

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Book by Chinese-Cuban generals sparks interest at Havana book fair

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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 70/NO. 8 FEBRUARY 27, 2006

Protesters denounce FBI raids in Puerto Rico

BY RON RICHARDS

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico—Hundreds protested outside the U.S. federal building here February 10 against Washington's latest assault on the pro-independence movement in this U.S. colony in the Caribbean. Heavily armed FBI agents staged six raids that day on homes and offices on the island, seizing documents, files, and computers. No arrests were made. The FBI claimed that the raids were conducted to prevent a "domestic terrorist attack" allegedly planned by independence supporters.

"We are here showing our opposition to the FBI's attitude, to this persecution of our Puerto Rican brothers and sisters," Alberto Jesús told the media at

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Steelworkers' locals back labor defense case

BY PAUL MAILHOT

SALT LAKE CITY—United Steelworkers (USW) Local 1005 endorsed the Militant Fighting Fund last week and contributed \$500. The local, which organizes workers at the giant Stelco mill in Hamilton, Ontario, is one of the largest union locals in Canada. Its support follows the recent endorsement from USW Local 8580 in Hawkesbury, Ontario. The workers in that local have been on strike for more than eight months against IKO Industries (see On the Picket Line column on page 4).

The Militant Fighting Fund is raising contributions and organizing public

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Boss profit greed claims 22 miners' lives this year

Latest death occurs at Pennsylvania stone quarry; Unsafe job conditions are prevalent at Utah mines

BY ALYSON KENNEDY

PRICE, Utah—The safety crisis that began with the deadly explosion at the Sago Mine in West Virginia in early January has now claimed the lives of 19 coal miners and three other mine workers across the United States in the first six weeks of this year.

The Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) just reported that a miner at a stone quarry near Media, Pennsylvania, was killed on the job February 13. According to MSHA, two other mine workers were killed at stone and gravel operations in January in Arizona and Oregon.

The coal bosses' push to increase production while coal prices are high, coupled with their disregard for workers' safety, are making it certain that such disasters will continue, many miners say. These workers point out that steps are urgently needed to organize all miners into the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA).

At the Horizon coal mine near Helper, Utah, following a company-sponsored "stand down for safety" meeting February 6, the day shift entered the mine to



Above: conveyor belt coming out of Horizon coal mine in Carbon County, Utah. Miners discovered February 6 a large section of the roof underground collapsed. Inset: Portal of Aberdeen mine nearby, owned by Andalex Resources, where a coal miner was killed January 29.



find a major roof fall on the belt line, reported workers who requested their names not be used to avoid retaliation by the bosses at this nonunion mine. The collapse was some five feet thick

and 45 feet long. The rock had broken right above the five-foot bolts used to secure the roof, workers said.

While no one was injured in the fall,

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Imperialist powers use reactionary demands on banning Danish cartoons to attack rights, boost support for war

BY SAM MANUEL

WASHINGTON—Washington, London, and other imperialist powers are taking advantage of often violent protests against controversial cartoons, including one showing Prophet Muhammad with a lit bomb in his turban, to expand popular support for their wars in Afghanistan and Iraq and threats against Iran and Syria.

These governments have been paying lip service to freedom of speech around this controversy. At the same time, they have grabbed onto reactionary demands by governments of majority Muslim countries, which call for banning the caricatures that they describe as blasphemous to Islam, in order to win support for censorship and other attacks on democratic rights.

The 12 cartoons that sparked the dispute first appeared in the Danish newspaper *Jyllands-Posten* September 30. The paper published them as responses from 40 well-known illustrators to a request to

"draw Muhammad the way they see him." Initially, two months of campaigning by individuals and groups in Denmark to force the paper to apologize gained little support, including among Muslims.

This changed, however, after a December meeting of the Organization of the Islamic Conferences (OIC), which is made up of 56 majority

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Opportunities seem endless to win new, repeat 'Militant' subscribers

BY ARGIRIS MALAPANIS

"The opportunities to win new and repeat subscribers seem endless," said Rachele Fruit in a recent note to the *Militant*. Fruit is a supporter of the paper and member of the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) at a meatpacking plant in Atlanta.

Her report is typical of others showing steady progress in the seven-week effort to increase the *Militant's* long-term readership.

"We recently had dinner with one of my co-workers and a friend of hers visiting from Savannah, Georgia," Fruit said. "They are young women, both Black, who used to work together in a poultry plant outside Savannah. Both have boyfriends who are truckers. A number of stories in the *Militant* about union-organizing and other struggles are of interest to them. My co-worker renewed her subscription and her friend

got an introductory sub too.

"We have several other subs in the works. They include three subscribers who are members of the Teamsters

Continued on page 3

Special Militant Labor Forums

Defend Labor Rights!

Support fight to defeat coal boss harassment lawsuit

Saturday, Feb. 18, 7:30 p.m.

Price, Utah—Speaker: Argiris Malapanis, 'Militant' editor

Sunday, Feb. 19, 4:30 p.m.

Los Angeles—Speaker: Paul Mailhot, Militant Fighting Fund

San Francisco—Speaker: Norton Sandler, Militant Fighting Fund

Monday, Feb. 20, 7:30 p.m.

Seattle—Speaker: Paul Mailhot

Friday, Feb. 24, 8:00 p.m.

New York—Speaker: Argiris Malapanis

Saturday, Feb. 25

Atlanta, 7:30 p.m.—Speaker: Norton Sandler

Washington, D.C., 6:00 p.m.

Newark, NJ, 8:00 p.m.—Speaker: Argiris Malapanis

Sunday, Feb. 26, 3:00 p.m.

Birmingham, AL—Speaker: Norton Sandler

Pittsburgh—Speaker: Argiris Malapanis

For address of Militant Labor Forum halls and other information see directory on page 8

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Gov't cuts put miners' lives at risk in West Virginia mines 4

Haiti vote: protesters demand Aristide ally be declared victor 9

Gov't uses 4 million cameras in UK to spy on population

BY PAUL DAVIES

LONDON—The British government has now installed and is operating 4 million closed circuit television (CCTV) cameras—one for every 14 people—to spy on individuals across the country. This “gives the UK a quarter of the world’s cameras to photograph 1 per cent of the world’s population,” said an article in the January 16 London *Times*.

This is more than the number of such cameras in the rest of Europe, the *Daily Telegraph* reported, allowing the police and other government agencies to monitor the movement and activity of much of the population at any given moment.

According to the *Financial Times*, a camera control center in Westminster, London, has direct radio links to five Westminster police divisions. Control operator Bill Newman told the *Times* “there is a ‘healthy competition’ between [camera] operators as to who gets the most arrests.” The operators know the exact locations of the cameras and their recording range.

The *Financial Times* reporter, Sarah Duguid, described how Newman used a joy stick to make one camera’s powerful lens close into a spot in London a mile and a half away from the camera’s location. “He zooms in on three young men wearing baseball caps,” Duguid said. “He gets so close to them that I can read the brand of their mobile phone. ‘Theoretically,’ explains Newman, ‘I could read a text message from here.’”

Camden Council authorities in north London have placed tiny, “motion-sensitive” cameras in flower pots, light fixtures, and fake electricity boxes

to spy on residents, according to the *Telegraph*, claiming the aim is to crack down on crime and “anti-social behavior.”

CCTV’s are used to intrude on people’s privacy. Two camera operators at the control center of Sefton Council, Liverpool, were reportedly caught recently zooming in to watch a woman undress in her home.

The *Telegraph* reported the government plans to double the number of CCTV cameras in the London underground to 12,000 over the next five years and upgrade them with more modern technology.

In rural areas like Powys, Wales, cops are pioneering a system that allows them to spy on people in six different small towns through one central network.

Cops are also to start using a new system that will automatically link an estimated 3,000 roadside cameras across the country with car registration records. The system will be capable of handling 35 million plate identifications daily, with plans to increase capacity so that information from 100 million cars could be kept.

Caracas World Social Forum: Young Socialists hold workshop on class struggle in U.S.



