

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Cuban combatants host tour on book by Chinese-Cuban generals
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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 70/NO. 11 MARCH 20, 2006

Kentucky labor rally draws 5,000 unionists Opposes 'right-to-work for less' bills

BY SAM MANUEL

FRANKFORT, Kentucky—Nearly 5,000 trade unionists rallied at the state capitol here March 7 to oppose legislation sought by Kentucky governor Ernest

Fletcher that would repeal the prevailing wage law and adopt so-called right-to-work rules. The rally was sponsored by the Kentucky AFL-CIO.

The previous day about 100 supporters of the antilabor legislation gathered in the same spot at a rally held by the business-sponsored group "Kentuckians For Jobs."

"We will always defend the right of American workers to join unions," said Cecil Roberts, president of the United Mine Workers of America, who received a loud ovation as he addressed the unionists. "We have had 21 miners die in coal mines since the beginning of the year," Roberts said. "They died because their government failed them." He asked the demonstrators to support a mine safety bill being introduced in the state senate next month.

Groups of trade unionists filled the expansive approach to the state capitol carrying banners and placards. Among

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Militant/Linda Joyce

Thousands of unionists rally March 7 in Frankfort, Kentucky.

Miners in Mexico wage 3-day strike to improve safety

BY NAOMI CRAINE
AND JOSE ARAVENA

CANANEA, Mexico—Demanding improved safety on the job in the wake of a deadly coal mine explosion, 5,500 workers at the copper and zinc operations of Grupo Mexico walked off the job February 28–March 2. Grupo Mexico, the world's third-largest copper producer, owns the underground Pasta de Conchos coal mine, where 65 workers were killed after a methane gas explosion caused roof falls February 19. The strikers shut down the company's huge copper mine here near the Arizona border, as well as its La Caridad mine, and a zinc mine and

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'Safety now!' say Alabama miners



Militant/Paul Pederson

Nearly 200 coal miners rally outside Alabama state capitol in Montgomery March 7 to protest unsafe job conditions and demand more federal funding for mine inspections. UMW organized car caravan from Bessemer and rally in Montgomery.

BY PAUL PEDERSON
AND CLAY DENNISON

MONTGOMERY, Alabama—The United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) called a mourning day, a one-day work stoppage, March 7 at five of the state's seven active underground

coal mines. Nearly 200 miners assembled at the statehouse here to demand a substantial increase in state funding for mine inspections and to protest unsafe conditions in the mines.

Shutting down Interstate 65 as they
Continued on page 7

Democratic politicians, labor officials lead American chauvinist anti-Dubai campaign

BY MICHAEL ITALIE

In the name of "homeland security," ranking Democratic members of Congress and a growing number of Republican legislators, along with a range of labor officials, have been waging a chauvinist campaign against the impending takeover of port facilities in six U.S. cities by

Dubai Ports World (DP World).

DP World is owned by the government of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and is named after one of the country's main coastal cities. It operates ports in many countries.

Charging the White House with failing to effectively prosecute the "war on

terrorism," U.S. senators Barbara Boxer of California, Hillary Rodham Clinton of New York, Frank Lautenberg of New Jersey, and Bill Nelson of Florida—all Democrats—introduced legislation on

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Special Militant Labor Forums

Defend Labor Rights
Support fight to defeat
coal boss harassment lawsuit

Saturday, March 11

Boston, reception 5 p.m., program 6 p.m.

—Speaker: Paul Mailhot, Socialist Workers Party

Toronto, reception 3 p.m., program 4 p.m.

—Speaker: Argiris Malapanis, 'Militant' editor

For address and other information see directory on page 8

Another Special Event

Defend Labor Rights!

Saturday, March 25, 7:00 p.m.

UFCW Local 789 union hall, St. Paul, MN

Speakers: Bill Estrada, coal miner in Utah & defendant in C.W. Minng harassment suit; Bernie Hesse, UFCW Local 789 head of organizing; Randy Jasper, activist in Family Farm Defenders & dairy farmer in Muscoda, Wisconsin; Argiris Malapanis, 'Militant' editor

Venue: UFCW Local 789, 266 Hardman Ave., St. Paul * Tel: (612) 802-8982
Auspices: Militant Fighting Fund; Endorsed by: St. Paul Speakers Club; Bernie Hesse, UFCW Local 789; David Riehle, chairman UTU Local 650.

