pointed out that religious fundamentalism increased in the periphery in response to neoliberalism and that this fundamentalism can serve either progressive or reactionary ends. World-systems theorists say religious opposition groups may be more likely to act toward progressive purposes if they link with other branches of the anti-systemic movements in a cooperative, mutually-respectful fashion. Ely's anecdote about cooperating with fundamentalists on some strike-related issues speaks to the possibility of linking with religious people in resistance to global capitalism.

The controversy began after the West Virginia state government passed a law mandating schools' curriculums be more multicultural. The Christian fundamentalist Kanawha County Board of Education member Alice Moore initiated the protests, reacting to what she viewed as the new reading lists' bad grammar, vulgar language, leftism, prurience, and evolutionism (Hillocks 1978, 633). Drawing support from many local fundamentalist churches, she encouraged parents to keep their children out of school in protest of the new books. Ten

thousand students remained absent from their classes over a period of four months (Hillocks 1978, 637; Page and Clelland 1978, 268). Beginning on September fourth, 3,500 miners walked off work for several weeks in response to their preachers' calls to protest the books (Billings and Goldman 1983, 71). This round of wildcats involved almost all miners in Kanawha County and the majority of miners in neighboring Fayette and Boone Counties (Hillocks 1978, 632)¹⁷. The protests soon escalated as the books' opponents bombed the Board of Education's building and several local schools, four people were shot, and right wing extremists like the KKK, John Birch Society, and the Heritage Foundation showed up to join the protests (Hillocks 1979, 366-367; Nyden 1978, 30). The protests subsided only after the Board of Education's chair resigned and officials pulled the books from classrooms (Hillocks 1978, 636-637).

The MRSC was surprised by the strike because they had considered the miners to be more politically forward-thinking than they realized. Ironically, one of the MRSC's first significant actions was in preventing workers from supporting the strike. Ely claims that the strike shows how "the most militant workers are not always the advanced, and that there is a deep struggle over politics and ideas that has to unfold" in any revolutionary process (2010B). The MRSC acted to help prevent the textbook strike from spreading all over the central Kanawha Valley by teaming up with a group of black Vietnam veterans to distribute literature denouncing the textbook protests' racism (Ely 2009A; Ely 2010B). This should not have been an especially difficult task, as the books that most infuriated the protestors contained passages by Malcolm X and Eldridge Cleaver (Hillocks 1978, 638), the Klan was present (Nyden 1978, 30), and the Charleston NAACP viewed the protests as an attempt to push black students out of the schools

¹⁷ Not all of the miners who went on strike during the boycott cared about the anti-book protestors' message. Many merely wanted to deplete their managers' stockpiles of coal to gain a strategic advantage in an upcoming contract strike (Page and Clelland 1978, 269).

(Billings and Goldman 1983, 70). The MRSC's appreciation for black opposition to labor militancy in this strike further illustrates the second anti-systemic movement's understanding of the independence of class and racial struggles.

The events also speak to what world-systems theorists have identified as the contradictory role of religious fundamentalism in anti-systemic movements. Some Appalachian observers claimed that the strike was a misdirected expression of working class anger. Billings and Goldman (1983) think that religious fundamentalism plays a different political role in Appalachian coal communities (where it offers a form of community autonomy from capitalism) than other regions and industries (where it is more often a tool of conservatism); this interpretation of Appalachian religiosity parallels Wallerstein's argument that the second anti-systemic movement will look different in the periphery (where it will likely take the form of religious fundamentalism) than in the core (Wallerstein 1990, 43). Billings and Goldman further argue that cause of the textbook protestors' anger was the ongoing shift from competitive to corporate capitalism in the coal industry. This shift entailed a new focus on technocratic and meritocratic rationality, which manifested ideologically in the inauthentic and patronizing universalism of the Kanawha County school board (1983, 77-78). This argument compliments the world-systems scholar Hammond's argument that the new right expresses anti-bureaucratic themes and is a response to liberal universalism, which has historically served to mask inequality (1983, 158 and 165)

