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# Death on the Picket Line: The Story of John McCoy

History of US miners' struggles brought to life

Our reporter  
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Mehring Books is pleased to offer *Death on the Picket Line: The Story of John McCoy* at a special discounted price. Published in 1990, this 68-page illustrated, perfect-bound pamphlet provides valuable background on the historic struggles of coal miners in the United States.

In 1990, company thugs gunned down John McCoy, a 42-year-old A.T. Massey miner from West Virginia and the father of two children, while he was picketing a nonunion mine near Welch, West Virginia. At the time, the union, the United Mine Workers (UMW), joined with the media and state authorities in whitewashing the killing. As a consequence, no one was ever prosecuted for the murder.

The response of then UMW President Richard Trumka (who now heads the AFL-CIO) to McCoy's shooting enraged miners. It highlighted the degree to which the UMW had evolved into little more than an appendage of the coal operators and the state.

Through interviews with McCoy's relatives, friends and co-workers, *Death on the Picket Line: The Story of John McCoy* <http://mehring.com/death-on-picket-line-perfect-bound.html> recounts the struggles of miners from the mine wars of the early decades of the 20th century, to the A.T. Massey and Pittston strikes of the 1980s.

This is gripping reading. Names and events indelibly etched in the traditions of the American working class—Sid Hatfield, “bloody” Mingo County, Paint Creek, the armed march on Logan—are brought to life.

At the same time, White points out the limitations of those traditions—above all, the failure of the American

working class to break politically from the capitalist two-party system and advance a socialist alternative to the profit system. At the time of the writing of this pamphlet the Workers League, the forerunner of the Socialist Equality Party, called on miners to drive out the UMW bureaucracy and revive the union on the basis of a socialist and internationalist strategy and the fight for a Labor Party. Given the degeneration of the unions and their transformation into direct tools of corporate management it has become necessary for the working class to build new organizations of industrial and political struggle. For this fight the historical lessons contained in this pamphlet retain their full force today.

Order your copy of *Death on the Picket Line: The Story of John McCoy* by clicking here.

*Special price: \$5.00, 69 pages, illustrated, perfect bound*



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