

INTERVIEW WITH FRED BARKEY

Fr Beth Nogay

Nogay: Why was West Virginia so critical to the United Mine Workers when it was starting out?

Barkey: West Virginia is an area which produces a very high grade coal relative inexpensive because it has drift mines where you can go in through the side of the mountain rather than through a shaft and as a largely ununion section producing a very good coal it was a constant threat to the early contractual relationships which the union had in the so called competitive fields in the mid-west and western Pennsylvania. It was vital if those contracts were to be insured that the state be unionized in case of a strike for example non union coal from West Virginia would pour into the mid west and break up the potential contracts so both these operators and the union were interested in organizing the state.

Nogay: Why did all the states around WV organize relatively quickly and easy and WV did not?

Barkey: I think in answering that you have to remember around the state mostly northern part of the area of course Kentucky remained ununionized for many years after we were organized and southwestern Virginia was not really organized very well either so the answer to that was WV was a point of demarcation. It was always difficult to organize in the mining industry. But WV especially so because of the factors of economics we just mentioned but also because of geography to get in here and coal operators had ability to control access to this area. They had gates on their property and or had agent monitoring trains and river boats which would come in and out. others might argue that the people of WV coal miners here were not from a union tradition. Being from a rural agricultural position they didn't know what trade unions were all about therefore it was a new concept and was difficult to make them aware of what this meant

Nogay: We saw northern WV organize more quickly than southern WV ... why?

Barkey: Well I happen to disagree with that it seems to me that around 1897 there were two drives coming into WV one through northern sector and was publicised more.

with national leaders involved in rallies and what have you in the Wheeling area. The other drive came out of the mid-west Cincinnati, etc. and came along the Kanawha River. There was something of an attempt in the southern part of the state in McDowell and 1901 and 1902. In the north that drive was stopped by injunctions where the Hitchman Coal Company early on got an injunction to protect its yellow dog contract that it had with its miners. In the south in the million dollar coal fields as they became known the drive was simply snuffed out by firing miners and knocking the devil out of the organizers and driving them out of the communities and really breaking the union as it were. It was really the Kanawha River Valley that was the basis for organizing much of the state.

Nogay: . You said one theory is that WV simply didn't have the consciousness of a union or familiarity of it. What then raised the desire to have a union.

Barkey: Hard question. Many factors came to play on the other. One thing was the fact of the economic fluctuations which in the entire country were becoming more serious—depressions rise and fall. A lot of evidence around 1907 and 1908 that people were becoming more aware that there were serious problems in the country and that some trade union was one way to deal with it. I would argue also that the general economic growth and development brought in to the state people who were official organizers and sometimes very unofficial organizers who were very much aware of what a trade union was and were very successful in adapting or tailoring their approach to trade unions to the general culture and background of the people in this area. Those things begin to create a greater degree of solidarity and class consciousness which is necessary for a productive trade union.

Nogay: How did the company view the union in its early stages?

Barkey: In most instances the companies did not want the union naturally. in a few instances I expect you have some awareness of movements that had come and gone in this country which we sometimes call progressive business thinking which said unions can in fact be very helpful. That was exemplified nationally by the National Civic Federation of which Samuel Gompers was very much interested and the president of the ~~National~~ United Mine Workers for many years John Mitchell was in fact an officer and chairman of the so called trades agreement vision within that movement

There were some operators connected with steel companies who were a little sympathetic to that and didn't fight the unions so much. There were others for one reason or another thought if they want a union I'll adjust and live with it. But many operators thought and felt the only way a coal industry could go was by being able to adjust wages. This is out big cost and we must keep it as low as possible.

Nogay: What was the role of Government in the union fights here starting in about 1912?