Two other Appalachian observers, Fisher and Foster, ascribe the boycott to "justifiable rage, caused by powerlessness" and speculate that progressives campaigning against strip mining and black lung could have turned the class resentments energizing the protests in a more productive direction. Progressives' failure to link with the people of Kanawha County by

relating their views to the people's experiences left an ideological void into which the fascistic John Birch Society stepped (1979, 182-184). Fisher and Foster's thoughts overlap with Wallerstein's argument that religious fundamentalism increased in the periphery as a response to the upheavals of neoliberalism because the periphery's people could not relate to old-fashioned leftist ideologies and organizational forms. Wallerstein warns that if leftists do not manage to connect with religious practitioners by revitalizing and broadening their ideologies and integrating with differently-minded people through internally-democratic and loosely-connected non-state organizations, then the second anti-systemic movement may develop in a fascistic direction (1992, 106-109).

Ely's experiences among religious coalminers indicate the possibility that leftists may cooperate respectfully and productively with religious fundamentalists. Ely is vocally atheist and would regularly defend evolution and communism among the miners. A local Pentecostal church (perhaps encouraged by the mine's managers) ran a media campaign against radicals in the mines, which provoked vandals to spray paint Ely's house and destroy his car. However, Don, a conservative Pentecostal with whom Ely worked and regularly debated religion, spoke out against the red baiting campaign among his congregation, emphasizing Ely's sincere commitment to uplifting working people. Don's speech gave a large group of people within the congregation the courage to leave and form a liberal, social justice-oriented church (Ely 2008A). This anecdote speaks to the possibility that second anti-systemic actors may articulate religious fundamentalism in either reactionary or progressive ways and that very different types of people (such as Pentecostals and Maoists) may cooperate through loose networks toward progressive ends.

iv. The Contract Strike of 1977-1978

During the Contract Strike of 1974 miners struck to pressure their employers and union against selling them out while negotiating a new contract. The strike illustrates the aggressive anti-unionism of transnational corporations in the 1970s, the weakness and inadequacy of Old Left actors and organizational forms to respond to this increased aggression, and how the New Left developed new organizational forms and practices in response to the Old Left's insufficiency. As multinationals gained an even bigger voice within the BCOA, the employers' association became much more aggressive toward the union and attempted to insert provisions into the new contract limiting the workers' ability to strike. The union's top leadership hardly resisted the employers' offensive and Miller was more concerned to end the strike than defend his memberships' interests. The rank-and-file militants responded with a long, militant strike. The MRSC harshly criticized Miller during the strike (to an extent that alienated some other anti-Miller unionists) and pushed alternative forms of industrial planning and union democracy. Despite the activists' best efforts, the new contract stripped the union of its central post-war achievement, the Welfare and Retirement Fund, although the miners did retain the right to strike. The MRSC's participation in the strike demonstrates how the world-system's structural shift toward neoliberalism pushed the second anti-systemic movement to break with the first.

Wallerstein writes that neoliberalism rose and social democracy fell in the 1970s because the first anti-systemic movement had reached its limit. First anti-systemic movement actors could no longer pursue welfare and development projects to pacify the working class without threatening capitalist accumulation itself, even though the entire working class, especially in the periphery and internal-periphery, had still not benefited from the welfare state (1992, 103). Deeply aware of how previous reforms were biting into their profits, the operators acted to destroy the few social regulations in the coal industry that organized labor had won. Mostly as a

result of the 1969 Coal Mine Health and Safety Act (which dramatically reduced deaths and injuries in the coal industry), but also due to wildcats, labor productivity in the coal industry decreased by fifty percent and labor costs increased by thirty percent in the years leading up to the contract strike (Moody and Woodward 1978, 20-23). The BCOA's response was to attempt to eliminate wildcats and the union's ability to enforce safety procedures; both of these goals were closely related because the miners were most likely to wildcat over safety issues (Simon 1983, 24; Cole and Rose 1978, 16-17). The BCOA's chief negotiator made his intention to dramatically reduce the workers' power clear, insisting that "the UMWA is not the only show in town" (qtd. "UMWA in Fight for its" 1977) and pledging to exterminate the "cancer of the wildcat strike" (qtd. Moody and Woodward 1978, 12). To do so, the BCOA proposed provisions in the new contract that would enable management to fine or fire miners for participating in wildcats (Seltzer 1985, 149). The management also wanted to dismantle the centerpiece of the Appalachian welfare state, the UMWA's Welfare and Retirement Fund (Muncy 2009A), by switching to company insurance plans with high copayments (Seltzer 1985, 151-152). Unable to continue the postwar regime of labor cooperation while maintaining acceptable profit margins, the BCOA decided to dismantle the Fund and the workers' tool for enforcing safety regulations, the wildcat.

