

Working Class Power and the Collapse of the Domestic Steam Coal Market:
Lessons from the Crowsnest Pass in the 1950s and 1960s

Tom Langford,
Department of Sociology,
University of Calgary
langford@ucalgary.ca

Neoliberal globalization has transformed the terrain of class struggle (Leadbeater 2008: 23-26; Munck 2002: 51-76), forcing labour activists and organizations to search for ways to reinvent and reinvigorate labour movements (e.g., Green 2008; Sullivan 2010; Waterman 2004). There is much in labour's contemporary crisis that is unique, particularly its global reach, but there is also much that echoes elements of earlier crises. The purposes of this paper are to sketch how the socialist workers' movement in the Crowsnest Pass responded to and was deeply affected by the collapse of the Canadian steam coal market in the 1950s; and to highlight the strategic lessons of this historical sequence of events for efforts to defend workers' rights in the neoliberal era.

At the end of WW II, the Crowsnest Pass through the Rocky Mountains (approximately 100 km. north of the 49th parallel) was populated by about 15,000 people living in a series of small coal-mining communities stretching from Hillcrest, Alberta in the east to Fernie, British Columbia in the west. The steam coal industry in the region had boomed during WW II and continued to boom in the immediate years after the war; the five major coal producers in the Pass not only continued to operate the successful underground mines that had first been developed at the turn of the century but in the 1940s had opened new underground and strip mines. However the steam coal industry in the Pass had a fundamental weakness: it

depended upon one customer, Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR), to purchase approximately 75 percent of the output. The Crowsnest Pass coal companies were therefore forced to implement a series of major production cuts during the 1950s as the CPR systematically phased out coal-burning steam locomotives in favour of diesel locomotives. Between 1949 and 1958, coal production fell by 83 and 46 percent respectively on the Alberta and British Columbia sides of the Pass (Langford and Frazer 2002: 54). In response to the shrinking market for steam coal, three of the four coal companies based in the Alberta Pass merged into a single company in 1952 and immediately started to close excess production facilities; the largest of the original coal producers in the Alberta Pass, West Canadian Collieries, ceased all operations in early 1961; and the only coal producer on the B.C. side of the continental divide, Crow's Nest Pass Coal Co., closed its Coal Creek (near Fernie) operation in 1958 while it continued to mine coal in the twin communities of Michel and Natal.¹

In the next section I outline the main features of the socialist workers' movement in the region that had roots dating back to the late 19th century. This will serve as a basis for understanding the consequences of the mine closures and lessons for contemporary workers' movements.

Sources of Working Class Power in the Crowsnest Pass

During the first half of the 20th century, the workers' movement in the Crowsnest Pass built an alternative proletarian hegemony that extended from coalface to union hall, and engaged the entire community in the pursuit of solidarity,

democracy and economic equality. This alternative hegemony was built in continual opposition to the individualistic, profit-oriented ethos promoted by the coal companies and the local business elite. A number of local organizations contributed directly to the institutionalization of the alternative hegemony in the Crowsnest Pass, with miners' union locals playing a pivotal role (Langford 2002: 148-150); the other local organizations included progressive ethnic associations, local governments and school boards that were controlled or heavily influenced by workers' representatives, local branches of the Communist Party of Canada (known in the 1940s and 1950s as the Labour Progressive Party) and the Fernie and District Labour Party, the sponsor of Tom Uphill's unbroken string of elections to the B.C. provincial legislature between 1920 and 1960 (Langford and Frazer 2002).

Research on strikes by British coal miners between 1889 and 1996 has shown that structural features of coal-mining work and communities are insufficient to explain the existence of radical regions like the Crowsnest Pass. Church and Outram found that "some collieries that were neither isolated nor large were nevertheless strike-prone; a much larger number of collieries were isolated and large but not at all strike-prone" (1998: 173). They conclude by positing coal miners' solidarity "as the outcome of deliberate social action, not simply as a reflex action carried out according to the dictates of a cultural norm." Their own model for the creation of proletarian solidarity and militant action in a coal community involves the mobilization of cultural and social capital by local activists working through local institutions (262). In such a model, the characteristics of work and life

in the Pass are structural resources and obstacles (rather than crude determinants) for the purposeful building of an alternative proletarian hegemony.