Socialist Workers Party ticket on Newark, New Jersey, ballot

BY ANGEL LARISCY

NEWARK, New Jersey—"Thousands in Newark have responded enthusiastically to our call to support workers' struggles to organize and mobilize union power to defend working people from attacks by the bosses on wages, benefits, safety, and dignity on the job, and for a labor party based on the interests of workers and farmers year round," Nancy Rosenstock, Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor of Newark, said in an interview.

Rosenstock, and Chauncey Robinson, who is running on the SWP ticket for

City Council in Newark's West Ward, have been certified to appear on the ballot for the May 9 election.

Socialist Workers campaign support-
Continued on page 2

'You're only as safe as union is strong'

Best week in 'Militant' sales

BY ARGIRIS MALAPANIS

"While in Kearny, Arizona, last weekend we talked with Kelly Hunt, the safety committee chairman of the United Steelworkers local there," said Wendy Lyons from Los Angeles in a March 7 note to the *Militant*. "He started out saying, 'You're only as safe as the union is strong.' He praised the miners in Mexico who walked out last week over this question, as he subscribed to the *Militant*." Grupo

Continued on page 4

South Dakota governor signs abortion ban

BY ARRIN HAWKINS

South Dakota governor Michael Rounds signed into law March 6 a bill banning abortion in that state. The law would make it a felony for doctors to per-
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Also Inside:

Young Socialist leader speaks on Africa, imperialism today 2

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Backing censorship of Danish cartoons is trap for workers 9

Young Socialist speaks in U.S., Canada on Africa and imperialism

BY MAURA DELUCA

PITTSBURGH—Arrin Hawkins, a leader of the Young Socialists, spoke at the University of Pittsburgh and then West Virginia University, February 23 and 24, as part of a speaking tour on “Imperialism, Central Africa, and the World Today.” Since participating in the first-ever book fair held in the Central African nation of Equatorial Guinea October 17–20, she has been speaking on the history of that part of Africa, and the competition between Washington and its imperialist rivals for control of oil and other mineral resources in the Gulf of Guinea region.

Hawkins said the United States now receives 15 percent of its oil from West Africa, and seeks to increase that figure to 25 percent within 10 years. She connected Washington’s profit-seeking exploitation on the African continent and elsewhere to the employers’ drive to increase production at home at the expense of workers’ health and safety. Hawkins also pointed to the revolutionary example of Cuba and its efforts to extend human solidarity. There are currently 18 Cuban medical missions in Africa, with 144 doctors in Equatorial Guinea alone.

About 25 people attended the University of Pittsburgh event, which was sponsored by the Black Action Society, Sankofa, the Muslim Student Association, and the Young Socialists. Mariano Nsue Nguema, an Equatoguinean student, said that he had not previously thought about how the development of the oil industry is bringing into being a working class in the country.

In the discussion, Stan Jabari, a worker attending the meeting, said that boycotting products that are made in overseas

“sweatshops” is a way to end workers’ exploitation in those countries and “protect” jobs by workers in the United States. Hawkins responded that protectionist protests and boycotts seek to encourage workers to buy products manufactured in the United States to help prop up U.S. capitalism and convince workers that they share similar interests with the employers in this country. “We have more in common with workers in other parts of the world than with the bosses here in the United States,” she said.

Some 35 people attended the West Virginia University meeting in Morgantown, West Virginia, organized by a history professor on the campus. Nicholas Makana, 39, a student originally from Kenya, spoke about the dilemma African nations face in trying to control their natural resources while imperialist banks and governments push for increased privatization of their economies. Hawkins cited the example of the Central African nation of Chad, whose oil assets in a Citibank account in London were frozen by the World Bank after the Chadian government announced it was seeking more control over the revenues from an oil pipeline in Chad operated by U.S.-based ExxonMobil.