Barkey: That is another tough one. I think you have to say it depended I think there were some governors if we look at that level who felt were more progressive and who felt unions will be alright if they act responsibly. My own reading of it and I would also refer you to John Williams who has written a by-centennial of this state I think perhaps captured the truth in this matter better than anyone else. He said as good intended as many of those political figures were they really didn't have as much control over this situation as they needed, outside interests corporate interests offen in the final annalysis called the shots and had there own representatives locally whom they could use to control the political power and most importantly the military power, and police power within the state. I think its a mixed bag. One of the problems has always been to get the kind of politician with the kind of power base economic power base in this state so that one can act independently.

Nogay: In 1919 John L. Lewis called the National strike which was later settled but the union in WV refused to stop the strike ...why?

Barkey: I think that again you have that problem of national leadership wanting to one thing and the rank and file in districts and so on wanting to do something or having to do something else. What happened there was a pent up demand in all of labor during this period for better wages and better hours to try and make up for some of the sacrafices they made during the first world war. We see for instance a big steel strike in 1919 general strikes through the entire country and much of that came from this desire that I'm describing. That was true of coal. The union had declared a strike and in southern the people were ready to go along with it. Until the coal operators in several places...McDowell County being one of the newer river field being particularly a good example took

this as a green light to advocate the agreements they had with the union. Miners felt that anything the government promises they are going to have to back up and if this is going to be the result of these kinds of agreements with national figures we can't depend upon that we must ask for ourself. So they engaged in a very long and bitter struggle in a couple of the southern WV coal fields and hung on until the company went out of business or they met their demands. So that was one. The other reason I think one should look at is that there is a rising a sometimes called new unionism rampant in the land during this time and the WV coal miners were far from immune from that spirit it could best be described as the industrial unionism but a militant industrial unionism which said we have to restructure in this country. Looking to nationalized coal mines. One sees this in impartial observers and even coal operators who say as they go up some of the creeks this is not a traditional struggle that I'm used to in the past... they use the term IWW Industrial Workers of the World. This is really the IWW under the guide of the United Mine Workers and is a new ballgame. They exaggerated but there is a certain truth to that. This was a struggle that took place in other unions. They almost captured the AFL in 1921 with William C. Foster barely lost for the presidency of the union. I would argue that if he had won the whole history of American labor would have been different in this country

Nogay: I think what your saying is WV became very violent alot of blood shed and warfare and massacres and murders. Why is WV so bloody?

Barkey: There have been bloody struggles elsewhere and America is an industrial struggle is acknowledged by most authorities more violent than other countries. WV chapter of that may be more intense because we are dealing here with an industry that finds itself hardpressed competitively fighting for survival constantly and seems that drives folks to make some battles tough. There livelyhood is at stake the coal operators. Also its a situation where in the struggles there is a lack of institutional ability to take care of law and order in other matters the operators thought it was necessary to bring Baldwin Phelps guards and their kinds of paramilitary type police. And then things escalate and one finds people fighting to make up for injustices that are personal and physical.

Nogay: Why did the U.S. Government allow them to bring in the Baldwin Phelps agents and why did it go on so long?

Barkey: One answer is our whole system of government which says the federal government should now interfere in state matters..... 4

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unless its a dier emergency. In the 1920s you had a civil insurrection later treason being claimed as a result of arms being taken up against federal authority. One answer is our federal system. Another answer is that the influence of economic groups, not just coal but others, would mediate agains the use of government. In the 1920s we are seeing a conservative group of Republican administration and I think they would be expecially reluctant to come in and deal with these matters.

Nogay: It seems that the coal operators thought that violence was there only recourse. In fact why did the power of the coal operators become to absolute?

Barkey: For one thing they are moving into areas where there is relatively little government and they in fact represent both forces for gov. and regulation and what have you. If you look at Cabin Creek district a district which will have two justices of the peace for most of its time. What happens when you have 15,000 working miners? Involved in a labor struggle. Who is going to come in there and maintain even equity and see that both sides are treated fairly. This is impossible. One can certainly understand the tendensy of the coal operator to protect their property and prepare for and emergency so there were always a good many guards of one kind or another but during the strike crisis they would have to go outside and recruit even more people so it was like a private army to do this. They knew they were at a disadvantage and another thing too even when you had these local officials sometimes you couldn't count on them if you were a coal operator, the sympathized with the miners and many of them had local businesses and new that there offices stemed from the votes of these miners. That was the base for the Matewan massacre. Inability of local people to be controlled.