A structural foundation of miners' class power in the Pass was the "dependency of the exploiter on the exploited" (Wright 1997: 12), since without skillful and hard labour to mine coal, the coal companies could not realize any profit. The Crowsnest Pass coal companies were more dependent upon their workers than many other employers because mechanized underground mining was slow to be introduced into mines due to the sharp pitch of the seams and it was hard to find replacements for skilled underground coal miners given the geographic isolation of the region. This structural dependency helps to explain why strikes, both authorized and wildcat, were a common and often successful form of struggle.

Most of the Pass communities were established on the floor of narrow mountain valleys near the entrances of mines. Research on other coal-mining areas indicates that dense settlement on valley floors near mine sites encourages greater proletarian solidarity than other types of settlement patterns (Cooke 1985: 24, 33; Dublin and Licht 2005: 23, 71).

Two other structural features of coal mining and life in the Crowsnest Pass deserve mention. Firstly, there was an abundance of fish and wildlife in the region that was available to provide sustenance to workers' families, thereby lessening workers' dependence on the employer. Secondly, major disasters marred the early development of coalmines in the area, including the loss of 189 lives at Hillcrest in 1914 -- the worst mining disaster in Canadian history (Kinneer 2002: 182-184). The memory of these disasters motivated activists for decades. On his retirement in

1947, the secretary of the Coleman Local of the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA), Mack Stigler, noted that he started working at Hillcrest Collieries in 1912 and was an employee at the time of the 1914 explosion. He wrote, "Every year I go to Hillcrest and spend an hour or more walking amongst those graves of my old friends, talking to them. They were my friends and they were murdered."² Stigler's story suggests that memories and lessons from the disasters became cultural resources for the union movement and socialist organizations that had established a significant presence in the region in the early 1900s.

The first union to organize miners in the Pass was the Western Federation of Miners (WFM). It was soon supplanted by the UMWA after the WFM decided to focus exclusively on hard rock miners. By August 1904, the UMWA had 4,000 members in the Pass, organized into seven local unions (Langford 2002: 147); the following year it signed collective agreements with mines throughout the region (Seager 1982: 205). Furthermore, the early strength of socialist political organizing in the Pass was demonstrated by the election of Socialist Party of Canada candidate and WFM organizer, Charlie O'Brien, to the Alberta legislature in 1909 as the member for the constituency of Rocky Mountain (Seager 1982: 231).

Working class formation involves the establishment of groups – such as labour unions, political parties, pro-labour newspapers, consumer co-operatives and progressive ethnic associations -- that offer interpretations of workers' class interests and organize workers in pursuit of those interests. "Class formations are important," notes Erik Olin Wright, "because they constitute a crucial link between class structure and class struggles ... because of the ways they shape class capacities

and thus the balance of power within class struggles ” (1998: 379-380). Working class formation in the Crowsnest Pass in the early 1900s proceeded very quickly, was thorough rather than fragmentary, and incorporated a strong element of socialist ideology -- unions and socialist political parties were as much a part of the fabric of life as the railway, the coal companies, churches and taverns. Therefore as civil society groups were formed in this nascent society, they had the option of orienting to the dominant capitalist hegemony or a proletarian counter-hegemony with a strong socialist orientation. This is undoubtedly an oversimplified model of working class formation in the Pass between 1900 and 1950 since it neglects important twists and turns that included miners’ abandonment of the UMWA in favour of the One Big Union at the end of WW I (Seager 1982). Nevertheless it gives a rough idea for why local support for the Communist Party of Canada (CPC) was relatively strong in the 1930s, as evidenced by the temporary renaming of the east end of Blairmore, Alberta’s main street in honour of jailed CPC leader Tim Buck and the designation of an outdoor rally/picnic venue in Natal, B.C. as “Karl Marx Park.”