Militant/Maura De Luca

CARACAS, Venezuela—The Young Socialists held a workshop (above) on “The Class Struggle in the U.S. and the Fight Against Imperialism,” during the World Social Forum held here January 24–29. Rebecca Williamson, a Young Socialist from St. Paul, Minnesota, spoke on workers’ resistance to the bosses’ offensive on wages and job conditions. She pointed to examples of labor struggles today, such as the strike by mechanics at Northwest Airlines, the union-organizing drive by Co-Op miners in Utah, and New York City transit workers’ struggle for a decent contract. Organizing solidarity with and being part of such struggles is central to building a revolutionary socialist movement, she said. “The problems working people confront in the U.S. are the same around the world,” responded María Cristina Martínez, a 22-year-old student at the Bolivarian University here. YS members also won 18 new endorsers to the Militant Fighting Fund (see front-page article) at the Forum. And they sold nearly 600 Pathfinder books and pamphlets and copies of the Marxist magazine *New International*.

—MAURA DE LUCA

Imperialist gov'ts use protests against Danish cartoons

Continued from front page Muslim states. Meeting in Mecca, the OIC condemned in its closing communiqué “the recent incident of desecration of the image of Holy Prophet Muhammad in the media of certain countries” and the use “of freedom of expression as a pretext to defame religions.”

The Islamic, Educational, Scientific

and Cultural Organization, comprising more than 50 states, then called on member nations to impose a boycott on Danish products. In early January the Jordanian parliament condemned the cartoons, as did other governments of majority Arab countries, after a Norwegian and other European newspapers reprinted the disputed illustrations. By the end of the month, the governments of Saudi Arabia and Libya withdrew their ambassadors from Denmark.

Protests flared up in early February. Major actions took place in more than 15 countries largely in Africa, Asia, and the Pacific—including Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, Kenya, Malaysia, the Philippines, Turkey, and the West Bank and Gaza. Some protests have had the tacit backing of local authorities. Bourgeois opposition and other groups, such as the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, have called others.

Tolerated by the police, protesters in Syria torched the Danish and Norwegian embassies in Damascus February 4. In Afghanistan, at least 12 people have died so far in clashes with U.S.-led occupation troops during such actions. Security forces killed five people in Pakistan rallying against the cartoons in several cities February 14–15.

Imperialists boost support for war

Washington, London, and other imperialist regimes jumped into the fray.

Washington initially criticized the cartoons as offensive. At a subsequent White House press conference with Jordan’s King Abdullah, U.S. president George Bush condemned the protests against the illustrations, adding that freedom of the press comes with the “responsibility to be thoughtful about others.” Most major dailies in the United

Continued on page 3

THE MILITANT

‘Without it workers have no voice’

“The ‘Militant’ calls for uniting workers. Without it working people have no voice. I never throw away my copy. I give it to other workers and neighbors to subscribe—and some already have!”

—Howard Allen
Retired seaman, New Orleans



Howard Allen, a retired merchant marine seaman, in front of his home in New Orleans, February 12.

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Australia: Send A\$50 to P.O. Box 164 Campsie, NSW 2194, Australia.

Pacific Islands: Send NZ\$50 to P.O. Box 3025, Auckland, New Zealand.

Signed articles by contributors do not necessarily represent the *Militant*'s views. These are expressed in editorials.

Protests against Danish cartoons

Continued from page 2

States have not reprinted the cartoons.

On February 7, Bush telephoned Danish prime minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen, who had earlier refused to meet ambassadors from Arab governments to hear their demands for censoring the cartoons or apologizing for their publication, to express "our support and solidarity," the Associated Press reported.

"We consider ourselves a faithful and loyal ally of the United States and we appreciate very much to see this reciprocated," Rasmussen responded, adding that his administration will maintain the 530 Danish soldiers in Iraq and 390 troops in Afghanistan, and are taking additional responsibilities in the NATO operations in that country. That was another sign of the progress Washington is making in drawing imperialist powers in Europe to get more deeply involved in U.S.-led military campaigns in the Middle East and Central Asia.

From Copenhagen to Washington, the imperialist campaigns for "regime change" in Syria and Iran intensified and gained wider popular support.

Rasmussen told the press he would "not exclude the possibility" that the government of Syria had been involved in organizing attacks against the Danish embassy in Beirut, Lebanon. He alleged Tehran was trying to use the controversy to divert attention from pressure to end development of its nuclear program, and Damascus is exploiting the dispute to avert investigation into accusations that top Syrian officials were behind the assassination last year of former Lebanese prime minister Rafiq Hariri. Rasmussen said he held "the two governments responsible" for the burning of the Danish embassies in Tehran and Damascus.

U.S. secretary of state Condoleezza Rice chimed in. "I don't have any doubt," she told the press February 8, "Iran and Syria have gone out of their way to inflame sentiment and to use this for their own purposes."

Washington and its allies recently succeeded in referring Iran's nuclear program to the United Nations Security Council for possible sanctions, claiming the Iranian government is secretly trying to build nuclear arms, which Tehran denies.

On February 12, the British daily *Telegraph* reported the U.S. military is making contingency plans for military strikes against Iran. "Strategists at the Pentagon are drawing up plans for devastating bombing raids backed by submarine-launched ballistic missile attacks against Iran's nuclear sites as a 'last resort' to block Teheran's efforts to develop an atomic bomb," the *Telegraph* said. "The most likely strategy would involve aerial bombardment by long-distance B2 bombers, each armed with 40,000 lb of precision weapons, including the latest bunker-busting devices. They would fly from bases in Missouri with mid-air refueling."

Attacks on democratic rights

The same imperialist regimes are using the controversy to push for censorship and attacks on workers' rights at home. According to the BBC, the government of Sweden has just shut down the website of *SD-Kuriren*, the newspaper of the Swedish Democrats, a right-wing group, after it posted a cartoon of Muhammad that authorities claimed Muslims would find offensive.

While posing as defenders of free speech and freedom of the press, governments in Europe are doing the opposite under the banner of "banning fascists." German author Ernst Zuendel was deported from Canada to Germany in November for writing a book denying the Holocaust. The same month, British author David Irving was arrested and thrown in jail in Austria for the same offense, on charges stemming from speeches he gave in 1989. If convicted, Irving could face up to 20 years in jail. Saying the Holocaust didn't happen is a crime in Austria, France, Germany, and other European Union member states.

British foreign secretary Jack Straw praised the British press for not reprinting the disputed cartoons, adding that freedom of speech does not allow "open season" on religion, said the BBC.

British members of parliament reintroduced last June a "Religious Hatred Bill" that had previously failed, which would make forms of blasphemy

Opportunities endless to sell 'Militant' subs

Continued from front page union. One is an independent owner-operator in Savannah, and another works at UPS. We are also visiting farmers in Marshallville, a town where cops killed Clarence Walker two weeks ago."

Over the last week, the *Militant* received 171 subscriptions—80 renewals and long-term subs and 91 introductory. In the next seven days, after the end of a special outreach effort, a "target week," another 230 subs are needed to be on schedule. *Militant* supporters in several areas report efforts to meet that mark.

"In Los Angeles we increased our quota to 75," Naomi Craine, a garment worker,

Coal miners protest in Iran, win back pay



ILNA/Ahmadreza Shojaei

More than 200 coal miners from the Sangrood Mine in Gilan province in northern Iran held a two-day protest in Tehran February 13–14 in front of the office of Iran's president, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, according to the Iranian Labor News Agency. The state-owned mine, which employed 618 miners, was reportedly taken over by a private company two months ago. The workers have not been paid for 14 months. The miners returned home after being promised a back pay settlement of nearly \$1 million. Ataollah Hakimi, a member of parliament from Gilan province, told the miners he would forgo performing his duties if the agreement was not implemented. "This mine is vital to the economic development of the depressed region of Roodbar" in Gilan, he said. "It is important to pay the workers so production can resume under government supervision."

—PAUL PEDERSON

against Islam a crime, a move backed by the Muslim Council of Britain. Similar laws regarding Judaism and Christianity are already in the books.

"The British government is using the protests over the Danish cartoons as a pretext to encroach on democratic rights in a dual way," Tony Hunt, a leader of the Communist League in the United Kingdom, told the *Militant*. "They are using it to curtail freedom of speech. The police in London recently told the organizers of a rally against the cartoons, the Muslim Association of Britain, they will remove placards if they deem them inflammatory. They also push for laws restricting 'religious hatred' to win support among bourgeois Muslim groups for the British rulers' 'war on terrorism.'"

Under this banner, a British court recently convicted and sentenced to seven years in jail Abu Hamza Masri, a Muslim cleric in London, for allegedly inciting violence against non-Muslims through "insulting words." The British, Danish, and other European governments have also further restricted the right of immigrants to get residency and work permits.