Nogay: Why did the president call on the troops?

Barkey: Because of Civil War like proportions and cannot be handled therefor we have no recourse but to come in. Remember that we are looking At the Bolsheveck Revolution going on. Nationally we are looking at a Red scare where ther was fear that American would have a class concious revolution that the workers would rise up and take over the government. The government did not want this to happen here. Strikes in Seattle, Washington and the great steel strike of 1919 so the authorities felt our backs are to the wall and this is the time we

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must be firm and come down hard and we must set the limits of what people can do in a strike. National and state laws were passed to try and limit the threat of radical ideas. In this state we have a red flag law which still exists...a legal display of a red flag in a public gathering. We have criminal syndicalist law where you cannot advocate the overthrow of the government establishment of a new structure based on something other than the government we have currently. You may recall the Red Scare where radicals were deported....many WV people were part of that especially in northern WV. The intervention has to be seen with a paranoia or phobia threat of very foundation of the government being torn down.

Nogay: Why then...if this is such a dramatic story... why is there so little known about it?

Barkey: One reason the scholars and memory keepers of our society in WV did not keep records. Another reason, so often some of the labor struggles such as Blair Mtn. in WV are often attributed to the nature of the appalachian work force that they are old feuding Hatfield and McCoy types who once they get agitated they get carried away beyond reality. It could be written off as a aboration or a peculiarity.

Nogay: Why were these men marching and killing?

Barkey: Because there was no other recourse for them. The leaders of the union in southern WV had been trying with some success to organize the southern counties. The president of the union at that time C. Frank Heeney felt that we have enough unions beginning in Mingo Logan area that we should have the ability to have them recognize by the operators. This was not done, in fact, the operators intensified their campaign of throwing suspected union members out of employment and out of their homes of hiring more and more private guards of which we finally have an army by Don Chafin in Logan County and being paid so much of a royalty on every ton of coal produced. This is the only recourse we have because the throwing out and beating up of union organizers and coal miners did intensify the hatred that many of the miners had by this time. A growing class conciousness here a militancy that comes from many of our boys in the state going out and fighting the war. To make the world safe for democracy and bringing back to WV the organizational ability sometimes and the military structures and also the idiology which says democracy begins at home.

Nogay: How do you view the attention of the press and the national attention  
What impact?

Barkey: The offbeat press that gets to the heart of these matters and not the regular press. Regular press reflects an class bias and tends to write this off in a hillbilly battle without much real significance but the radical press traveled through this state and captured the essence of it very well. But this is a constant problem we have. How much freedom do journalists give to labor matters? Not all that much not even today certainly not enough then.

Nogay: The miners took an oath of secrecy. Why was that?

Barkey: Because if you were known to be a union member the chances of you being blacklisted and not being able to work anywhere in an area which had not much alternative of employment was a real threat. To protect your family...to stay in housing and to have a job.

Fred Barky

Q Why was West Virginia so critical to the United Mine Workers, <sup>of America</sup> when it was first starting out?

A West Virginia is an area which produces a very high grade coal, realitively and expensively because it has drift mines, where you can go right into the side of the mountain rather than shaft mines and going down. As a largely unionized section producing a very good coal very inexpensively, it was a constant threat to the early contractor relationships which the union had in the so called central competative fields of the mid-west and western pennsylvania.. So it was vital if those contracts were to be insured, that this state be unionized. In case of a strike, for example, non-union coal from West Virginia would pour into the mid-west and break up potential contracts. So both ~~the~~ the operators there and the union were intr<sup>all</sup>ested in organizing the state.

Q Why did all of the states around the West Virginia organize realtively early and relatively easily, <sup>West</sup> West Virginia did not?

