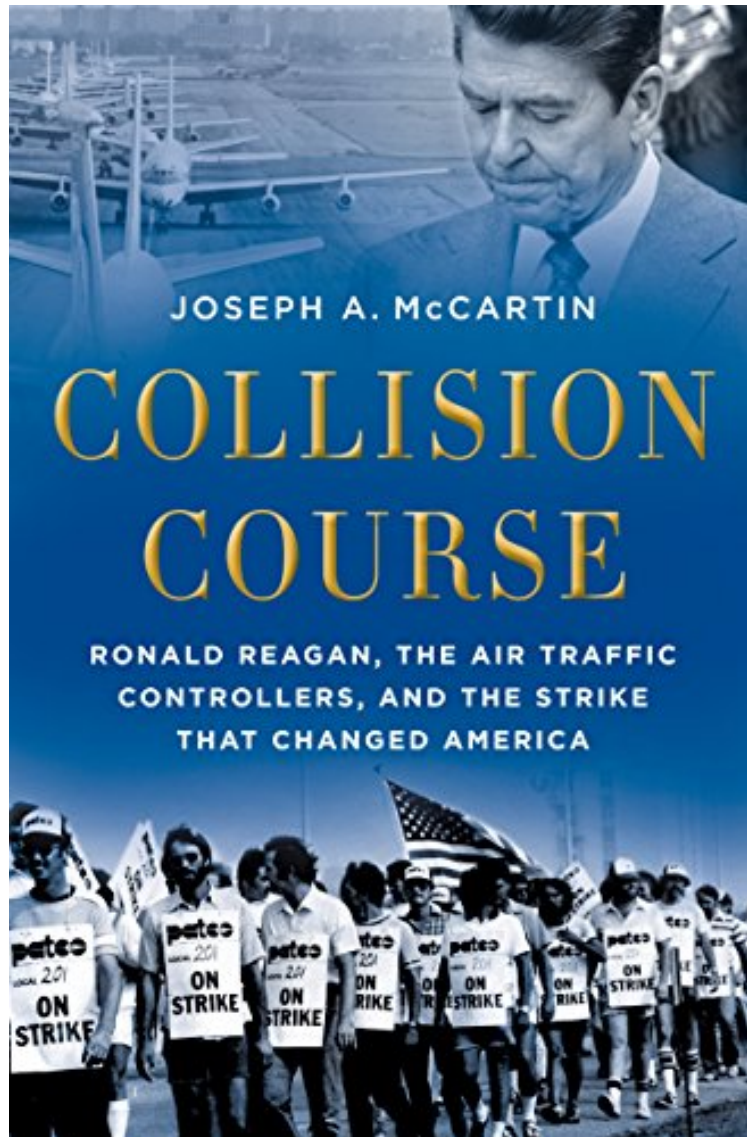


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Collision Course: Ronald Reagan, the Air Traffic Controllers, and the Strike that Changed America

Joseph A. McCartin

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Joseph A. McCartin : Collision Course: Ronald Reagan, the Air Traffic Controllers, and the Strike that Changed America before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Collision Course: Ronald Reagan, the Air Traffic Controllers, and the Strike that Changed America:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Excellent labor relations studyBy anonHeavily researched and very

well-written, but dry. Excellent labor relations study. Laborious to almost too heavy on some of the 1970's events. Don't take this lightly as a quick read; but it's excellent in shedding insight into what happened with PATCO. Funny how politics makes groups of people do things they would normally avoid as single individuals. I couldn't understand why blue-collar workers would risk losing a job that paid such a high wage, even under stressful and crappy management. It was 1981 and at the end of the 70's when all that employment uncertainty and inflation made everyone fear for their jobs. This book, written by a seemingly impartial observer, presents the best even-handed view available. Thank you for illuminating the strike and contract negotiations in such detail. These negotiation stances, both union and government, are fine examples of strategy games. The anthropology and historical detail here are exemplary. Personalities do matter, but no one person is to blame or praise for 1981. Group thinking is quite apparent on both sides. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Exciting, gripping, yet academic! By Wendy Scher Who would have thought that a tome of labor history would be so much fun to read? This is thoroughly researched - I can tell it took several years to write - yet not tedious in the details. Every facet of this book is carefully done - the pace is planned, the titles and sub-headings are clever, and every participant (real-life character) is afforded true respect. This is a rich history that teaches some valuable lessons on campaign organizing - as well as human nature itself! This is absolutely worth a read. (P.S. I encourage you to support your neglected local library and pick it up there - because you might actually finish it in three weeks!) 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Behind the Scenes By JimB37 Excellently researched; powerfully written!! As a former air traffic controller during those dramatic days, I was only vaguely aware of the high stakes power games being played out at the national level between the union and the Reagan administration negotiators. This book takes the reader behind the scenes to witness the administration's chicanery and union's overconfidence which led to the disastrous outcome ... for PATCO, many of its members, and the U.S. labor movement as a whole. I know a number of former controllers and line supervisors who were interviewed by the author and named in the book. They attest to the accuracy of the author's description of events and outcomes in this major labor-management confrontation. Collision Course is an important contributor to the history of the labor movement in this country. JimB37