Meanwhile, governments backing the protests against the Danish cartoons and their supporters are taking the level of the dispute even lower. Iran's largest daily announced February 7 an international competition for cartoons on the Holocaust. Washington and its allies have had a field day in using previous statements by Iran's president saying the Holocaust was a myth and calling for "wiping Israel off the map" to win popular support for the imperialist campaign against Tehran. And the Arab European League, in retaliation for the Danish cartoons, posted on its web site a drawing of Adolph Hitler in bed with Anne Frank, with Hitler saying, "Write this one in your diary." Frank, a German-Jewish teenager, hid for two years from the Nazis in an annex above her father's office in Amsterdam. She was later captured and died in Hitler's concentration camps. She left a diary of the ordeal that has been widely published.

How blasphemy has been used

This is not the first time capitalist regimes in semicolonial countries or

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'Militant' Sub Renewal Campaign January 21–March 13, 2006 Week 3 of 7				
Country	Quota	Sold	%	Renewals
ICELAND*	12	7	58%	3
SWEDEN*	36	21	58%	11
NEW ZEALAND				
Auckland*	25	16	64%	8
Christchurch*	10	2	20%	2
N.Z. Total	35	18	51%	10
AUSTRALIA*	25	11	44%	7
UK				
Edinburgh*	22	9	41%	5
London*	50	19	38%	11
UK Total	57	28	39%	16
CANADA*	75	29	39%	15
U.S.				
Twin Cities*	70	46	66%	22
Price*	65	35	54%	19
Chicago*	40	21	53%	12
Albany, NY*	16	8	50%	5
Detroit	4	2	50%	0
Miami*	70	34	49%	15
Los Angeles*	75	33	44%	17
Washington*	35	15	43%	10
Boston*	40	16	40%	6
San Francisco*	60	24	40%	11
Des Moines*	85	33	39%	21
Atlanta*	60	22	37%	8
Pittsburgh*	40	14	35%	5
Houston*	65	22	34%	9
Salt Lake City*	30	10	33%	4
Philadelphia*	60	19	32%	11
Birmingham*	40	12	30%	3
Seattle*	35	10	29%	7
Newark*	65	17	26%	13
New York*	175	35	20%	26
New Orleans		4		4
U.S. Total	1130	432	38%	228
Int'l totals	1370	546	40%	290
Should be	1350	579	43%	
*increased quota				

—ON THE PICKET LINE

Steelworkers strike in Ontario now into its eighth month

HAWKESBURY, Ontario—The strike by United Steelworkers Local 8580 against IKO is now into its eighth month. The walkout began July 13, 2005, when IKO, a major producer of shingle and other roofing materials, demanded contract concessions, including a health benefit plan that would allow company officials to pry into employees' medical records. IKO has refused to negotiate with the union. Six workers have crossed the picket line, while more than 70 unionists remain on strike. "They're out to break the union but they will not succeed," said Patrick Lemay, who has 20 years at the plant.

—Annette Kouri

Auto workers in Atlanta condemn Ford plant closing

ATLANTA—"They just want to get away from paying union wages to workers," said Robert Cobb, 38, a production worker at the Ford assembly plant here in response to the announcement that the company is shutting the factory here, idling 2,100 workers. This closing, coupled with the previously announced shutdown of the General Motors plant in Doraville, Georgia, by 2008, affect-

ing 3,100 workers, leaves the Saturn plant in Spring Hill, Tennessee, as the only UAW-organized auto assembly plant in the South. Ford's plan is to shut down seven assembly plants, and 14 factories overall.

—Miguel Zarate

Meat workers in New Zealand strike for higher pay

WELLINGTON, New Zealand—Nearly 200 workers picketed the Taylor Preston meat works here February 7, the first morning of a three-day strike. Strikers held signs highlighting their low wages to oncoming traffic. "It's not a meat works, it's a sweatshop" read one of the home-made placards.

Last December, union members voted 223 to 1 to reject the company's pay offer of 30 cents to 40 cents hourly raises, adding up to \$1.00 to \$1.30 in three years' time. The union reports that following the vote the company accused Meat Union plant president Tuki Teautama of theft for using the company photocopier to make six copies of the results of the secret ballot to post on noticeboards.

Workers start on temporary contracts at the legal minimum wage of NZ\$9.50 (US\$6.45). Vailega Nanumea, a cleaner, had finished her overnight shift and then



Militant/Janet Roth

Meat workers on strike February 7 at Taylor Preston in Wellington, New Zealand.

waited at the plant gate until other pickets arrived. Years before, she said, "I had been looking for a strike but the union was not strong enough. Now it is."

—Ruth Gray and Janet Roth

Catfish workers in Alabama fight for union

EUTAW, Alabama—Some 60 workers at the Southfresh Farms catfish processing plant here walked off the job December 19 to protest unequal pay for trimmers. The one-day walkout resulted in an immediate raise to \$7.25 an hour for all trimmers, workers said, and has given impetus to a broader fight for better pay and working conditions, and for union recognition. "We knew we needed

a majority of workers—if we only had 10 workers walk out, we would have been fired," said Trinesa Davis, 36, who has worked as a trimmer at Southfresh for a year.

A representative from the United Food and Commercial Workers union from Birmingham met with the workers here in Eutaw. A local official of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference opened up an activities center for the meeting. All 60 workers who walked out signed union cards that day. Nearly 100 workers met with the union January 21 to discuss how to move ahead. Most workers at Southfresh get \$5.25 an hour and often work less than 30 hours a week.

—Susan LaMont

Bosses' profit drive, gov't cuts in safety standards killed W. Virginia miners

BY PAUL PEDERSON

LOGAN COUNTY, West Virginia—Mine investigators involved in the probe of a fire that killed two coal miners January 19 in the Alma No. 1 mine near Melville here said that "difficulty in donning breathing devices" may have contributed to their deaths, the Knight Ridder news agency reported.

In September 2001 the Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA), citing "resource constraints," withdrew a proposal to require coal bosses to stock extra caches of emergency breathing masks in every mine. Now MSHA officials say that without such caches "miners are exposed to grave danger."

Massey Energy, the largest coal producer in West Virginia, owns the Alma No. 1 mine. Only 3 percent of Massey's 5,700 employees are in a union.

In addition to inadequate supplies of

breathing masks, miners say the few facts that have emerged about the fire reflect a consistent pattern of disregard by both the mine bosses and government regulators for the lives of the miners who worked there.

The Alma No. 1 fire began on the belt that hauls coal up to the surface. A fire broke out in the same section of the belt in December, but the supervisors did nothing to correct the problem, an Alma miner told the *New York Times*, requesting anonymity for fear of reprisal by the boss.

"The bosses never want to shut down the belt. They try to keep the coal running out of the mine nonstop," Bethel Purkey, a retired underground miner for 28 years who lives in southern West Virginia, told the *Militant*. "They knew that a bearing was heating up on the belt but they refused to shut it down."

Between 1970 and 1990 conveyor belts caused 42—about 14 percent—of the 307 underground mine fires reported. Between 1993 and 2002, the industry reported 10 conveyor belt fires. In about one-third of those fires, MSHA reported that flames traveled for hundreds of feet, creating "a severe hazard to the health and safety of miners."

Compounding the danger, Massey was using the tunnel where the conveyor belt that caught fire is located to pump fresh air into the mine.

Federal regulations did not allow the use of this ventilation practice until 2004. However, for years prior to this change MSHA regularly approved exceptions to their more restrictive regulation. About 90 mines were granted permission to use belt entries for fresh-air intakes between 1998 and 2003, according to the *Charleston Gazette*.

Using the belt tunnel as an air intake saved the mine bosses the expense of digging extra ventilation shafts, while endangering miners' lives.

"Bringing fresh air in on the belt line is extremely dangerous," Purkey said. "The union has always fought this. It means anything that happens on the belt immediately fouls the air the miners are breathing. Not only is this a fire hazard, but the belt kicks up a lot of coal dust, which is transported right into the working sections."

"The way that ventilation was set up, once that fire started, those miners didn't have a chance," said William Chapman, a former underground miner who was on the scene at Alma No. 1. mine with the union rescue teams that responded to the fire after being notified more than two hours after it happened.

A similar delay in notifying and assembling the rescue teams occurred after the January 2 Sago Mine disaster, in which 11 of the 12 men who died were trapped alive after the explosion. One of the miners, George Hamner Jr., wrote a note six hours after the explosion: "We don't hear any attempts at drilling or rescue," he wrote. "The section is full of

smoke and fumes, so we can't escape." The rescue crew didn't enter the mine until 11 hours after the blast.