What was the state of working class formation in the Pass just prior to the collapse of the steam coal market in the 1950s? The five UMWA local unions in the region continued to be the heart of the alternative proletarian hegemony. A strong collective agreement was in place that covered the 3,000 plus miners in the area, including the employees of firms subcontracted to strip mine outcrops of coal. They were democratic local unions that continued to maintain a great deal of independence from the District 18 office in Calgary let alone the international office in Washington. Furthermore, the local unions took active roles in their communities,

in provincial politics, in the affairs of District 18 and in the broader workers' movement. Involvement in communities ranged from sponsoring free film showings for children, to contributing to union members' election campaigns for local government, to spearheading the campaign to build a modern hospital in the Alberta Pass in the late 1940s (Langford 2002).

Despite these obvious strengths, just prior to the major production cuts in the 1950s the UMWA local unions faced two challenges that complicated the process of working class formation. Firstly, many core activists (like Mack Stigler) had retired or were about to retire, so there was a need to renew union leadership. Secondly, the local branches of the CPC went from a period of great political activity just after WW II to virtual inactivity by the end of the 1940s as the deep chill of the Cold War swept through the area. (However a few prominent UMWA activists continued to be publicly affiliated with the CPC throughout the 1950s.) On the B.C. side of the continental divide, the CCF partially filled the vacuum caused by the collapse of communist activism and MLA Tom Uphill continued to promote a working class program under the banner of the Fernie and District Labour Party. In the Alberta Pass, however, the political left virtually disappeared as an independent force until the mid-1960s. The Cold War also weakened the strength and socialist character of working class formation in the Crowsnest Pass by creating dissension in ethnic communities; and by strengthening the hand of more conservative unionists in the UMWA locals (Langford and Frazer 2002: 59).

An additional dimension of the proletarian culture in the mid-20th century points to its incompleteness as an alternative hegemony. The gender order in the

Pass was highly patriarchal, and there is scant evidence of much of a difference between the dominant hegemony and proletarian counter-hegemony in this regard. A material foundation for women's subordination was their legal exclusion from production work in or around the mines. In the case of Alberta, the exclusion lasted up until 1975.³ As a consequence, women had relatively limited occupational opportunities compared to men and were expected to fill the compulsory roles of homemaker and mother once they were married. It is important to note that no evidence exists of the Crowsnest UMWA local unions ever objecting to women's exclusion from employment opportunities. Therefore Cooke's conclusion (1985: 39N2) that male coal miners in South Wales were complicit in the exclusion of women from mining employment applies with equal force to the male coal miners in the Pass.

If the mines were bastions of male domination, so were the local unions and ethnic associations. Indeed the only organizations in the working class formation that featured women leaders were those associated with the CPC. For example, Margaret Mills was the Alberta party's director of organization in 1943; according to a RCMP security report, Mills was the featured speaker at a party meeting at Blairmore's UMWA Hall on 3 December 1943, attended by 115 people. A second example is the activism of Pass women in branches of the Housewives Consumer Association in 1946 and 1947. Therefore one of the deleterious consequences of the collapse of communist activism in the late 1940s was the end of organizing efforts that expanded women's progressive political roles.⁴

The preceding analysis suggests that renewing and deepening the proletarian counter-hegemony in the Pass throughout the 1950s and into the 1960s would have been a challenging and uncertain task even if the demand for steam coal had remained strong. When the CPR started to drastically cut back its orders from Crowsnest Pass mines, however, the workers' movement was soon as hollowed out as the downtown business districts of towns where the mines had closed.

Economic Crisis and a Decisive Shift in the Balance of Class Forces

The outline of the coming economic crisis in the steam coal industry in the Pass had become apparent to workers by early 1950. West Canadian Collieries reported that "absenteeism, so plentiful a year ago, is now almost a thing of the past" and offered this explanation for the change: "The general feeling being that gas and oil competition may mean less work as time continues and it would appear that workmen generally are busy to consolidate their position."⁵

The economic crisis was marked by mine closure after mine closure between 1952 and 1961, but also a steady diet of reduced work hours (sometimes as few as one shift per week) at mines that continued to operate. Given the poor prospects for the Pass coal industry in the 1950s, many younger workers chose to leave the area to find work in regions with healthy industries. Between 1951 and 1966, the population in the Alberta Pass decreased by 30 percent with two-thirds of the decrease occurring in the first five years. In the British Columbia Pass the decrease was only 10 percent over the same period because of the continuing health of mining at Michel. Indeed if coal mining at Michel had faltered, the depopulation of

the Alberta Crowsnest Pass would have been much greater since a number of Alberta miners commuted across the continental divide to Michel for work.⁶