A I think, in answering that you have to remember, we say around the state, mostly northern part of the area. Of course, Kentucky remained largely unionized for many years after we were organized. Virginia--southwestern Virginia was not really organized very well either. The answer to that is West Virginia was again the point of demarcation.

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It was always difficult to organize the coal mining industry, but West Virginia especially so because of the factors of economics that was just mentioned. But also because of geography. It's tough to get in here and coal operators had a good deal of ability to control access to the property here.

(Pause)



Q Why was West Virginia so critical to the union movement?

A It was critical to United Mine Workers because it was crucial to the contractual relationships which they had established by 1897 or 1900 with the central competitive fields of the mid-west and--including western Pennsylvania. The coal in West Virginia was a high grade medilogical coal, fairly easy to mine because you could use drift mines or mines going into the side of the mountains instead of shaft mines going down. Therefore, during laborors problems or during strikes, a lot of this non union coal would undermine the relationship and destroy the market for the existing relationship in the mid-west. It was critical for that matter. In <sup>a</sup>~~the~~ larger prospective it's important to the trade union development in this country because it was kind of a gateway to the south. You have very little union organizing in the south except for coal mines and dock workers.

Q Why did surrounding states organize and yet WV did not?

A I guess there is a lot of ideas about that, one certainly comes to mind immediately would be the difficult terrain,

the geography. Trying to get in here, to get excess to mining property's particularly was difficult. Most operators were very conscience of that and had gates on their property or had their agents monitoring trains and river boats which would come in and out. Others might argue that the people in West Virginia--coal miners were not from a union tradition. Being from a rural agricultural tradition they really didn't know what trade unions were all about. Therefore, it was a new concept and it was a little bit difficult, perhaps a lot difficult to get them aware of what this meant.

Q We saw, though, northern West Virginia organize a lot more quickly than southern West Virginia. Why was that?

A I happen to disagree with that. It seems to me, in my reading of it is that around 1897, this same period, there were two drives coming into West Virginia. One came in through the northern sector and ~~was~~ was the more publicized one with some of the most important national leaders involved in ralley's and what have you up in the Wheeling area. The other drive came out of the mid-west, Cincinnati and so forth and came along the Kanawha River. There was something of an attempt down in the very southern part of the state, down in McDowell down in 1901 and 1902. In the north that drive was pretty well stymied by injunction where the hitchman coal company early on got an injunction to protect its Yellow Dog Contracts that it had with its coal miners. In the south and in the so called, million

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dollar coal fields, as they became known, the drive was simply snuffed out by firing miners knocking the devil out of the organizers driving them out of the communities and really breaking the union as it were. So that -- it was really the Kanawha River Valley, it seems to me that was the basis for organizing much of the state.

Q You say that one theory is that west Virginia simply didn't have the consciousness of a union, didn't have the ~~same~~<sup>same</sup> familiarity with it. What then raised the consciousness or raised the desire to have a union here.?

A Well, that's a hard question, many factors it seems to me came to play. Interacting one up on the other. One thing certainly was the fact that you have these economic fluctuations which in the entire country were becoming more serious. Depressions, rise and falls in the economy. I can pick up a lot of evidence around 1907 and 1908 in that depression that people were becoming more aware that there were real serious structure or economic problems in this country and that the trade union was one way to begin to deal with it. I would agree also, that the general economic growth and development brought into the state, people who sometimes are official organizers and sometimes very unofficial organizers, who were very much aware of what a trade union was and were very successful in adapting or tailoring their approach to trade unionism to the general culture and background of this area's people. So I think those things begin to create a greater degree of solidarity and class consciousness

which is necessary for a productive trade union.

Q How do the companies <sup>view</sup> ~~view~~ the union in its early stages?