In order to increase production to meet higher demand at a time of rising coal prices, Massey submitted a request to waive a Kentucky law that requires miners to read English and speak it fluently in order to be able to hire Spanish-speaking immigrants. The coal boss cited a labor department study showing that Kentucky mine companies need 3,500 new workers.

The document also complained that the "work ethic of the Eastern Kentucky worker has declined," the *Lexington Herald-Leader* reported. "Attitudes have changed among the existing workforce, which affects attendance, drug use and, ultimately, productivity," it said.

Many working people took offense at the slanders by the company and say the proposal to bring in immigrant workers is part of Massey's efforts to keep wages down and the union out.

A miner interviewed by the *Militant* outside the Excel No. 3 mine in Pike County, Kentucky, asking that his name not be used for fear of retribution by the company, said the mine companies have a long history of trying to use immigrant labor to drive down the wages. "That's how a lot of our ancestors got to this area," he said. "What we need is to get the union back in the mines here. I am ready for some action."

1,000 protest new anti-immigrant measures by governor of Minnesota



Militant/Carlos Samaniego

MINNEAPOLIS—A largely young, working-class crowd of more than 1,000, mostly Latinos, marched here February 12, chanting "No human being is illegal" and "Immigrant rights are human rights!" Organized by a coalition of some 40 religious, labor, and community organizations, the marchers protested Minnesota governor Tim Pawlenty's new anti-immigrant measures. Pawlenty is setting up an Illegal Immigration Enforcement Team, calling for increased use of police for checking individuals' immigration status, and trying to impose increased penalties on "false identification offenses."

—NELSON GONZALEZ

—MILITANT LABOR FORUMS— IOWA

Des Moines
Why All Working People Should Support Immigrant Rights. Fri., Feb. 24. Dinner, 6:30 p.m., program, 7:30 p.m. Donation: \$5 dinner, \$5 program. 3707 Douglas Ave. Tel.: (515) 255-1707

TEXAS

Houston
Baytown Residents Protest Exxon Refinery Release. Panel discussion. Fri., Feb. 24, 7:30 p.m. 4800 W. 34th St., Suite C-51A. Tel.: (713) 869-6550.

Louisiana home owners face strangling—“Baton Rouge—The Louisiana Insurance Rating Commission reluc-



Harry Ring

tantly [!] approved its first post-Katrina increase in homeown-

ers insurance rates Wednesday, beginning what is likely to be a painful stream of rate increases [23 percent plus!]” reported the January 19 *New Orleans Times-Picayune*.

Just puke—A member of the Louisiana insurance commission said of the rate hike, “We do have a little indigestion.”

Headstone victory—Previously we had the London

report about Philip Yason, who was buried in a Jewish cemetery. An order was issued to remove his family epitaph engraved on his headstone: “Gentleman, thinker, socialist.” There was enough angry protest for the Jewish court to rule that “socialism” was not a religious issue.

“P” as in putrid?—The Toronto *Globe and Mail* reports the impact of an indecent word

that harms the economy. Citing research, the finance minister has warned bosses to avoid the “P” word at all costs. Researchers said people really get ticked by the word.

“Productivity”—Some folks suspect that what it really means is layoffs and squeezing more work out of fewer workers. The “P” word may well also voice the demand for dignity on the job.

A sticky issue (ho, ho)—Some people worry about the pollution of earth, water and air. Others warn of global warming. But in Ireland, the food industry will cough up 6 million euros (US\$7.2 million). The aim will be to convince consumers to dispose of chewing gum in a proper way. A gum tax may be imposed. Ireland’s environmental minister saluted the program as “a significant step forward.”

Boss profit greed claims lives of 22 miners this year

Continued from front page

it was in a heavily traveled area a few hundred feet from the production section.

According to MSHA, Horizon has had eight major roof falls over the last year. Six of these have been in a heavily travelled section of the mine. “The area was bolted with five-foot bolts, which was definitely inadequate,” said one miner.

These shorter roof bolts were used before deteriorating mine conditions led the company to switch to six-foot bolts in newly mined areas in the middle of last year. Sections of the mine with five-foot roof bolts have not been re-bolted. MSHA reports on several of the roof falls at Horizon state: “Area was bolted with 5 foot resin bolts prior to change in operator’s roof plan to 6 foot resin bolts.” The government agency, however, has not ordered the company to re-bolt the inadequately protected parts of the mine.

“At the stand down for safety meeting miners brought up points on safety,” said one of the miners. “The company people would say ‘that is a very good idea.’ But talking will not do anything. There needs to be action. We miners need to stand together to hold the company responsible for our safety.”

More accidents at Aberdeen

A few days following the February 6 “stand down for safety” meeting at the Aberdeen mine near here, two miners were injured by a coal face blowout, reported workers at that mine, who also asked that their names not be used. Shane Jacobson, a miner with 10 years mining experience, was killed at Aberdeen January 29 when coal from the high production mining section burst out of the wall at high velocity and struck him.

The Aberdeen mine, a nonunion operation run by Andalex Resources Inc., is under scrutiny in the media for an alarming number of safety violations. The mine has implemented cosmetic changes underground, say miners who work there, following the death of Jacobson. At the “stand down for safety” meeting at Aberdeen, company representatives made scant mention of Jacobson’s death and instead concentrated on placing responsibility for accidents and injuries on the miners themselves, workers said.

Management has resumed production on the long wall, after installing new bounce guards on every hydraulic shield to appease miners, many of whom are questioning the safety of their working conditions. The bounce guards are being fastened with chains and reinforced with “pens,” metal frames placed behind the bounce guards to absorb the force of blowouts, miners told the *Militant*.

Before Jacobson’s death the company’s practice was to have guards spaced

apart along the long wall machinery, say miners who worked in that section of the mine. Miners had to dash from behind one guard to the next in order to get some protection during frequent blowouts of coal. By spreading out the bounce guards, a method that was unsafe for the miners, the company made it easier to carry out repairs on equipment and remove coal spillage without disrupting production.

Mine owners don’t pay fines

The spate of coal mining accidents across the country this year has highlighted the ineffectiveness of the government’s mine safety agency. Even when MSHA does move to punish an employer found in violation of safety standards its fines are often disregarded. A recent article in the *Dominion Post*, a daily published in Morgantown, West Virginia, reported that fines against coal operators amounting to \$11 million are delinquent.

“Kentucky mine operator Stanley Osborne has accumulated more than \$200,000 in safety fines since the 1980s, but the federal government has not been able to collect the money,” the *Post* said. It reported that MSHA has filed a suit against this mine to recover the money.

“The payment of fines to MSHA is essentially voluntary,” said Wes Addington, a lawyer at the Appalachian Citizens Law Center in Prestonsburg, Kentucky, according to the *Post*.

MSHA spokesman Dirk Fillpot told the *Post* that 20 percent of the fines have not been paid in the last decade. In addition to coal companies, other mine bosses owe MSHA \$5 million in delinquent fines for safety violations.

“The problem isn’t new, but it has gained attention following mining accidents that have left 21 miners dead so far this year,” the *Post* said, in the article it published February 12. The next day, another rock miner was killed, bringing the toll up to 22.

The first rock miner to die on the job this year was a 39-year-old mechanic with 12 years of mining experience. According to MSHA, he was fatally injured January 6 while repairing a front loader at a sand and gravel operation in Phoenix, Arizona, owned by Rinker Materials Western Inc.

FBI conducts raids in Puerto Rico

Continued from front page

the demonstration outside the federal building in San Juan. “We have here a foreign country that puts the label of terrorist on us.”

More than 50 protesters joined a similar action in New York City February 13.

On September 23 Filiberto Ojeda Ríos, a leader of the pro-independence group *Los Macheteros* (cane cutters), was killed by FBI cops who raided his home in Hormigueros. Ojeda was one of the 15 Puerto Rican pro-independence fighters framed up in the 1980s on charges of conspiracy to rob a Wells Fargo armored car depot in Hartford, Connecticut.

In Trujillo Alto outside San Juan, the FBI raided the home of Norberto Cintrón, head of the pro-independence Latin American and Caribbean Coordinating Group of Puerto Rico. Cintrón spent 15 months in jail in the 1980s for refusing to testify before a U.S. grand jury. He organized the funeral

Dwight Borris, a 60-year-old heavy equipment worker with 10 years on the job, died January 27 at a crushed stone operation near Sherwood, Oregon, owned by Northfork Excavating, Inc. MSHA said Borris was killed when a bulldozer he was operating fell over the edge of a 50-foot-high wall and crashed into the quarry floor, submerging the cab in several feet of mud and water.