In 1959-60, West Canadian Collieries reopened its Greenhill Mine in Blairmore, Alberta to fill a trial metallurgical coal order from Japanese steel makers. The company remarked in the middle of 1959, "We ourselves are finding it difficult to get the required number of men for our Greenhill Mine operation, particularly miners and the same situation is true of the other mines in the area. The aggressive miner and labourer has bought and gained employment elsewhere."⁷ Indeed it was largely older miners, many with minor disabilities, who remained in the Alberta Pass throughout the 1950s: not only were their prospects for finding other jobs limited, they were financially chained to their homes because the housing market had collapsed. In 1955 a provincial government official wrote, "Real estate values dropped to such an extent that \$4,000 to \$5,000 homes could be bought for \$800 and it was possible to rent a home in the Coleman area free of charge if the tenant would pay taxes and maintain the property."⁸ For the union and socialist movements in the 1950s, this demographic shift in the mining labour force meant that there were very few young people around with a long-term commitment to the Pass who might renew the depleted ranks of activists.

It is important to recognize that the collapse of the coal-mining industry in the Crowsnest Pass in the 1950s is far from a unique historical event. As Dublin and Licht state in their book on the decline of the Pennsylvania anthracite region, "The economic decline of coal-mining communities has been an international phenomenon across the twentieth century" (2005: 4). One of the reasons for the

high incidence of decline of coal-mining communities is the susceptibility of particular coal regions to competition both from new coal fields and from other fuels: coal's main drawbacks are that it is bulky and relatively expensive to transport, and the mining and burning of coal creates severe environmental problems (Freese 2003: chapters 7 and 9). Nevertheless, regardless of the competitive problems of a particular coal field, there is always a political dimension to any story of the decline of a coal-mining region since higher levels of government will inevitably be asked to help save the industry, protect the workers' jobs and preserve the integrity of the communities. In the Crowsnest Pass of the 1950s, the five UMWA local unions followed the lead of the District 18 executive and supported the building of across-class coalitions to try and save as much of the coal industry as possible.

The first coalition effort at the industry-wide level occurred in the summer of 1950. On the initiative of the UMWA, representatives of the Bituminous and Domestic Operators Associations met with union representatives "to discuss present problems and the future of the coal industry." This led to the establishment of a functioning joint committee consisting of three representatives from each organization.⁹ As the crisis deepened, coalition efforts extended to the regional and local levels. For instance, in March of 1954 sub-district 5 (the three Alberta Pass locals) of the UMWA organized a mass meeting in Blairmore "to discuss the coal crisis and help to formulate plans for a national coal policy for the benefit of western miners." Promotional material invited "every resident of the Pass ... to attend -- miners, coal operators, doctors, merchants, school teachers and everyone." The

meeting attracted a crowd of 400 and concluded with the promise to bring together “two or three members from every organization and business together with coal operators and union officials to form a central committee to draw up a brief to present to the government.” Just over a week later, Coleman Collieries announced that 300 miners would lose their jobs at the end of the month when it closed an underground mine and coal preparation plant. Three days later the Coleman Local of the UMWA convened a special union meeting that attracted “the largest crowd ever to assemble in Coleman.” The main motion presented to the union members was “that we as union men and citizens of the town of Coleman send a delegation to interview Premier Manning, this to be comprised of two union delegates, two from the town council and two from the Board of Trade.”¹⁰

UMWA bodies initiated the examples of across-class lobbying coalitions recorded in the preceding paragraph. When the initiatives came from the sub-district or local levels, they were consistent with ongoing union leadership of the alternative proletarian hegemony in the Pass. The UMWA locals could only fulfil this role, however, when mines were operating and they had an active membership to sustain and support their leadership efforts. Therefore whenever a local union no longer had any working miners as members, as was the case for the Blairmore Local in 1957, Fernie Local in 1958 and Bellevue Local in 1961, the local union no longer had resources or moral authority to lead the community responses to the crisis. In this circumstance, community leadership quickly passed to local businesses that stood to gain the most from speedy efforts at economic revitalization. The best example of this process is Fernie in 1958: whereas in January and February the