BY JOE YOUNG

BROOKS, Alberta—Members of United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Local 401 and others attended a forum here February 19 presented by Arrin Hawkins. The meeting was held at the UFCW Local 401 union hall. Last October, the union led some 900 workers out of a workforce of 2,100 in a successful 23-day strike against Tyson-owned

Lakeside Packers.

“Black and white we fought for our rights and defeated Tyson,” said Robert Akol, who was first to speak in the discussion, after the presentation by Hawkins. Akol, originally from Sudan, is a chief shop steward at Lakeside. Workers there come from 36 countries in Africa, South America, Asia, and Canada. Efforts to build unity across nationalities was an important factor in the success of the strike and organization of the union.

“The media doesn’t show what Africa is doing to build itself up,” commented Ashley Bratten, also a union shop steward. “The same is true in Alberta, where they only showed negative images of the Sudanese [workers] during the strike.” During the strike the provincial government brought hundreds of riot police into Brooks and put



Militant/Natalie Doucet

Arrin Hawkins of the Young Socialists in the U.S. speaks on her recent trip to Equatorial Guinea at February 19 meeting at hall of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 401, which organizes workers at Lakeside Packers in Brooks, Alberta.

the Canadian army on standby, Bratten noted.

During Hawkins’s three-day visit here, 13 people renewed or signed up for new subscriptions to the *Militant*, including two of the 11 people who took part at the February 19 meeting.

SWP ticket on ballot in Newark, N.J.

Continued from front page
ers collected 2,718 signatures on nominating petitions for Rosenstock and 588 for Robinson—well more than double the required 1,159 for mayor and 232 for city council. Rosenstock was the second mayoral candidate to gain ballot status, after Cory Booker, among the 11 who have declared they are running.

Incumbent Sharpe James and Booker, a former city councilman, both Democrats, are ahead in the polls, though James has yet to announce whether he is running.

Rosenstock, 56, works at a meatpacking plant and is a member of the United Food and Commercial Workers. Robinson, 20, is a retail worker and member of the Young Socialists.

“Working people in Newark are looking for ways to resist the grinding effects of the capitalist economic crisis,” said Robinson. Newark is one of the poorest cities in the country, with 28 percent of the population living below the official poverty line, she pointed out. “We present demands to advance the interests of working people,” she said. “As part of that, the SWP calls for withdrawing

now all U.S. and other ‘coalition’ troops from Iraq and Afghanistan.”

“I got a strong response to our call to socialize health care to provide universal, federally guaranteed, lifetime medical coverage for everyone in this country, and no cuts in present or future Social Security benefits,” said Rosenstock.

The socialist candidates are now stepping up their outreach efforts. On February 23, Rosenstock spoke at a vigil for immigrant rights in Newark. “The internationalization of the working class through immigration strengthens our class in this country,” Rosenstock said. The Socialist Workers campaign opposes restrictions on the right of immigrants to live and work here, she said. The SWP campaign opposes the McCain-Kennedy “Secure America and Orderly Immigration” bill, or a similar “temporary worker” proposal pushed by the Bush administration. These “guest worker” bills are designed to reinforce divisions in the working class and maintain a permanent category of workers stripped of rights in order to guarantee a reservoir of superexploited labor for the bosses, Rosenstock pointed out.

THE MILITANT

‘It brings out meaning of unionization’

“The ‘Militant’ is informative about labor worldwide. It gives us a better understanding of what other countries are up against. It helps us out on organizing and brings out the meaning of unionization.”

—Samuel Johnson & Wilbur Willie
Tse Bonito, New Mexico



Wilbur Willie, political action committee chairman (left), and Samuel Johnson, president, of UMW Local 1332, which organizes McKinley mine in Tse Bonito, New Mexico.

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

Pentagon renews focus on Africa, Latin America, China

(Second in a series)

BY SAM MANUEL

WASHINGTON—Global repositioning of U.S. forces to fight the “war on terror” from many locations simultaneously and for years to come is a centerpiece of the Pentagon’s 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR). The secretary of defense prepares the report once each presidential term to present the main lines of U.S. imperialism’s military strategy and priorities.