Charles Davis III, 25, died February 13 at the Pyramid Materials Quarry near Media, Pennsylvania. As this issue goes to press, further details about his death have not been released.

for Ojeda Ríos, which became a mass demonstration against U.S. colonial domination of Puerto Rico.

In San Juan, the FBI searched the apartment of independence activist Lilliana Laboy. She and her attorneys were denied the right to be present at the time of the search. The FBI assaulted and pepper sprayed protesters and journalists who gathered outside the apartment.

In the town of Mayagüez, some 50 federal agents raided the offices of the Ecumenical Committee for Community Economic Development, and the homes of its director, José Morales, its president, William Mohler, and the Cabán family, who are active in the group.

“We have to do it like we did in Vieques,” Mohler told the Puerto Rican daily *El Vocero*. “We must protest and repudiate things like this until those people respect us as a people.”

Arrin Hawkins, reporting from New York, contributed to this article.

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



February 27, 1981

CHICAGO—In a major victory for democratic rights, hundreds of people showed up here at a February 13 court hearing and blocked a deal that would cripple the fight against secret police crimes.

The hearing was held before Federal Judge Susan Getzendanner to determine if there were any objections to the proposed settlement of a lawsuit against the FBI and CIA.

Liberals and government lawyers alike got an unpleasant surprise when 300 people, most of them Black, showed up and strongly objected to the deal. One young man held up a sign reading “Stop FBI Crimes” until federal marshals forced him to discard it.



February 27, 1956

FEB. 22—Deputy sheriffs moved into the Negro community of Montgomery, Ala., today to arrest 115 leaders and supporters of the anti-Jim Crow bus boycott in that city. Among the first arrested was the Rev. Ralph D. Abernathy, one of the chief leaders of the 80-day old boycott movement.

A Montgomery County grand jury indicted the boycott movement under an anti-union law which declares illegal a “conspiracy, combination or agreement to interfere with or hinder business.”

The 100% effective bus boycott was originally intended as a one-day protest against the arrest and fining of Mrs. Rosa Parks for refusing to give up her seat to a white passenger.



February 13, 1931

Some 140,000 South Wales miners have just returned to work after a strike to enforce the seven and a half hour workday act. The operators were willing to concede recognition of this act only on the basis of a demanded 6 percent wage cut. The miners terminated their strike on the promise of arbitration which has since resulted in the signing of a new three year agreement [that] failed to decide the question of a subsistence wage.

At the present moment the officially registered unemployed workers in Great Britain number over two and a half million. The bosses now have no need of what was called Mondism, i.e. the British form of class collaboration. They are directly on the offensive.

'Our History Is Still Being Written'

Book-length interview with Chinese-Cuban generals sparks wide interest at Havana book fair

BY MARTÍN KOPPEL
AND XERARDO ARIAS

HAVANA—"This book will be a vehicle to get out the truth about the Cuban Revolution in every country, especially among young people," said Brig. Gen. Moisés Sío Wong. "It will help people, both here and in the United States, learn about the role of Chinese in Cuban history."

The book, he noted, will be of value "not only in capitalist countries but in socialist countries too," especially in China, where little is known about the Cuban Revolution.

Sío Wong was one of the featured speakers at a standing-room-only meeting here February 6 to present *Our History Is Still Being Written: The Story of Three Chinese-Cuban Generals in the Cuban Revolution*, newly published by Pathfinder Press in both English and Spanish. The event was part of the February 3–12 Havana International Book Fair.

Sío Wong said the book was the product of "persistent work" by Pathfinder editors who, in the course of several interviews over four years, drew out the stories of each of the three generals, including the importance for the Cuban Revolution of the work they are doing today.

As they recount in the book, Armando Choy, Gustavo Chui, and Sío Wong all joined the revolutionary struggle led by the July 26 Movement and the Rebel Army, which overthrew the U.S.-backed Batista dictatorship on Jan. 1, 1959, and opened the door to the first socialist revolution in the Americas. Each became a general in Cuba's Revolutionary Armed Forces. Today Chui shoulders national responsibilities in the Association of Combatants of the Cuban Revolution. Choy heads up the far-reaching effort to transform the infrastructure of the port of Havana and restore the environmental health of the bay. Sío Wong, who is on active duty in Cuba's Revolutionary Armed Forces, is president of the National Institute of State Reserves and of the Cuba-China Friendship Association.

Book generates interest

Our History Is Still Being Written was one of the titles that generated



Militant/Jonathan Silberman

Part of panel of speakers during February 6 launching of *Our History Is Still Being Written* at international book fair in Havana. From left: Cuban vice president José Ramón Fernández, and the three generals of Cuba's Revolutionary Armed Forces interviewed in the book: Gustavo Chui, Armando Choy, and Moisés Sío Wong.

broad interest among visitors to the 10-day book fair. The daily newspaper *Granma*, the news agency Prensa Latina, and the online edition of the Cuban cultural magazine *La Jiribilla* all featured articles about the book.

After the Havana fair, the Association of Combatants of the Cuban Revolution is sponsoring multiple presentations of the book in that city—including in Havana's historic Chinatown—as well as in Matanzas, Santo Domingo, Santa Clara, and Fomento. A presentation is also projected for Santiago de Cuba in the coming weeks. The Association organizes activities of some 300,000 Cubans who have participated in revolutionary struggles at home or internationalist missions abroad.

More than 80 people attended the February 6 meeting. They included a delegation from the Association of Combatants of the Cuban Revolution headed by generals Rafael Moracén and Alfonso Zayas. A number of veteran revolutionary combatants and some university students were among those in the audience.

The three generals were joined on the platform by Cuban vice president

José Ramón Fernández, himself a brigadier general who in April 1961 commanded the main column of Cuban troops that defeated the U.S.-organized mercenary invasion at the Bay of Pigs, known in Cuba as the victory of Playa Girón.

Iraida Aguirrechu, a senior editor of the Cuban publishing house Editora Política, who participated in the interviews and did much to assure the book's editorial quality, chaired the meeting. The first speaker she introduced was Mary-Alice Waters, editor of the book and president of Pathfinder.

Waters focused her remarks on why *Our History Is Still Being Written* is important today outside Cuba, especially in the United States, and why Pathfinder is publishing it. (See the text of her talk on page 7.)

All three generals spoke at the meeting. Choy concentrated on the important place of Chinese in Cuba's history, from their outstanding record in that country's independence wars between 1868 and 1898 to the revolutionary struggle against the Batista tyranny. Chui talked about his own experience growing up in Santiago de Cuba, about the struggle led by the Rebel Army in the Sierra Maestra mountains of eastern Cuba, and about the internationalist combat mission in Angola in which all three took part at various times between 1975 and 1988. Sío Wong spoke about the political collaboration with Pathfinder editors that produced *Our History Is Still Being Written*, and about Cuba's contribution to the worldwide fight for socialism.

Choy said he had experienced little anti-Chinese discrimination growing up in Fomento and Santa Clara before the Cuban Revolution. He attributed the acceptance of Chinese-Cubans and their general integration in society to their distinguished record in Cuba's independence struggle.

Chui remarked that his experience was different, noting that each of the three was from a different region and social background. His own father was

Chinese and his mother black. As a young child Chui spoke only Cantonese, but as soon as he started going to school he encountered such anti-Chinese bias and felt so ashamed of being Chinese that he rapidly suppressed his ability to speak that language. "These conditions led me to have a rebellious nature" and to join the Rebel Army, he said.

Sío Wong, commenting on the role of Cubans of Chinese ancestry in Cuba's history and today, said the fact they no longer face systematic discrimination in this country is the result of a socialist revolution.

'Take this book to China'

The lesson of the Cuban Revolution is "not only that another world is possible, but that a socialist world is possible," he emphasized. "We are fighting and demonstrating that socialism is the future of the world."

He said that in addition to its value for Cubans, especially for young people, "it will be important to translate this book into Chinese and take it to China." In that country, he pointed out, "little is known not only about Chinese participation in our independence war but about the history of the Cuban Revolution in general."

Sío Wong noted, "It is no secret that for 25 years"—from the mid-1960s to the end of the 1980s—"relations between Cuba and China were not good. Nothing was said here about China, and in China nothing was said about Cuba."