Fernie Local of the UMWA was central in early efforts to lobby the provincial government after the closure of the mine at Coal Creek, by the spring there was no longer any mention of the union in the initiatives spearheaded by the Fernie Chamber of Commerce at the local and regional levels.¹¹

The logic of class struggle partially changed when the coal industry went into crisis in the Pass since the UMWA locals needed to work collaboratively with coal companies to try and win new markets and therefore to preserve their members' jobs. In those communities where the mines shut down for good in the late 1950s or early 1960s – Fernie, Blairmore and Bellevue – the logic of class struggle underwent a more fundamental change. This is because the once omnipresent coal companies literally disappeared from the scene (with senior managers typically wasting no time to move far away); and the remaining branches of the labour movement (including UMWA pensioners' locals, nurses' and teachers' associations, and a few unions at small industrial establishments like saw mills) lacked the membership base and strategic economic importance to sustain the alternative proletarian hegemony. It is true that a few experienced working class leaders stayed involved on municipal councils and school boards after the closing of the mines. Whenever they did so, however, they had to accommodate themselves to the leadership of the local business elite.

The three options for dealing with a catastrophic loss of market and jobs for a hinterland coal-producing region were starkly mapped in the foreword to a book published by the Works Project Administration, an American New Deal organization, in 1941: "Either the declining industry must be rejuvenated, or it must

be supplanted, or the people must move away -- obviously there are no other solutions" (Brown and Webb 1971: iv). The detailed story of the pursuit of these three paths of action in the Crowsnest Pass is beyond the scope of the current paper. However the results for each path can be summarized.

(1) The B.C. and federal governments directly or indirectly subsidized the surviving two Pass coal companies in the 1960s, and thus facilitated the rebirth of the coal industry. Since the early 1970s, the region has been a major supplier of metallurgical coal to Japanese, Korean and Chinese steel makers, and has thus been a cog in the hegemonic efforts of the United States to integrate the East Asian countries into the capitalist world-system. Since the 1980s, all of the coal has come from massive strip mines high in the mountains on the B.C. side of the border (Gunton 2003: 75-80).

(2) In 1963 the federal government designated the Crowsnest Pass as an economically depressed area, thereby making new industries established in the Pass eligible for "a three-year tax holiday and an attractive cost allowance on equipment." The one major company that took advantage of these tax incentives was Phillips Cable – it established a telephone cable manufacturing facility just west of Coleman, Alberta in 1965. In 1972 the plant employed 220 people. However Phillips Cable started to reduce production at the facility in 1980 and closed it in 1985.¹²

Therefore while the federal government's attempt to supplant the coal industry with new manufacturing enterprises had some early success, it ultimately failed. The relatively long distance of the Crowsnest Pass from major markets makes it an unattractive location for manufacturing investment.

(3) In the late 1950s the federal government of John Diefenbaker announced its intention to establish new federal penitentiaries in different parts of Canada. The Fernie Chamber of Commerce spearheaded an effort to secure one of the new prisons to replace some of the jobs lost by the 1958 closure of the Coal Creek mine. Fernie eventually lost out in this competition for prison jobs to other communities, including the economically depressed former coalmining communities of Drumheller, Alberta and Springhill, Nova Scotia.¹³ As a consequence, even though there is a modest core of public sector employment in the Crowsnest Pass (in schools, hospitals and different levels of government), there is no major public institution on either side of the continental divide that provides a significant boost to the regional economy.

(4) Efforts to supplant the Fernie coal industry with a destination ski industry were initiated by the Fernie Chamber of Commerce in 1960 and, after many years of growing pains, have largely transformed Fernie into a vacation hot spot, albeit with signs of its proletarian heritage.

