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# Thirty years since the PATCO strike

1 September 2011

Mehring Books is pleased to announce the print publication of *Thirty Years Since the PATCO Strike* by WSWs writer Tom Mackaman. This essay, first published as a series on the *World Socialist Web Site*, examines the significance for the working class of the 1981 strike by PATCO air traffic controllers in the US.

The strike marked an historical turning point in the class struggle in the US and internationally. It was part of a series of events that signaled the start of a ruling class offensive against all the past gains of the working class that continues to this day. The strike presaged not only the collapse of the American trade unions, but of all the organizations of the working class that based themselves on nationalism and class compromise.

Mackaman examines the events that formed the historical background of the PATCO strike, including the role of the Democratic Party Carter administration in drawing up plans to smash the PATCO union. He documents as well the treachery of the AFL-CIO trade union, which deliberately allowed the strike to be broken by the Reagan administration.

This essay draws prominent attention to the intervention by the Workers League, forerunner of the Socialist Equality Party. The fight by the Workers League fought for the independent political and industrial mobilization of the working class behind the controllers won a broad hearing among PATCO workers.

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