Relations between the two governments improved beginning in 1989. That year Sío Wong led a high-level Cuban military delegation to China. He joked that in the initial meetings, the Chinese hosts didn't realize he was Cuban. They kept asking: where is the head Cuban of the delegation? "They thought I was the translator—the waiters would serve all our comrades and then serve me last."

Sío Wong also spoke of the ongoing internationalist aid Cuba is providing Venezuela today, including the efforts he is contributing around the development of small-scale urban agriculture there. That, he said, "is part of the history we are still writing today."

After Sío Wong's remarks, Fernández, who had not planned to speak, asked to say a few words. He thanked Pathfinder "for the work of telling the truth about the Cuban Revolution." He thanked Iraida Aguirrechu for her help on this and other books, noting her editorial abilities and that she had worked under him for several years when he was vice minister of the Revolutionary Armed Forces.

Pathfinder has published *Playa Girón/Bay of Pigs* by Fidel Castro and Fernández. It has also published an interview with Fernández in *Making History*, the new Cuban edition of which was presented at the book fair the following day.

After the meeting, book fair participants purchased 86 copies of *Our History Is Still Being Written*. Fair organizers said it was one of the biggest sales at book presentations during the 10-day event.

New! Now Available!

Our History is still being written

THE STORY OF THREE
CHINESE-CUBAN GENERALS IN
THE CUBAN REVOLUTION

ARMANDO CHOY
GUSTAVO CHUI
MOISÉS SÍO WONG



Armando Choy, Gustavo Chui, and Moisés Sío Wong—three young rebels of Chinese-Cuban ancestry—threw themselves into the great proletarian battle that defined their generation. They became combatants in the clandestine struggle and 1956–58 revolutionary war that brought down a U.S.-backed dictatorship and opened the door to the socialist revolution in the Americas. Each became a general in Cuba's Revolutionary Armed Forces. Through their stories the social and political forces that gave birth to the Cuban nation and still shape our epoch unfold. \$20

Special offer: \$15 for Pathfinder Readers Club members (through March 31)

WWW.PATHFINDERPRESS.COM

Book needed by those in front lines of class struggle

Will be of special interest to many among 2.5 million Chinese-Americans in U.S.

The following presentation by Mary-Alice Waters opened a meeting, held during the 15th Havana International Book Fair in Cuba, to launch Pathfinder Press's new book *Our History Is Still Being Written: The Story of Three Chinese-Cuban Generals in the Cuban Revolution* by Armando Choy, Gustavo Chui, and Moisés Sío Wong (see article on facing page). The book was published simultaneously in Spanish as *Nuestra historia aún se está escribiendo*. Waters, who conducted the interviews with the three generals and edited the book, is president of Pathfinder Press. Copyright © 2006 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

BY MARY-ALICE WATERS

On behalf of Pathfinder, I want to begin by expressing my appreciation to all of you who are with us here today. To vice president José Ramón Fernández. To the *compañeros* of the Revolutionary Armed Forces (FAR) and Association of Combatants of the Cuban Revolution (ACRC). And above all to generals Choy, Chui, and Sío Wong.

A very special word of appreciation is also due to our chairperson, *Compañera* Iraida Aguirrechu of Editora Política. Without exaggeration we can say that were it not for her unfailing support and expertise, we would not be presenting these books today.

I also want to mention the assistance we received from the *compañeros* and *compañeras* of the José Martí National Library, and of the photo archives at *Granma* and *Bohemia*. Their enthusiastic and very competent help in locating many of the drawings and photos that enrich the pages of *Nuestra historia aún se está escribiendo* was indispensable. Such graphics, we have learned, are vital in drawing workers and youth into a political story that is often very different in time and circumstances from their own experiences.

Where and why

The three generals whose lifetimes of revolutionary action are at the center of this book will have much to say this afternoon. I want to add a few words about only two things: First, where this book came from. And second, why it is important outside Cuba, especially in the United States.

Work on the book that became *Our History Is Still Being Written* began almost exactly four years ago. At that time, with the collaboration of the

national leadership of the Combatants Association, Pathfinder had already published the first edition of *Making History*—composed of interviews with Néstor López Cuba, Enrique Carreras, José Ramón Fernández, and Harry Villegas, all generals of the FAR—which will be presented here tomorrow in a new edition for distribution throughout Cuba. In February 2002, *From the Escambray to the Congo: In the Whirlwind of the Cuban Revolution* by Víctor Dreke had just been presented here at the Havana International Book Fair. And we were finishing work on the interview with General Teté Puebla that was published a few months later as *Marianas in Combat*.

At that moment—as we were just beginning to ask ourselves “What next?”—Chui and Pombo [Harry Villegas, executive vice president of the ACRC] suggested we might be interested in interviewing the three generals of the FAR who are of Chinese ancestry. With our enthusiastic agreement, Pombo invited us to the offices of the

‘Circulating and discussing this book will be a joyous task young socialists will embrace’

Combatants Association one morning. Armando Choy, Gustavo Chui, and Moisés Sío Wong joined us, and we started work that very hour.

It is safe to say that none of us thought it would be four years before the multiple interviews begun that day would be shaped into a book and published. But as is always the case in the lives of revolutionaries, the class struggle unfailingly disposes of preconceived blueprints or schemas. Far from being a problem, learning to act on that fact is a precondition for the victory of the toilers.

The curse that the old Mandarin caste of prerevolutionary China once hurled at its enemies was: May you live in interesting times! We all gladly accept. For us it is a keen anticipation, not a curse.

The book we are presenting here today is not solely about the past, although it is rich in history and its clarification. It begins with mid-century stories of the three young Cuban rebels of Chinese ancestry, each of whom had grown up



Militant/Martín Koppel

Volunteers at the Pathfinder booth at Havana's international book fair on February 6 sell *Our History Is Still Being Written* (being shown) and other Pathfinder books.

under social and economic conditions different from one another, as well as in three different regions of the country—Sío Wong in Matanzas and Havana; Choy in Fomento and Santa Clara; and Chui in Santiago de Cuba. Like thousands of others of their generation, they threw themselves into the revolutionary struggle to bring down the Batista tyranny.¹

Chinese immigration

A section of the book tells the history of Chinese immigration to Cuba, which in proportion to the size of the population was greater than anywhere else in the Americas, including the United States. (In absolute numbers the Chinese immigration to Cuba in the mid-1800s was nearly the same as the immigration to the U.S. But the U.S. population at the time was 38 million, while that of Cuba was 1.4 million!)

The book includes a section on Cuba's internationalist mission in Angola from 1975 to 1991, with the reflections of each of the three generals on their experiences in that epic struggle. And an appendix with excerpts from several speeches by Fidel [Castro] explaining what happened at some of the critical moments in that nearly 16-year mission.

One of the richest elements is the final

1. The March 1952 military coup by Fulgencio Batista was met by sustained mass protests by youth and working people across Cuba. On July 26, 1953, some 160 revolutionaries under the leadership of Fidel Castro launched an insurrectionary attack on the Moncada army garrison in Santiago de Cuba and another garrison in Bayamo, opening the revolutionary armed struggle against the U.S.-backed Batista dictatorship. After the failure of the attack, in which more than 50 revolutionaries were massacred by Batista's forces, Castro and 27 others were tried and imprisoned. They were amnestied in May 1955 after a broad national campaign demanding their release. From 1956 through 1958, the July 26 Movement and Rebel Army, led by Castro, waged a revolutionary war to bring down the tyranny. In the closing weeks of 1958, Rebel Army victories coincided with a general strike and popular uprising across Cuba, ensuring the triumph of the revolution. Batista fled the island on January 1, 1959.

section of the book entitled “The Special Period and Beyond,” in which each of the three *compañeros* talks about the responsibilities he carries today. Organizing the work to transform the infrastructure and productivity of the port of Havana and restore the environmental health of the bay and its tributaries. Leading the military-patriotic work of the Combatants Association. Overseeing the strategic reserves of the Cuban state. Transforming the structure of agriculture in Cuba with the development of the *organipónicos* [urban farming]. Supporting the revolutionary struggles advancing in Venezuela and preparing to meet, throughout Our America, the inevitably sharpening aggression from the empire to the north.

Above all—as its title, chosen by the generals, indicates—it is a book that draws us into the present and toward the future, allowing us to understand where we come from, how we got here, and where we must go. In reality, it is an introduction to “What is the Cuban Revolution?” “What is a socialist revolution?” “Why should you dedicate your life and work to advancing toward it in whatever country you find yourself?”