By the late 1970s, the Old Left had lost its oppositional edge and was unable to contain the neoliberal corporate offensive (Wallerstein 2006, 83). Many Old Left actors responded to the attacks on them from the second anti-systemic movement and a less patient capitalist class by more vigorously defending their corporatist schemes (Harvey 2007, 12-13). Miller was one such Old Left actor. By this time Miller had become convinced that the union should help management discipline militant workers and appealed to labor peace to defend his lackluster

contract deals (Seltzer 1985, 149). At the UMWA's 1976 convention, the miners democratically decided on the demands they would bring to the 1977 contract negotiations. Among these demands were a right-to-strike clause, higher pay, and safety and health improvements (Seltzer 1985, 148). However, Miller expressed little interest in pressing these demands during the negotiations. He was more concerned with getting the strike to end as quickly as possible. Miller infuriated the rank-and-file by spending forty thousand dollars from the union's coffers on a public relations campaign to convince the miners to return to work (Green 1978, 6), blocking miners' access to the strike aid other unions had donated to the UMWA, and supporting the Carter Administration's use of legal injunctions to force the miners to end their strike and attempts to cut strikers' access to food stamps (Turl 2010). Miller encouraged miners to accept two separate contracts that did not include the right to strike, both of which the rank-and-file voted down. Finally, after 110 days of striking, the miners were so exhausted that they accepted a compromise measure that granted a five percent inflation-adjusted pay increase and did not contain the BCOA's proposed fines and pink slips for strikers, but nonetheless dismantled the Fund (Seltzer 1985, 163-164).

The first anti-systemic movement's incompetence, bureaucratism, and complacency spurned second anti-systemic movement activity (Arrighi, Hopkins, and Wallerstein 1989, 37). Miller's pro-industry positions, distance from the rank and file, and weak negotiating skills during the contract strike pushed the MRSC and other rank-and-file groups into second anti-systemic activity. The MRSC's focus was on criticizing Miller and the union bureaucracy for failing to adequately support the right to strike and provide the strikers with decent material backing ("UMWA in Fight for its" 1977, 9). The MRSC's newspaper argued that Miller was "showing his yellow company colors" and pushing a "bag of garbage" on the strikers by trying to

convince the rank-and-file to accept the first two contracts (“Contract Battle Underway: No Sellout” 1977, 1). The MRSC called for Miller’s resignation and labeled even some of Miller’s critics among the union’s top leadership as “company stooges” (qtd. Nyden 1978, 30).

Wallerstein writes that the Old Left responded to the New Left’s accusations of complacency by calling the New Left divisive and pointing out that the New Left was accelerating the rise of neoliberalism by delegitimizing the welfare state system that held capital in place (2003, 29-31). Many Old Left forces were willing to criticize the MRSC as divisive. For example, the CPUSA’s outfit in the mines, Miners for a Fair Contract, depicted the MRSC’s activity as counterproductive factionalism and encouraged miners to fully support their negotiators (“UMWA in Fight for its” 1977, 9; Miners for a Fair Contract n.d.). More traditional union militants, even those who bitterly criticized Miller, did not appreciate the MRSC’s calls for Miller to step down in the middle of a contract negotiation (Nyden 1978, 30). Others accused the MRSC, whose core activists’ political affiliations were by now known widely, of opening the rank-and-file to red baiting (e.g. Selzer 1985, 132). For example, Consolidation Coal’s top executive told reporters that the MRSC initiated three fourths of all wildcats in the area, which not only drastically overestimated the MRSC’s influence, but also made the miners’ very popular demands for the right to strike and decent safety standards appear as the desires of only a few manipulative communists (Seltzer 1985, 154; Bleiberg 1977, 7).