A In most instances with just a few exceptions, the companies did not want the trade union., naturally. In those few instances, I suspect you have some awareness of movements that have come and gone in this country which we sometimes call progressive business thinking. Which said unions can in fact be very helpfull. That was perhaps best exemplified best nationally by the national Civic Federation of which Samual Gompers was very much interested in. The president of the united Mine Workers for ~~any~~ <sup>many</sup> years, John Mitchel was in fact an officer and a chairman of the so called trade agreement division within that movement. There were some operators connected largely with steal companies ~~that~~ <sup>though</sup> I think were a little bit sympathetit to that and didn't fight the union so much. There were others who, for one reason or another, had a kind of obless oblige about their workers and thought well if they want a union I will try to adjust and live with it. Many operators thought it roughlessley and felt the only way we could make <sup>the</sup> coal industry go is by being able to adjust wages. This is our big cost and we must keep it as low as possible.

Q What was the role of government in the union fights here starting with about 1912 and Paint Creek strike?

A Well, that's another tough one. I would have to say it depended. I think there were some governors, if we look at that level, who were perhaps more progressive.

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and who felt trade unions will be alright if they act responsibly. My own reading of it and I would also refer you to John Williams, who has written the bicentennial history of this state, who I think perhaps captured the truth in this matter better than anyone else. He said that as good intended as many of those political figures were, they really didn't have as much control over the situation as they needed. Outside interest, outside corporate interests, often in the final analysis called the shots and had their own sort of representatives locally whom they could use to control the political power and most importantly the military power, police power, within the state. I think it's a mixed bag, but one of the problems has always been, it seems to me to get the kind of politition with the kind of power base, economic power base in this state so that one can act indepentley. .

Q In 1919 John L. Lewis called the national strike, which was later settled, but the union here in WV refused to stop the strike. Why?

A I think that again you have that problem of the national leadership wanting to do one thing and the rank and follow in districts and so on wanting to do something else, or having to do something else. Which is more to the point. [What happened there was that there was a <sup>Pent</sup> pinned up demand in all of labor during this period for better wages and better hours and to try to make up for some of the sacrifices they made during the first World War. We see, for instances, the

big steale strike in 1919. Some general strikes through the entire country. Much of that came from this sort of desire that I am describing. That certainly was true of coal. The union had, as you say, declared for a strike and , I think mostly in Southern West Virginia some of the people were willing to go along with it. At least large segments were. Until, the coal operators in several of the places, McDowell county being one and the new River Field being particularly a good example, took this as a kind of green light to abrogate the agreements that they had with the union.

Well, the miners felt that anything that the government promises they're going to have to back and if this is going to be the result of these kinds of agreements with national figures, we can't depend upon that we must ~~depend up~~ act for ourselves. So they engaged in a very long and bitter struggle in a couple of the southern West Virginia coal fields. They hung on until either the company went out of business or they won their demands. That was one reason. Another reason, I think one should add, is that

there was a rising--sometimes called new unionism rampant in the land during this time. WV coal miners were far from ammuned from thatspirit. It would best be described as industrial unionism. But a militant industiral unionism, which said "we've got to really do some restruaction here in this country". A second reason that ~~this-country~~ the rank and file in Southern West Virginia were not willing to go along with the so called Washington Agreement that had been

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worked out, <sup>with</sup> Lewis and the national administration, was that I think they were being influenced by what I would call a new unionism that was rising in this country from about 1910 thru 1920. A kind of militant industrial unionism which, it seems to me aimed mainly at trying to make some real structural changes in the economy of the United States. Looking perhaps in some instances to nationalize coal mines and some other basic industries. The West Virginia mines were not immune to this and one sees this exemplified in an impartial observers <sup>reports</sup> and even coal operators who say as they go up some of the creeks, this is not a traditional struggle that I am use to in the past this is a--they use the term IWW--International Workers of the World, this is really IWW under the guides of the UMW and it's a new ball game. They may have exaggerated but I think there was a certain truth to that. This was a struggle too, that took place in other unions. Of course, this new <sup>union</sup> group almost captured the AFL in 1921, William Z. Foster, varily lost for the presidency of the union. I would have argued that if he won, the whole history of American labor would have been different in this country.