(5) The Alberta provincial government's signature response to the crisis was to subsidize the travel and moving costs of miners who decided to go anywhere between the Great Lakes and the Pacific Coast for work opportunities. Between 1954 and 1960, 132 Crowsnest Pass families were moved at the Alberta government's expense and an even large number of single men were given free transportation out of the region. In response to the closing of the Greenhill mine in Blairmore in 1957, Premier Ernest Manning stated it is a "regrettable thing, but it is one of the consequences generally in the coal industry as a result of progress of

other types of fuel.” Two years earlier the leader of the Labour Progressive Party of Alberta, Ben Swankey, had critiqued the Premier’s approach with this analysis: “The coal miner was the forgotten man in Alberta today because Premier Manning 'is too busy giving away our oil and natural gas to U.S. oil corporations to bother about a few thousand coal miners.’”¹⁴

Lessons For Contemporary Workers’ Movements

Only remnants of the alternative proletarian hegemony in the Crowsnest Pass survived into the 1960s and beyond. For instance, the Michel Local of the UMWA continued to uphold a tradition of militant opposition inside the international union and was the only Canadian local that officially cast more votes for challenger Jock Yablonski than incumbent Tony Boyle in the UMWA’s infamous 1969 presidential election that culminated in the murder of Yablonski and his family.¹⁵ In addition, in response to the locally depressed economic conditions of the mid-1960s, a large proportion of the residents of the Alberta Pass turned their backs on Premier Manning’s provincial government and helped to elect the first NDP member in Alberta’s history (Langford 2009). Overall, however, labour unions in the Crowsnest Pass after the economic collapse of the 1950s tended to be interest groups rather than a movement, let alone a counter-hegemonic force.

The decisions to close the mines between 1952 and 1961 were made by capitalist firms that had no obligation to consult with coal miners or other members of the Pass communities in which they had been operating for decades. It is noteworthy that during these troubled years there were no public calls to

nationalize the mines of the Crowsnest Pass even though this had been a demand during earlier crises. More than likely the absence of the nationalization demand was a strategic choice that took into account the Cold War politics of the period. Nevertheless, the demand for public control over the actions of companies that are contemplating the complete shutdown of mines would not have been out of place. For instance, a six month window of public participation managed by government officials would have allowed all options for sustaining a mine to be explored and engaged community members rather than leaving them as helpless victims of an impersonal corporation. During such a participatory process, the mine would have to remain operational in order to protect capital investment and markets, and government subsidies would likely be required to make that happen. Furthermore, nationalization of a mine, at least for a transition period, would have to be recognized as one possible outcome of the entire exercise. The key lesson from the Crowsnest Pass of the 1950s is that even a militant, well-prepared workers' movement is no match for corporations in a crisis unless the public holds some sort of control over the disposition of assets. Such control would only come through the active involvement of a government that upholds the principle of economic democracy for the residents of resource communities.

A second lesson concerns the transitory character of place-based alternative hegemonies – they can be disorganized and dissipated in an instant through capital flight, the closure of productive facilities and the abandonment of working class communities. The challenge of the current era of wireless communication and social media is to involve rank-and-file union members and activists in new forms of

networked affinity and solidarity that are not rooted in the face-to-face relations of workplaces and residential communities and therefore not subject to instantaneous disorganization.

Finally, the history of the workers' movement in the Crowsnest Pass demonstrates the crucial role of oppositional politics. There were many structural factors in the Pass that facilitated labour and socialist organizing during the first half of the twentieth century, yet it still took the dedicated organizing efforts of hundreds of Pass activists working through a myriad of organizations to create a powerful, counter-hegemonic, democratic movement. Even before the economic crisis in the steam coal industry, the future of this alternative hegemony was in doubt because of a decline in Leftist activism (caused by retirements of veteran leaders and Cold War political pressures). Then the economic crisis itself revealed the limitations of an oppositional proletarian politics that is locally isolated. A just and democratic resolution to the crisis could only have been fashioned through the intervention of progressive political forces at the provincial and national levels. The lesson is that even the most powerful of local workers' movements lacks the means to solve crises that are rooted in trans-local factors such as technological change.