Takis Fotopolis (2011), Wallerstein (1990, 48), and Frank and Fuentes (1987, 1506-1507) write that the second anti-systemic must develop new organizational forms to replace the first’s bureaucratic forms that ultimately served to reinforce the system. The MRSC looked toward alternative forms of organization to the corporatist union system that failed to support strikers or fundamentally adjust Appalachia’s dependency. The MRSC had two big strike

support committees, one in Beckley and one in Morgantown. Their Beckley strike committee, which was jointly run with an organization called the Mountain Community Union, operated a free clinic for miners to use while the UMWA's leadership withheld necessary strike aid. Miller was bitterly critical of this clinic (Green 1978, 13; Nyden 2007, 46).

During this period, the MRSC also proposed alternative organizational initiatives to challenge regional dependency. The MRSC tried to act through an organization called the Appalachian Alliance [which served as a forum to unite regional organizations acting on political and environmental problems (Fisher and Foster 1979, 188)] to develop what they called an "Appalachian Citizens' Energy Plan." This plan would balance the needs of miners for higher wages and better safety standards (which could possibly lead to increased energy prices) with the needs of people on fixed incomes. The plan would balance these interests with royalty taxes on resource extraction to increase aid to those vulnerable to rising energy costs. This tax would also redress surplus extraction by directing money back into community development. The plan would also prepare for a gradual transition away from coal and restructuring of the regional economy (MRSC 1977B). Such a plan could have altered Appalachia's dependent status. Unfortunately the plan was never implemented, perhaps because the groups within Appalachian Alliance faced deep divisions over strategy and goals (Fisher and Foster 1979, 188). Nevertheless, both initiatives (the Beckley health clinic and the Citizens' Energy Plan) were alternatives to the Old Left systems of corporatism and developmentalism that left coalfield communities vulnerable to the energy corporations' aggressiveness.

v. Concluding Thoughts on the MRSC

With this in mind, one can understand that the MRSC developed an increasingly second-anti-systemic approach to labor activism through their coalfield organizing throughout the 1970s.

The MRSC's Mike Ely's work with religious miners reveals his appreciation for what world-systems theorists have categorized as the second anti-systemic nature of fundamentalism in the periphery and fundamentalism's contingent political role. The MRSC's attempts to help miners' realize the connections between national liberation movements in the Third World and their own struggle overlaps with world-systemic depictions of Appalachia as an internal-periphery and Wallerstein's call for a loose, diverse, international coalition of social movements in opposition to globalized capitalism. The MRSC's participation in the 1977-1978 Contract Strike embodied the second anti-systemic movement's opposition to the Old Left's bureaucratized organizational forms that no longer served to challenge capital, especially the increasingly anti-union transnational conglomerates. Struggling against coal operators and union bureaucrats taught the MRSC activists to acknowledge the needs of women and minorities as independent from the needs of the industrial proletariat.

The MRSC's good work, however, could not last forever. Wallerstein argues that Maoism's anti-systemic potential was short-lived. Anti-systemic actors need to "deghettoize" social movements and devote more energy to "inter-movement diplomacy" (Wallerstein and Zurkin 1989, 52). Rather than broadening their connections to other movements, Maoist groups of the late 1960s lost their second anti-systemic nature as they descended into debilitating sectarianism. Sectarian infighting, dogmatism, and insularity eventually led Maoist organizations to take on the Old Left's worst qualities (Wallerstein 2002, 34). As the RCP developed a cult of personality around their leader Bob Avakian in the 1980s (e.g. Avakian 2005), the party abandoned the insights the MRSC had gained on religion and the relative autonomy of class, gender, and racial oppressions. Avakian's RCP has a reductionist view of religion as a mixture of false consciousness and simple ignorance. Avakian does not honestly

address religion's potentially progressive role (see Ely 2007). The RCP also became less open to analysis of the autonomy of racial, gender, and class oppressions. For example, Avakian opposed the creation of independent women's and people of color's councils within his party, describing these means of safeguarding underrepresented groups' voices as "formalistic" and unprincipled (Avakian 2005, 276). Avakian moved his followers from the kind of openness to inter-movement cooperation that enabled the MRSC's successes. Far from embracing the type of loose, international activist networks Wallerstein promotes, Avakian warns his organization would devolve into "an eclectic mishmash of communism and revisionism" without a strict party line (Avakian 2005, 223). Whereas MRSC activists had moved in a more second anti-systemic direction through their participation in coalfield labor politics, their party eventually moved in the opposite direction.