In August 1981, the Professional Air Traffic Controllers Organization (PATCO) called an illegal strike. The new president, Ronald Reagan, fired the strikers, establishing a reputation for both decisiveness and hostility to organized labor. As Joseph A. McCartin writes, the strike was the culmination of two decades of escalating conflict between controllers and the government that stemmed from the high-pressure nature of the job and the controllers' inability to negotiate with their employer over vital issues. PATCO's fall not only ushered in a long period of labor decline; it also served as a harbinger of the campaign against public sector unions that now roils American politics. Now available in paperback, Collision Course sets the strike within a vivid panorama of the rise of the world's busiest air-traffic control system. It begins with an arresting account of the 1960 midair collision over New York that cost 134 lives and exposed the weaknesses of an overburdened system. Through the stories of controllers like Mike Rock and Jack Maher, who were galvanized into action by that disaster and went on to found PATCO, it describes the efforts of those who sought to make the airways safer and fought to win a secure place in the American middle class. It climaxes with the story of Reagan and the controllers, who surprisingly endorsed the Republican on the promise that he would address their grievances. That brief, fateful alliance triggered devastating miscalculations that changed America, forging patterns that still govern the nation's labor politics. Written with an eye for detail and a grasp of the vast consequences of the PATCO conflict for both air travel and America's working class, Collision Course is a stunning achievement.

"Simply one of the best-written labor histories I have ever read." -Working USA: The Journal of Labor and Society "Mr. McCartin deals with policy but also with personalities, and the book is better for it. For anyone at all interested in labor or business history, I recommend it." --The New York Times "[C]onvincing...draws a vivid picture of a culture and how, as much as the realities an organization faces, that culture can determine the group's behavior." --The Philadelphia Inquirer "[McCartin] patiently lays out the full background and aftermath of the PATCO tragedy in Collision Course, an absorbing, detailed and shrewdly observed chronicle of the strike and PATCO's unlikely rise and fall." --The Nation "The definitive account of the PATCO strike...Collision Course's treatment of worker and political power should help inform trade unions' strategies today, and perhaps prompt discussion of how to revitalize the greatest source of worker power: the strike." --In These Times "The air traffic controllers' strike in August 1981 was a defining moment for the Reagan presidency and the American labor movement. By firing the air traffic controllers, and successfully replacing them, Reagan heralded the end of a political era when labor unions - and the workers they represented - were an integral part of the American social contract. Joseph McCartin tells the story in gripping detail. It's must reading for anyone interested in the recent history of American politics and labor relations." --John B. Judis, author of The Folly of Empire "The signal event in the evisceration of the American middle class was Ronald Reagan's breaking the air traffic controllers' strike in 1981. In Collision Course, Joe McCartin brilliantly and compellingly tells this tragic tale, and situates it in the broader narrative of middle-class America's long and sickening decline." --Harold Meyerson, Editor-at-Large of The American Prospect and op-ed columnist for The Washington Post "In an age of

obscurantist academic historical writing, Collision Course stands out as a model of accessible and relevant scholarship." --National "The Air Traffic Controllers strike of 1981 was one of the most important struggles in American history, and by breaking the union, Ronald Reagan dealt a blow to organized labor from which it has still not recovered. If you care about the labor movement, you need to read Collision Course and even if you don't, you'll be transfixed by the drama of McCartin's story-telling." --E.J. Dionne, syndicated columnist and author of Why Americans Hate Politics "[a] wonderfully good book... In this admirable account of President Ronald Reagan's destruction of the Professional Air Traffic Controllers Organization (PATCO) in 1981-1982, McCartin shows not merely where that destruction fits into a long narrative of the decline of organized labor in the United States but also how tensions between controllers and the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) might have been resolved differently." --Journal of American History "McCartin tells the story of PATCO before its inception to years after the conclusion of the strike, a fascinating story with many twists and turns." --Contemporary Sociology

About the Author Joseph A. McCartin is Professor of History at Georgetown University and Director of the Kalmanovitz Initiative for Labor and the Working Poor.