

# The Bootleg Coal Rebellion

The Pennsylvania Miners Who Seized an Industry, 1925–1942

Mitch Troutman • Foreword by Staughton Lynd

Told with great intimacy and compassion, *The Bootleg Coal Rebellion* uncovers a long-buried history of resistance and resilience among depression-era miners in Pennsylvania, who sunk their own mines on company grounds and fought police, bankers, coal companies and courts to form a union that would safeguard not just their livelihoods, but protect their collective autonomy as citizens and workers for decades. Community and Labor organizer Mitch Troutman brings this explosive and accessible American tale to life through the bootleggers' own words. Scholars, historians, organizers and activists will celebrate this story of the people who literally seized mountains and stood their ground to create the Equalization movement, the miners' union democracy movement, and the Communist-led Unemployed Councils of the anthracite region. This epic story of work, love and community stands as a testament to the power of collective action; a story that is sorely needed as communities today rise to confront neoliberal policies ravaging our planet.

## ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTORS

**Mitch Troutman** is a writer, educator, organizer, and jack-of-all-trades living in Central Pennsylvania. He is a direct descendent of bootleg coal miners and belongs to the group Anthracite Unite.

**Staughton Lynd** is a historian, lawyer, activist, and author of many books and articles. Howard Zinn hired him to teach at Spelman College, a college for black women, during the early 1960s. He was coordinator of the Freedom Schools in Mississippi during the summer of 1964. As an outspoken opponent of the Vietnam War, he came to be unemployable as a university professor and became a lawyer. In Youngstown, Ohio, he fought for and lost the fight against plant shutdowns and for worker/community ownership of the mills. When Ohio built its supermaximum security prison in Youngstown, Staughton and his wife Alice, spearheaded a class action that went to the Supreme Court of the United States, establishing due process rights of supermaximum security prisoners.

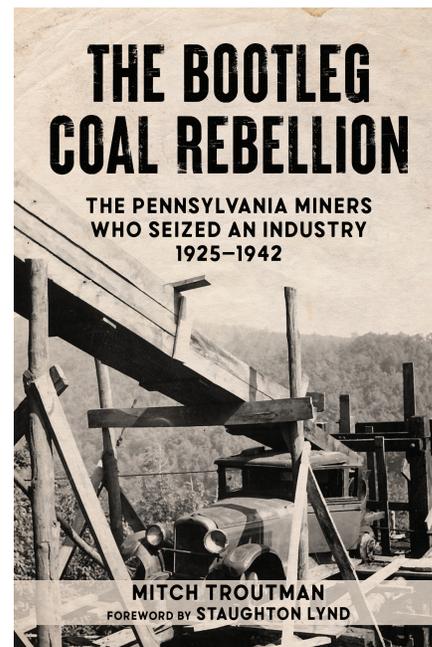
## ACCOLADES

"Troutman is a gifted storyteller. Combining rich imagery and down-to-earth writing with prudent historical research, he shows us what working class people are capable of when companies push them to the brink of starvation. What the bootleggers endured and accomplished is extraordinary. You'd be hard-pressed to find a better tale of democratic rebellion anywhere, particularly one with so many lessons for today. Modern-day coal barons beware: this book will turn readers into renegades."

—Jamie Longazel, author of *Undocumented Fears: Immigration and the Politics of Divide and Conquer in Hazleton, Pennsylvania*

"Using local newspapers and oral history interviews, gifted historian Mitch Troutman tells the story of the miners as well as the women, children, storekeepers, truckers, and priests who participated in the bootleg coal rebellion. Great read!"

—Karol Kovalovich Weaver, author of *Medical Caregiving and Identity in Pennsylvania's Anthracite Region, 1880–2000*



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