Chapter 5: Concluding Remarks

i. Introduction

On a concluding note, this thesis has shown that the MRSC's participation in Appalachian wildcat strikes throughout the 1970s was more thoroughly expressive of the shift from the first to the second anti-systemic movement than was PL's intervention in East Kentucky's Roving Picket Movement of the early 1960s. Both NCM organizations broached a second anti-systemic orientation by embracing Maoism, opposing union bureaucratism within the UMWA, and criticizing the CPUSA as too reformist. Nevertheless, the MRSC's presence in the coalfields was more closely aligned with the second anti-systemic movement in the following ways: where PL's sectarianism prevented them from cooperating with other radical organizations active in Hazard, the MRSC had a less sectarian stance and sought alliances with diverse groups and individuals, both in Appalachia and internationally. Their non-sectarian stance matches Wallerstein's vision of a loose, internationalist movement against capitalist globalization (e.g. 2004A, 632). Reflecting Wallerstein's expectation that the second anti-systemic movement will recognize the independence of women and racial minorities' issues from the industrial proletariat's struggle (2004A, 631), the MRSC understood that working among employed, working class men was not enough to address women's distinct concerns and that workers' militancy alone is not sufficient to advance racial minorities' interests. On the other hand, PL's work in Hazard and elsewhere failed to emphasize the distinct role of women and minorities in the class struggle. In line with Wallerstein's assessments, this thesis has shown that the MRSC's second anti-systemic approach was enabled by declining U.S. hegemony in the form of the OPEC crisis, Third World national liberation movements, increased core-core competition, less bounded capital, and a decaying first anti-systemic movement.

PL and the MRSC's Maoism and distaste for Old Left union bureaucracy and top-heavy, complacent leftist parties were characteristic of the second anti-systemic movement. Although he says Maoism is no longer second anti-systemic, Wallerstein sees Maoism as an important early challenger to the first anti-systemic movement (2004, 631; 2014, 165). Both the MRSC's parent organization, the RU/RCP, and PL embraced Maoism and more-or-less supported China during the Sino-Soviet split (Elbaum 2002, 62 and 98). PL deeply opposed the "phony union leaders" in the UMWA and other mainstream labor organizations (De Chispa 1963, 12) and sharply criticized CPUSA's failure to push their contacts within the labor movement further to the left (Waters 1969). The MRSC peeved the UMWA's leadership on countless occasions by supporting illegal, unauthorized strikes (e.g. "Miners Committee Responds To" 1977) and criticized the union's president Miller for his top-down, bureaucratic approach and unwillingness to meaningfully challenge the coal operators (Nyden 1978, 30). The MRSC's anti-Miller stance likewise pushed them into conflict with Miners for a Fair Contract, CPUSA's front group in the mines (Miners for a Fair Contract 1977; "UMWA in Fight for its" 1978). Finally, the MRSC's Beckley Strike Committee (Green 1978, 13) and proposed Appalachian Citizens Energy Plan (MRSC 1977B) were steps toward new organizational forms to replace the more traditional labor organizations that no longer served an oppositional purpose. PL and the MRSC's actions thus reflect the second anti-systemic movement's opposition to passive Old Left organizations "on the grounds that these movements were not in reality anti-systemic but were also collusive with the system" (Wallerstein 2014, 164).

Despite PL's second anti-systemic opposition to complacent first anti-systemic organizations, their sectarianism and narrow focus on the industrial issues at hand in the Roving Picket Movement (and their failure to engage with the movement's inherent racial and gender

issues) marks their stance as first anti-systemic. PL's intervention in Hazard was sectarian because they refused to work in coalition with other radical groups in support of the strike and opportunistically used the strike as an opportunity to draw attention to their organization, even as this approach brought increased scrutiny upon the strikers (Waters 1969). PL did little to speak to the strike's significance for American racial politics beyond writing that East Kentucky's problems illustrate how capitalism disadvantages both the white and black proletariat (Ignatin 1967, 363-364). Other activists, including those affiliated with SNCC and SDS, actively promoted independent black leadership by sending white radicals into the coalfields to prepare white workers to unite with their black compatriots and leave black activists to separately lead their own struggles (Sinclair 1968, 8-9; Fager 1967, 90). Gender issues motivated the Roving Picket Movement (Muncy 2009A; Black 1990, 120), but PL paid little, if any, attention to them in East Kentucky and hesitated to back the broader women's movement, which they viewed as too middle class (Waters 1969). PL's activity in support of the Roving Picket Movement continued the first anti-systemic movement's dismissal of the struggles of women and minorities outside of labor organizing as secondary in importance (Wallerstein 2014, 161).

