

Death on the Picket Line, the story of John McCoy

Book traces history of West Virginia miners' struggles

2 March 2018

On January 16, 1990, company thugs killed West Virginia coal miner John McCoy in an ambush near Welch. The *Bulletin* newspaper, forerunner of the *World Socialist Web Site*, conducted a campaign to uncover the identity of the killers and exposed the treachery of the United Mine Workers (UMW) bureaucracy headed by Richard Trumka, now president of the AFL-CIO, and Cecil Roberts, now UMW president, who collaborated with the state to protect the company gunmen.

This illustrated book, published in 1990, traces the struggles of generations of miners in West Virginia, drawing extensively on first-hand accounts from the men and women who lived through these times. It reviews the battles waged by the working class from the mine wars of the early decades of the 20th century to the A.T. Massey and Pittston strikes of the 1980s. 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.

Through a study of the bitter class war waged for generations in West Virginia, the book makes the case for the development of a new program and leadership in the working class based on irreconcilable opposition to the profit system and its political representatives in the Democratic and Republican parties.

The great traditions embodied in the struggle of the miners are being revived by the teachers of West Virginia, who are defying government officials and their own unions to press home their demands for a decent standard of living and basic social rights. Teachers and all workers will find in this book a valuable resource to aid in understanding the nature of their struggle.

Death on the Picket Line: The Story of John McCoy

ISBN 0-929076-52-6

68 Pages

Price \$5.95 plus shipping



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