Endnotes

¹ “Three Pass Mines Amalgamate,” *Coleman Journal* 16 January 1952: 1. Letter from West Canadian Collieries to the Coal Operators’ Association of Western Canada, 20 January 1961, cancelling its membership since “circumstances beyond our control compel us, for the present at least, to discontinue our operations effective as of now” (Glenbow Archives [GA], M1601, FF 1208). “Close Elk River Colliery. Hope to Absorb Miners At Michel,” *Fernie Free Press* 16 January 1958: 1.

² Attached to a letter addressed to Elmer Roper, editor of the *Canadian Mineworker*, from A.J. Morrison, Secretary Treasurer of District 18, UMWA, 2 June 1947 (GA, M2239, FF 10).

³ The “Act to regulate the Working of Coal Mines,” assented to on 6 April 1945 stipulated in section 11(1): “No male under the age of seventeen years, and no female of any age, shall be employed or permitted to be in or about a mine for the purpose of employment.” The 1913 “Mines Act” excluded women in an identical way but provided conditions for boys as young as fourteen years to be employed by mines (section 6).

⁴ National Archives of Canada (NAC), RG 146, vol. 3616, file: Communist Party of Canada, Blairmore, Alberta. FOIP request number 96-A-00189, p.294. The RCMP informant noted that copies of the *Communist Manifesto* were being sold at the meeting for 10 cents. An announcement of a petition campaign on price controls from the Coleman Housewives Association was published in the *Coleman Journal* on 12 December 1946; it was signed by Mrs. E. McCartney and Mrs. J. Bosek (p. 6).

⁵ GA, M1601, ff 571, West Canadian Collieries, “Labour Situation,” 3 February 1950.

⁶ Percentage changes in population are calculated from *Census of Canada 1961*, Bulletin 1.1-10, p. 6-80, 6-84, 6-123 and 6-125; and *Census of Canada 1966*, Vol. 1 (1-6), p. 9-58, 9-60, 9-68 and 9-70. Detailed calculation tables are available from the author on request. In early 1958 the number of Albertans working as miners in Michel was 148 (“Plea for Idle B.C. Miners,” *Coleman Journal*, 12 February 1958: 1).

⁷ On 4 May 1959 West Canadian Collieries submitted to the Alberta government an application for a permit to renew mining at the Greenhill mine that had been closed in 1957 (GA, M1601, ff 1229). The quote is from GA, M1601, ff 571, West Canadian Collieries, “Labour Situation,” 17 June 1959.

⁸ “Miners Rehabilitation Alberta,” 1955, attached to a letter from Premier Ernest Manning to Justice Ivan Rand, 13 April 1960 (NAC, 33/42, Vol. 19, ff Alberta – Miners Rehabilitation).

⁹ The 1950 joint committee idea is recorded in the minutes of the Coleman Local 2633 membership meeting, 14 May 1950 (GA, M6048 ff2). A report on the joint

committee meeting by W.C. Whittaker of the Bituminous Operators Association is found in NAC, RG 81, Vol. 75, ff 58-1-5-1.2.

¹⁰ "Mass Meeting to Discuss Coal Industry. All Pass Residents Urged To Attend," *Coleman Journal*, 3 March 1954: 1. "Mass Meeting Calls For Resolution Asking For Higher Subvention and Embargo On U.S. Coal," *Coleman Journal*, 17 March 1954: 1. "Operations Suspended At Mine," *Coleman Journal* 24 March 1954: 1. "Union Will Attempt To Get Orders To Keep Mine Open," *Coleman Journal*, 31 March 1954: 1.

¹¹ "Delegation Sent To Victoria," *Fernie Free Press*, 23 January 1958: 1; "McFarlane Meets Local Committee," *Fernie Free Press*, 10 April 1958: 1; "Pass Groups Form Industrial Board," *Fernie Free Press*, 1 May 1958: 1.

¹² "Thermal Power Plant May Come To The Pass," *Coleman Journal*, 20 May 1964: 1 (reprinted from the *Lethbridge Herald*). "Phillips Cable Company," entry in *Crowsnest and Its People: Millennium Edition* (Crowsnest Pass Historical Society, 2000: 210).

¹³ "Bid For Prison to Get Careful Consideration," *Fernie Free Press*, 29 May 1958: 1. "Springhill to get Federal Penitentiary," *Fernie Free Press*, 12 March 1959: 1.