Q WV though, I think what you're also saying in a round about way, is that West Virginia became very violent. A lot of bloodshed and gorilla warfares and masacress and murders. Why was WV unionization so bloody?

A Well, there have been bloody struggles elsewhere and

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*Why bloodshed  
in WVA*

America's industrial struggles have been, its acknowledged by most authorities, more violent than other countries. That's something that's not popular or well understood. WV's Chapter of that may be a little more intense because we are dealing here with an industry that I think finds itself often times, very hard pressed, competitively. Fighting for servival constantly. It seems to me that drive folks to make some--make it a tough battle. They're lively hood being at stake. That is they, being the coal operators. Their capital investments being at stake. Also, I think, it's a situation where in these struggles, given the fact that there is a lack of inst<sup>ut</sup>itutional ability to take care of law and order sometimes and some of these other matters it's necessary--the operators thought it was necessary to bring in Baldwin-Felts guards and other kinds of paramilitary type police and then ~~pat~~racities began and things <sup>e</sup>scalate and one finds people fighting to make up for injustices that are very personal and very physical.

Q Why did that happen, though. Why did it become so bloody, why did the US government allow coal operators to bring in these Baldwin-Felts operators and why did it go on so long?

A Well, I think that one of the answers to that is our whole system of government which sort of says the federal government should not interfere in state matters, unless it's a <sup>dire</sup>diar emergency and if you look at that you'll see that infact in the 1920's that you had a civil inserecton



later treason being claimed as a result of that. Armes  
 being taken up against <sup>Federal</sup> the authority. I think one answer  
 is, kind of our federal system. Another answer could certainly  
 be that perhaps the influence of economic groups, not  
 just coal operators, but others would midigate against the  
 use of government. Don't forget in the 1920's we were  
 setting a period of generally conservative type republican  
 administrations. I think, that they would be especially  
 reluctant to come in and deal with these matters. I think  
 that is at least partial answers to your question.

Q It seems to me that the coal operators thought that violence  
 was their only recourse. In fact, that so much of the govern-  
 ment was controlled by coal operators, politicians and so  
 much of their lives were controlled. Why did that happen  
 why did the power of the coal operators become so absolute?

A Well, for one thing they are moving into areas where there  
 is relatively little government. They infact, represent  
 those forces for government and regulation and what have you.  
 If you look for instance, at Cabin Creek district, here is  
 a magisterial district which will have two justices of the  
 peace, for most of its time. What happens when you have  
 15,000 working miners involved in a labor struggle. Who  
 is going to come in there and maintain even equity.  
 to see to it that both sides are treated fairly. It is just  
 impossible. So one can certainly understand the tendency  
 of the coal operator, I suppose to protect their property

and to prepare for that kind of emergency. So there was always a good many guards of one kind or another, but during the coal crisis or strike crisis, they would have to go outside usually or recruit even more people so they had almost a private army to do this. I think that's part of the reason. They knew they were at a disadvantage another thing to even when you had these local officials sometimes you couldn't count on them if you were a coal operator. They sympathized with miners. Many of them had local business and were--new that their offices stemmed from the vote of these miners. They were more sympathetic. Once he's at the cabin creek business and certainly that was the base, it seems to me, for the Matwan Massacre. Inability of local people to be controlled.

Q Why did the federal government, why did the president call on the federal troops during the march on Blair mountain?