Because it is needed

That helps answer my original second question. Why is this book important outside of Cuba, and in the United States above all? Why did Pathfinder publish it? Why will young socialists and communist workers be selling it, in English and Spanish, not only through bookstores, to libraries, and on the worldwide web, but from tables in front of plant gates and mine portals, on university campuses, and on the streets of working-class districts in towns and cities across the continent.

The simplest answer is the most accurate one. We published this book because it is needed by those on the front lines of the class struggle, wherever they may be. Because the example of the Cuban Revolution is not only a moral one, great as that is. It is a practical lesson for our class of how to fight—and most importantly, how to win.

The brutal face of U.S. imperialism that the world sees in Iraq, in Guantánamo, threatening Iran and Venezuela, is the same face that confronts working people within the United States. The in-

Continued on page 8



“The book begins with mid-century stories of three young Cuban rebels of Chinese ancestry, each of whom had grown up under social and economic conditions different from one another, as well as in three different regions of the country—Sío Wong in Matanzas and Havana; Choy in Fomento and Santa Clara; and Chui in Santiago de Cuba.” Fomento is a short distance southeast of Santa Clara in central Cuba.

Presentation by editor of 'Our History'

Continued from page 7

tensifying interimperialist competition and the colossal profits to be made from the exploitation of workers and farmers at home and abroad fill the owners of the mines and factories with both heightened fear and enhanced greed. That has meant, and will continue to mean, a dangerous intensification of the pace of work, absolute disregard for life and limb of working people, and the degradation of conditions of life.

Most important for us, however, that capitalist reality is already generating new levels of resistance, and new levels of solidarity among working people, who are increasingly searching for answers as to how to resist, and how to organize themselves to resist effectively.

You all know of the social (not "natural") catastrophe that unfolded in the city of New Orleans in the wake of Hurricane Katrina. But what the capitalist media never tells you about is how the working people of New Orleans reached out to help one another, working together and organizing themselves to confront that calamity. It is something the rulers in their class blindness and arrogance can't even see, much less understand.

In the same way, they could see nothing but a propaganda "trick" in the hand of solidarity extended by the people of Cuba, who offered to send 1,500 doctors and other medical personnel who would have traveled to the furthest reaches of the Mississippi Gulf Coast, with their knapsacks on their backs, to bring life-saving care to those most desperately in need—just as they are doing in Pakistan, Bolivia, and elsewhere today.

Since January 1 of this year—in only five weeks—18 workers have been killed in six separate incidents in the coal mines of the United States, from the Appalachian mountains of the east to the high mountains of the west. The mine in which the largest number of miners were killed is a relatively small nonunion mine in West Virginia. It is owned by a big U.S. energy company that was on an accelerated production drive, fueled by rising energy prices worldwide, to increase coal output threefold—*threefold*—this year, from 350,000 tons in 2005 to 900,000 tons in 2006. A few days after the men who died had been laid to rest by their grieving families and friends, the chief executive of the company callously and calmly announced that their deaths would not alter the owners' production goals.

Under such conditions, more and more miners inevitably come to see there is only one way to prevent an increasing toll of life and limb, and that is to organize themselves into the United Mine Workers union and to use union power to impose the necessary safeguards. The bosses can do nothing to stop the outbreak of what will be sharpening struggles to build the unions, in the mines and in other industries.

That kind of shift in the thinking of working people inside the United States is taking place at the same time that we can see the stiffening resistance of the toilers who are targets of imperialist oppression worldwide—from the Altiplano of Bolivia; to the streets, factories, and fields of Asia, Africa, and the Middle East; to the suburbs of Paris.

Reading is a weapon of resistance

I want to end with a word about Antonio, Fernando, Gerardo, Ramón,

and René—our five Cuban brothers who today find themselves on the front lines of this class struggle within the U.S., even if not by their own choosing and despite our collective efforts to win their freedom.²

As many of you know from your own lives of revolutionary struggle, the prisons of the capitalist masters are places many a young, thinking worker passes through, trapped by conditions of life they are unable to escape. There is no better example in the United States than the great revolutionary leader Malcolm X.

In the United States, which has the second highest per capita prison population in the world—only in Russia is it higher—one out of every four young men who are Black are either in prison, on parole, or have only recently been released. For communists the prisons are not unknown territory, and for many decades the books published by Pathfinder have won avid readers there.³ We have a special fund, well subscribed, through which prisoners can obtain books at half their normal cover price.

Within the walls of the separate federal prisons where they are confined, our five compañeros continue their work as Cuban revolutionaries. It is a source of strength that touches us all. Pathfinder

2. In June 2001 Fernando González, René González, Antonio Guerrero, Gerardo Hernández, and Ramón Labañino were convicted in U.S. federal court on frame-up charges of "conspiracy to act as an unregistered foreign agent"; Guerrero, Hernández, and Labañino were also convicted of "conspiracy to commit espionage," and Hernández of "conspiracy to commit murder." They are currently serving sentences from 15 years to double life terms plus 15 years. In August 2005 a three-member panel of the federal appeals court in Atlanta reversed the convictions and sentences and ordered a new trial in a

frequently receives letters from one or another of them asking if it would be possible to receive this or that title they want to read and to share with fellow inmates impatiently awaiting their turn. Some of the titles most recently requested—and read—include *The Jewish Question* by Abram Leon, a young Jewish resistance fighter, a Marxist, who died in the hands of the Gestapo during World War II; *El Capital* by Karl Marx; *How Far We Slaves Have Come!*, with speeches by Nelson Mandela and Fidel on Angola and South Africa; and *Marx and Engels on the United States*.

As René put it in one of his recent letters, "Reading is one of the weapons of resistance we most often resort to here, and your books have been a blessing for us—albeit a dialectical materialist one!"

I can report to you that *Our History Is Still Being Written*, in both English and Spanish, is one of those blessings now in their hands. As I was leaving for Havana we received confirmation from both Gerardo and René that it was already being read and shared.

different location. On February 14 federal prosecutors urged the full 12-judge appeals court to overturn the August ruling and deny the defendants' petition for new trials. All five Cubans are still in prison.

3. One of Pathfinder's best books, *Letters from Prison* by James P. Cannon, a founding leader of communism in North America, was written in prison, where Cannon was serving time on federal frame-up charges stemming from the Socialist Workers Party's efforts to mobilize labor opposition to Washington's entry into the second imperialist world war. —M.-A. W.



Militant/Jonathan Silberman
Mary-Alice Waters, editor of *Our History Is Still Being Written*, speaking as part of panel presenting the book at Havana book fair on February 6. On right is Iraida Aguirrechu of Editora Política.

Special interest for Chinese

One final comment: We will actively seek out a wide audience for this new book among workers, farmers, and youth of all backgrounds in the United States. At the same time, there will be special interest among the 2.5 million Chinese immigrants and Chinese-Americans in the U.S. Yes, that's 2.5 million!—from garment workers to hundreds of thousands of students on campuses across the country. And that's an official government figure, which does not include the uncounted numbers of Chinese who are undocumented.

This book will not only help to throw light on a hidden chapter in the history of Our America. It will open the eyes of those Chinese-Americans who read it to the truth about the Cuban Revolution and revolutionary working-class politics more broadly. Circulating and discussing this book with them in English, Spanish, and perhaps one day soon in Chinese as well, will be a joyous task young socialists will embrace!

These are the reasons why Pathfinder has published this book.

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Censorship hurts working class

Top officials of imperialist democracies have cast a sympathetic ear to charges by majority Muslim states that caricatures of Prophet Muhammad published last fall in a Danish newspaper are blasphemous, offensive, and should have never been printed. Such feigned sensitivity to “religious sensibilities” is a cover for advancing censorship and other attacks on democratic rights.

Calls to ban the controversial cartoons are reactionary and should be vigorously opposed.

The thrust of such demands, and the character of the campaign to promote them by capitalist regimes in the Middle East and elsewhere, are lending a hand to the imperialist powers worldwide. Washington and the bourgeoisies across Europe are having a heyday with this controversy.

What a help to Washington’s efforts to solidify support in Europe—from Copenhagen to Amsterdam and Warsaw, from London, to Paris, Madrid, and Rome—for military operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. What a help to their escalating threats against Iran, which is in greater danger from imperialist assault now than at any time since the 1979 popular revolution that overthrew the U.S.-backed regime of the shah.