¹⁴ "Rehabilitation of Unemployed Coal Miners," 6 January 1960: 3 and "Miners Rehabilitation Alberta," 1955, attached to a letter from Premier Ernest Manning to Justice Ivan Rand, 13 April 1960 (NAC, 33/42, Vol. 19, ff Alberta – Miners Rehabilitation). "Thermal Plant is Possible," *Lethbridge Herald*, 3 May 1957: 1; "Labor-Progressive Meeting Held Saturday," *Coleman Journal*, 15 June 1955: 1.

¹⁵ "Official Report of the International Tellers," *United Mine Workers Journal*, 81(4), 15 February 1970. Ralph Nader, "King Coal's Cliques," *Vancouver Sun*, 5 February 1970: 5.

References

- Brown, Malcolm and John N. Webb. 1971 [1941]. *Seven Stranded Coal Towns: A Study of an American Depressed Area*. New York: Da Capo Press.
- Church, Roy and Quentin Outram. 1998. *Strikes and Solidarity: Coalfield Conflict in Britain, 1889-1966*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Cooke, Philip. 1985. "Radical Regions? Space, Time and Gender Relations in Emilia, Provence and South Wales." Pp. 17-41 in *Political Action and Social Identity: Class, Locality and Ideology*, edited by G. Rees, J. Bujra, P. Littlewood, H. Newby, and T. L. Rees. London: MacMillan.
- Dublin, Thomas and Walter Licht. 2005. *The Face of Decline: The Pennsylvania Anthracite Region in the Twentieth Century*. Ithaca New York: Cornell University Press.
- Freese, Barbara. 2003. *Coal: A Human History*. Cambridge, MA: Perseus Publishing.
- Green, Brian. 2008. "Organizing for Defeat: The Relevance and Utility of the Trade Union As a Legitimate Question." *Labour/Le Travail* 62 (Fall):153-69.
- Gunton, Thomas. 2003. "Natural Resources and Regional Development: An Assessment of Dependency and Comparative Advantage Paradigms." *Economic Geography* 79(1):67-94.
- Kinnear, John. 2002. "Hillcrest: Legacy and Memorial". Pp. 182-184 in *A World Apart: The Crowsnest Communities of Alberta and British Columbia*, edited by W. Norton and T. Langford. Kamloops: Plateau Press.
- Langford, Tom and Chris Frazer. 2002. "The Cold War and Working-Class Politics in the Coal Mining Communities of the Crowsnest Pass, 1945-1958." *Labour/Le Travail* 49 (Spring):43-81.
- Langford, Tom. 2002. "An Alternative Vision of Community: Crowsnest Miners and Their Local Unions During the 1940s and 1950s." Pp. 147-157 in *A World Apart: The Crowsnest Communities of Alberta and British Columbia*, edited by W. Norton and T. Langford. Kamloops: Plateau Press.
- , 2009. ""So Dauntless in War": The Impact of Garth Turcott on Political Change in Alberta, 1966-71." *Prairie Forum* 34(2):405-34.
- Leadbeater, David. 2008. "Introduction: Sudbury's Crisis of Development and Democracy." Pp. 11-48 in *Mining Town Crisis: Globalization, Labour, and Resistance in Sudbury*, edited by D. Leadbeater. Halifax & Winnipeg: Fernwood Publishing.

- Munck, Ronaldo. 2002. *Globalisation and Labour: the New 'Great Transformation'*. London & New York: Zed Books.
- Seager, Charles Allen. 1982. "A Proletariat in Wild Rose Country: The Alberta Coal Miners, 1905-1945." Ph.D. Dissertation, York University, Toronto.
- Sullivan, Richard. 2010. "Why the Labor Movement Is Not a Movement." *New Labor Forum* 19(2):53-58.
- Waterman, Peter. 2004. "Adventures of Emancipatory Labour Strategy As the New Global Movement Challenges International Unionism." *Journal of World-System Research* X(1):217-53.
- Wright, Erik Olin. 1997. *Class Counts: Comparative Studies in Class Analysis*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.