The MRSC's initiatives in support of the 1970s wildcats were much closer to the second anti-systemic movement than their PL precursors' actions in Hazard had been. The MRSC was less sectarian. They worked closely alongside other organizations with different political orientations, such as the Appalachian Alliance and the Mountain Community Union (Green 1978, 13; MRSC 1977B) and Mike Ely benefited from his closeness to fundamentalist miners (Ely 2008A). The MRSC's anti-sectarianism extended to their attempts to promote internationalism through their work among the miners, such as their depiction of the 1974 Gas Strike as part of a "broad-based attack" on global energy capitalism encompassing Middle

Eastern and African national liberal struggles (Weinrub 1975, 28; Pugh and Zimmerman 1974, 26). The MRSC's approach to coalition building overlaps with world-systems scholars' visions of a loose, ideologically diverse, internationalist movement against globalized capitalism (Wallerstein 2004, 632; Amin 2012) whose participants include fundamentalists (Wallerstein 1992, 106-109).

The MRSC likewise came to appreciate a more independent role for women and minorities within anti-systemic activism. They dropped their initial assumptions that the immediate interests and desires of black workers would line up closely with those of the most militant wildcat strikers. Given the severity of employment discrimination in the coal industry, black workers, though generally more politically aware, were often less willing to strike for fear that it would endanger their jobs (Ely 2008B). MRSC activists even had to constrain white workers' from attacking black strikebreakers (Ely 2008A, 21) and appeal to anti-racism to prevent the reactionary textbook strike from spreading (Ely 2009A). The MRSC similarly readjusted their process of organizing women in the coalfields after concluding they could not reach women by singularly focusing on organizing in the workplace and promoting trade union issues (Ely 2009A, 15). The MRSC's work thus falls within the second anti-systemic movement's efforts to broaden the organized left's mass base beyond the predominantly male, white industrial proletariat and prioritize women and minorities' issues (Arrighi, Hopkins, and Wallerstein 1989, 88-89).

In the time between PL and the MRSC's interventions in the coal fields, declining U.S. hegemony opened Appalachian coal communities (and the MRSC) to more thoroughly second anti-systemic activism. Falling U.S. hegemony creates the conditions in which the second anti-systemic movement can advance and develop, especially as the U.S.'s weakened state power

relative to capital's power increases global inequality and provokes more determined resistance movements (Arrighi, Hopkins, and Wallerstein 1989, 111). Inflation caused by the Vietnam War (Moody and Woodward 1978, 18-19), the OPEC oil crisis (Pugh and Zimmerman 1974, 4), and national liberation movements in the Third World (Nyden 1978, 8) (all of which were signs of declining U.S. hegemony) led to an increasingly centralized coal industry under the leadership of aggressively anti-union operators (e.g. Moody and Woodward 1978, 38). As the coal corporations became more hostile to unions, the UMWA's leaders' ongoing commitment to union/management cooperation appeared useless against the BCOA's offensive (e.g. PL 1978B, 23). Thus, declining hegemony heightened the tensions between capital and labor and provoked a militant wildcat movement in the Appalachian coal industry. National liberation movements' escalating assertiveness in the form of the OPEC embargo and Southern African independence movements pushed coal operators and the West Virginia state government to increase their pressure on miners and thereby provided the MRSC the opportunity to bring internationalist messaging into their work with the strikers (Weinrub 1975; Ely 2008A). Furthermore, the Vietnam War signaled declining U.S. hegemony (Wallerstein 2014, 164) and provoked the second anti-systemic activity as disillusioned Vietnam veterans were among the most militant strikers (Turl 2010).