What a boost to efforts by the rulers across the imperialist world to try to win popular backing, to sow confusion, as they press step by step to encroach on the political rights of working people and the oppressed to speak, publish, organize, and act.

Working people have no interest in supporting cen-

sorship laws of any kind, whether they are purportedly directed against pornography, so-called hate literature, blasphemy, or slandering the socialist state. Making Holocaust denial a legal offense—which has spread across Europe—is also an example of rationalizing new crimes as “politically correct” that is becoming rampant in the capitalist world. The main targets of all such laws are ultimately workers, farmers, and their organizations.

Demands to enforce censorship strengthen the hand of the capitalist ruling class to boost domestic spying on phone calls and e-mail, to expand the power of cop agencies to demand libraries hand over lists of individuals based on what they read, or to undermine the right to privacy.

In a recent column, Patrick Buchanan, an incipient fascist politician in the United States, claimed that “Muslims are simply more devout and resolute in defense of their faith than the milquetoast Christians of modernity” and they don’t believe “freedom of speech and the press should protect those who blaspheme their God or prophet.”

The opposite is true. Muslims, like other believers, are divided into classes. Among the swelling ranks of working people—from the Middle East to North America, from Europe to Africa, Asia, and the Pacific—there is a growing convergence among those who recognize the need to safeguard and extend democratic rights in order to defend the life and limb of the working class and its allies, and to fight for a world without class exploitation, national oppression, or sex discrimination.

Imperialist powers use protests against cartoons

Continued from page 3

imperialist democracies have used blasphemy laws to enforce censorship and broader restrictions on democratic rights.

In 1989 Iranian leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini exhorted Muslims to kill Salman Rushdie, an Indian-born British resident. Khomeini charged Rushdie with blasphemy against Islam on the grounds his novel *Satanic Verses* portrayed Muhammad and his wives in an offensive manner. Rushdie, a defender of the Palestinian struggle for self-determination and of the 1979 Nicaraguan revolution, was forced into hiding. The largest U.S. bookstores pulled his book off their shelves. Washington,

London, and Ottawa used the case to step up surveillance and deportation threats against Iranians. And many U.S. bourgeois figures echoed the charge of blasphemy against him, while taking a distance from the call to kill him.

Ten years later, New York mayor Rudolph Giuliani threatened the Brooklyn Museum of Art with loss of city funding and eviction from its premises, on the grounds that an exhibit scheduled to open there contained a painting offensive to Catholics. The piece by Nigerian-born British artist Chris Ofili depicted a Black Madonna with breasts made from elephant dung, material Ofili had used in many of his works. Over a 1,000 people rallied in front of the museum to back the opening of the show.

Steelworkers locals back Militant Fighting Fund

Continued from front page

support for the *Militant’s* fight against a harassment lawsuit by the C.W. Mining Co., which owns the Co-Op mine near Huntington, Utah. Miners there waged a two-year-long fight for representation by the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA). The Militant Fighting Fund is also publicizing the fight of the other defendants—including 16 Co-Op miners and the UMWA—to dismiss the defamation and other charges filed by the Utah coal bosses.

A growing number of union locals and others in the labor movement and beyond are endorsing this effort to defend labor rights and freedom of the press because of heightened interest among working people in the struggle for safety on the job, especially since 22 miners were killed across the United States in the first six weeks of this year. C.W. Mining has charged the UMWA, 16 Co-Op miners, the *Militant*, Utah’s two main dailies, and others with defamation for supporting or writing about the Co-Op miners’ union-organizing struggle. Many of the charges center on company claims that workers slandered the boss by explaining the fight against unsafe job conditions was central to their struggle.

Organizers of the Militant Fighting Fund are shooting to get over 100 new endorsers by the February 17 court hearing here, where the defendants’ motions to dismiss the retaliatory suit will be heard. Since February 1, over 95 individuals have signed up.

A number of them are from New York. The executive board of Laborers Union Local 79 there donated \$200 last week. Three members of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 342 at different meatpacking shops in the Bronx endorsed as well. UNITE HERE Local 63 chairman Achilles Selearis and Daniel Rottenstreich, a political organizer for UNITE HERE, signed up too. Twenty individuals, including two local rail workers, endorsed after hearing facts about the case at a February 10 Mil-

itant Labor Forum in Manhattan on the New York transit workers’ fight for a contract. The new endorsers at that forum contributed \$420.

Endorsements continue to come from abroad. At the World Social Forum in Caracas, Venezuela, at the end of January, 15 people signed up. They include Valentin Pacho, director and deputy general secretary of the World Federation of Trade Unions, from Prague, Czech Republic; Josue Merilien, secretary general of the National Union of Haitian Teachers, from Port-au-Prince, Haiti; Jean-Marc Byoko, president of the Cameroon Public Servants Union; Manuel Córdoba, president of the Teachers Union of La Guajira, in Colombia; and Maria Ednalva, national secretary of working women of the Central Workers Union, in São Paulo, Brazil.

Please send endorsements and donations to Militant Fighting Fund, P.O. Box 520994, Salt Lake City, Utah 84152; Fax (801) 924-5910; E-mail: MilitantFightingFund@yahoo.com

LETTERS

Thanks for coal coverage

Thanks for all your recent coverage of the situation in the coal mines. I come from a long line of miners, and I can tell you that your efforts are appreciated. Miners have been suffering and dying for years—it’s about time it got some attention!

Jack Goff

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

The letters column is an open forum for all viewpoints on subjects of interest to working people. Please keep your letters brief. Where necessary they will be abridged. Please indicate if you prefer that your initials be used rather than your full name.

Haiti vote: protesters demand Aristide ally be declared victor



Militant/Eric Simpson

Gérard Jean-Juste (forefront with beard), a political prisoner recently freed from jail in Haiti, is greeted February 12 in Miami. Protesters backed demands that René Préval be declared winner in Haiti’s elections.

BY DEBORAH LIATOS AND ERIC SIMPSON

MIAMI—Thousands have marched through the streets of Port-au-Prince, Haiti’s capital, demanding that presidential front-runner René Préval be declared the winner in the February 7 elections. Préval was the prime minister under former president Jean-Bertrand Aristide, who was ousted following a U.S.-backed rightist uprising and imperialist military intervention in February 2004.

Préval supporters accused the provisional electoral council of fixing the vote totals to force a March 19 runoff. “We don’t need a second round!” was the chant at a pro-Préval rally in Miami.

As of February 13, with 90 percent of the vote counted, Préval reportedly had 48.7 percent of the vote—just shy of the absolute majority needed to avoid a runoff. Second place in the field of 35 candidates was Leslie Manigat with 11.8 percent of the vote. Guy Philippe, the leader of the rightist uprising that led to the ouster of Aristide, garnered less than 2 percent.

Aristide was first elected president in 1990 following a decades-long struggle by workers and farmers to end the reign of a series of U.S.-backed military regimes. He was ousted in a military coup in 1991 but reinstated by U.S. forces three years later after U.S. troops invaded and occupied the country.

Préval, who worked closely with Aristide, was elected Haiti’s president in 1996. Aristide again won the presidency in 2000 in a climate of increased hostility from Washington, which cut aid to Haiti. Opposition parties, goaded on by the U.S. rulers, began a campaign that culminated in an armed uprising by rightist forces and direct military intervention led by Washington.

Aristide was kidnapped Feb. 29, 2004, by U.S. forces and taken out of the country. He is still living in exile in South Africa. Gerard Latortue, a career diplomat living at the time in Boca Raton, Florida, was installed by the U.S.-led occupation force as “interim” prime minister. He has ruled since then with the help of a United Nations military force.

If elected, Préval has promised to provide relief to the two-thirds of Haiti’s population living in extreme poverty. At the same time he has made overtures to Washington and to the opposition parties in Haiti’s ruling class. “A chief objective of Mr. Préval’s government, one of his advisers said, would be to attract more investment from the United States,” the *New York Times* reported February 10.

The election took place in the shadow of a nearly 9,000-strong United Nations occupation force.

“I think all foreigners’ armies need to leave Haiti,” said Pierre Paul at a rally in Miami celebrating the release of political prisoner Gérard Jean-Juste from his jail cell in Haiti. “Haiti is an independent country. Haitians can run our own country. We had an elected government with Aristide for five years. Then Jacques Chirac, George Bush, and Paul Martin kidnapped the president by night,” he said. He was referring to the presidents of France, the United States, and the former prime minister of Canada, which all deployed troops in the invasion and occupation of Haiti in 2004.