A Well, I think the argument there was that this indeed has taken on civil war like proportions. It cannot be handled. Therefore, we have no recourse but to come in. I kinda of like your question and tend to get carried and stress some of my own thesis ~~on that~~ but one thing that I think perhaps to see that in context you have to keep in mind is, remember that internationally we're looking at the Bolshevik Revolution going on. Nationally we're looking at a Red Scare. Where there was a tremendous fear that American will have in fact a class conscious revolution that the workers will rise up and take over the government. I think in that kind of context the

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government was acting perhaps as well. That we don't want that to happen here and that these sorts of things have gone on general strike in Seattle, Washington and great steele strike in 1919. So, I think, a lot of the government authority felt that our back are to the wall this is the time when we must be firm and we must come down hard and we must set the limits of what people can do in a strike or in any other kind of activity. Put this into perspective, national law and state laws which were passed to try to limit these sorts of radical ideas which -- here in this state for instance we have a red flag law, which still exists it is illegal<sup>no</sup> display, a red flag in a public gathering. We have synicalists laws. They are so called criminal synicalist laws. You can't advocate the overthrow of the government an establishment of a new structure which would be based on something besides the kind of government that we have currently. All of those sorts of things. You may recall the red Scare where radicalls were deported. Many WV so called radical<sup>s</sup> were part of the round up, especially in northern WV. I think that--the intervention has to be seen within a kind of a paranoia a ~~zyna~~<sup>para</sup>phobia threat of the very foundation of the government being torn down.

Q Why then, if this is such a dramatic story and it's certainly the largest domestic labor conflict in the history? Why is there so little known about it?

A There is a lot of answers to that. One reason I think is that the people who, try and capture that story, hadn't

done it. ) I am referring here to the scholars. The memory keepers of our society, imparticularly in WV. So much of our scholarship until very recent times in WV was ~~the~~ devoted to the Civil War and to the frontier area era. It has only been recently that scholars--and I would argue that scholars with a ~~scholars~~ kind of working class background. Or industrial background have come a long who have been more interested in that and realize how very signaficant WV is in this picture. Another factor which I think enters into this (turn tape)

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Well, I think another reason is that so often some of the labor struggles such as the Blair Mountain incident in WV are often attributed to the nature of the Applachain workforce which is--they are old feuding Hatfield and McCoy type folks who, once they get adgitated get carried way beyond the bounds of human reality. I think there is a tendency to write that off as an aberation or pacularility.

Q Isn't that what happened here, though. Why were these men marching and killing?

A Well, I think that they were marching and killing because in many incidences there was no other recourse for them. It seems to me that the leaders of the union in Southern West Virginia have been trying again and again and with a modest success to organize the southern counties. The president of the union at that time, Frank Keeney, I believe felt that we have enough unions, local union, beginning in the Mingo/Logan area, that we ought to have the ability to

have them recognized by the operators. This was not done, infact the operators intensified their campaign of throwing suspected unions members out of employment and out of their homes of hiring more and more private guards which finally have an army lead by Don Chaffin in the Logan County area and being paid by so much of a royalty on every kind o f coal produced. So I think the answer in part is this is the only kind of recourse we have.

The throwing out of the organizaers and the beating up of the union organizers and the coal miners did inflame-- did intensify the haterard that the many miners had at this time. I think there is a growing class consciousness here. A growing militancy that comes as a result of many of our boys in the state going out and fighting in the war. Fighting to make this world safe for democracy and bringing back to WV the orgazational ability sometimes and the military like structures and also, as much as anything thing the idology which says democracy begins at home.

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Q How do you ~~de-the~~ view the reaction of the press and the national attention that was focused here. What was that and how if at all did it impact?

A Well, I think again it's probably the offbeat press that by and large gets to the heart of these matters and not the regular press. the Regular press again reflects the class bias or economic bias and tends to right this off as a hillbilly battle without much real significance. The radical press at the time, some journalists who worked for

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lesser known papers actual traveled through this state and I think captured the essence of it very well. But again, I think it is a constant problem that we have how much freedom and how much emphasis do journalists and newspapers establish in this country give to labor matters. My own reading of it is, not all that much. Not even today. Certainly not so much then as was really needed.

Q The miners took an oath of secrecy and in fact maintained so much secrecy in the state, Why was that?

A Again because if you were known to be a union member, the chances of you being blacklisted and not being able to work anywhere in an area which had relatively little alternative employment, was a real threat. You realized it to protect your family, to stay in housing and to have a job. Secrecy was necessary.

End.