Finally, the War on Poverty and welfare programs extended U.S. hegemony by attempting to quell Appalachia's labor strife while maintaining capitalism within the region; these initiatives were remarkably similar to U.S.-backed development schemes intended to moderate the periphery's anti-colonial movement (Sinclair 1968, 20; Dix 1970, 29). These anti-poverty programs failed to contain the area's labor unrest and catalyzed the nascent anti-systemic movement by providing women more resources to participate in strike activity (Clever 1975).

Thus, women's participation within the wildcats was more visible by the time the MRSC began organizing in the region. U.S. hegemony was weaker when the MRSC started their work among the miners than when PL was involved in Hazard. This is why the MRSC played a more thoroughly second anti-systemic role than PL.

ii. Prospects for Further Research

I have thus far explained how and why the MRSC's activism was more characteristic of the second anti-systemic movement than was PL's intervention in the Roving Picket Movement. I will now roughly sketch two potential new directions for my work. My research for this thesis directs me to consider issues related to activist strategy and globalization in greater detail. The world-systems theory concept of hegemonic succession implies that some resistance movements, due to their strategically important geographic locations, will have greater impact than others. Mike Ely and Max Elbaum's reflections on the NCM's legacy likewise hold that activists must learn to be more selective of issues to embrace. Additionally, a world-systems theory analysis of the 1970s Appalachian wildcats could be useful for critically engaging William Robinson's global capitalism perspective (e.g. Robinson 2011).

World-systems theory's analysis of hegemonic shifts implies that struggle in some areas will be more important than others during transitional periods. For example, Arrighi and Silver write that anti-systemic movements in Asia are gaining increasing significance as the U.S.'s power declines and China begins to take its place as the next hegemon (2001, 279). Elbaum draws similar conclusions from the NCM's experience. Elbaum views the NCM's focus on issues of inequality and imperialism as an antidote to contemporary post-modern activism's tendency to assign equal importance to all issues. Elbaum finds the alter-globalization movement's non-sectarianism and internationalism heartening, but insists that alter-globalists

must focus on the most urgent issues, including environmental problems, imperialism, and immigration (2002, 327-328). Ely's reflections on the MRSC's experience lead him to comparable conclusions. Most NCM labor activists did not strategically select workplaces in which to organize. Instead, Ely writes, they usually expected to radicalize whatever struggles randomly materialized wherever they happened to be working. However, most of these organizers did not witness any significant protest activity in their workplaces. Ely was particularly lucky to have selected an industry that was in the midst of intense labor strife (2010A, 6-7). "Not all places or movements are equal" and serious radicals must select to focus on the most radical struggles in a non-sectarian way (Ely 2010A, 7). Ely views work among Mexican immigrants in the meatpacking industry as a particularly promising struggle (2010A, 20). With this in mind, my future research may use world-systems literature to theoretically ground the selection of important struggles.

My future research projects may also frame the Appalachian coal industry's consolidation in the 1970s in terms of the debate between world-systems theory and William Robinson's global capitalism approach. Robinson claims that, since the 1970s, globalization has brought forth a qualitatively new phase of capitalism marked by increasingly transnationalized production networks, thereby rendering geographically-distinct notions of core and periphery irrelevant (Robinson 2011, 16-17). Wallerstein, on the other hand, says that what some call globalization is nothing new within capitalism (Robinson 2011, 2; Wallerstein 2004B, 93). Certain Appalachian scholars have argued, much like Robinson, that the transnational conglomerates' takeover of the Appalachian coal industry in the 1960s and 1970s represented a shift away from Appalachia's historical dependency (Caudill 1976, 75-79; Diehl 1972, 88-89). However, even after the coal industry's consolidation, certain aspects of the region's former

dependency remained in place. The energy and steel conglomerates used institutions left over from the more competitive period of the coal industry, such as the BCOA and the Fund, to pressure Miller into submission (e.g. Cole and Rose 1978, 14). Moreover, the transnational steel companies did not permanently maintain their Appalachian coal holdings; the Virginia-based Massey Energy bought most steel companies' mines in the 1990s (Nyden 2007, 38). Thus, an analysis of the transformation of regional dependency in the Appalachian coal industry in the 1970s may lend support to Wallerstein's contention that the seemingly new phase of globalization is a continuation of older patterns, rather than a qualitatively new phenomenon.

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