An article last week described how the proposals in the current QDR build on what the Department of Defense dubbed the transformation of the U.S. military in 2001. (See “Pentagon: Washington faces ‘long war,’” in March 13 *Militant*.)

The 2006 review explicitly extends the U.S. military’s “key geographic operational area” from its 2001 focus on Europe, the Middle East, and Northeast Asia to include Africa and Latin America. It singles out the government of Venezuela as a particular threat to Washington.

“China has the greatest potential to compete militarily with the United States,” the defense review also warns. It says Washington will attempt to dissuade Beijing or any other “hostile power” from pursuing that course, but it must also face “the possibility that cooperative approaches by themselves may fail to preclude future conflict.”

Africa and Latin America

The U.S. military has strengthened its presence in Africa in relation to Paris and London, Washington’s main competitors for markets and resources on the continent. The Pentagon has established a Combined Joint Task Force at the Horn of Africa in Kenya, Ethiopia, and Djibouti. The U.S. European Command heads a “counterterrorism” initiative involving troops from nine African countries in the Trans-Sahara region—Algeria, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, and Tunisia. U.S. combat pilots are training pilots in Niger. And the U.S. military is building on its collaboration with governments in West Africa after the 2003 military intervention in Liberia, says the QDR.

U.S. defense secretary Donald Rumsfeld visited the north African countries of Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco in February. This first visit to Algeria by a U.S. defense secretary was aimed at deepening cooperation by Algiers in Washington’s “war on terrorism.” While there, Rumsfeld discussed possible arms sales to Algeria.

The defense review emphasizes the need for more U.S. military attention to Latin America. It asserts that slow economic growth and stark economic inequality have led to a resurgence of “populist authoritarian movements,” such as that in Venezuela.

Washington is leading a course of confrontation against Caracas. On February 2, Rumsfeld likened Venezuela’s president Hugo Chávez to Hitler. Rumsfeld said he is “concerned” not only about Venezuela, but about the recent election of Evo Morales as the president of Bolivia. A leader of the Movement toward Socialism, Morales has pledged a close alliance with Caracas and Havana.

India vs. China

In a section on “emerging powers,” the QDR says Beijing continues to build up its military capabilities in order to im-

prove its ability to “project power beyond its borders.” It adds that U.S. government policy remains to encourage China to play a constructive role on common security issues—including “terrorism, proliferation, narcotics, and piracy.”

The review notes that China has accelerated modernization of its military to develop new options in a potential conflict with Taiwan—a reference to the capitalist enclave on the Chinese island across the straits from the mainland, which is backed by Washington and Tokyo.

The QDR indicates that another emerging power in the region, India, is different from China and should be treated by Washington as a “key strategic partner.” The White House soon implemented this course with its nuclear accord with New Delhi (see article below).

“Bush’s push to transform the relationship between the world’s most powerful and most populous democracies into a strategic alliance locked in by intense military, nuclear, scientific, and agricultural cooperation amount to an overarching response to the expansion of Chinese influence in Asia,” said an article in the March 3–4 *International Herald Tribune*, titled “Nuclear deal with India a sign of new U.S. focus.” It added that Beijing responded with “grumpiness.”

‘Coalitions of the willing’

A related Conference on Security Policy, held in Munich February 4, registered further steps by Washington in expanding NATO into a worldwide imperialist military alliance under U.S. command. It also showed that more and more governments in Europe—including those that have clashed with Washington over foreign policy, such as Paris and Berlin—are

U.S. gov’t uses nuclear deal to bring India into its fold

BY MICHAEL ITALIE

A March 2 deal signed by U.S. president George Bush and Indian prime minister Manmohan Singh makes available to India for the first time U.S. nonmilitary nuclear technology in exchange for opening up two-thirds of India’s nuclear plants to international “inspection.” The agreement registers another step in Washington’s effort to bring New Delhi into its political orbit, which was marked last June by a 10-year military pact between the two governments.

In Pakistan two days later, Bush praised that country’s government as a “major non-NATO ally.” The U.S. president also cited the need to avoid repetition of past “proliferation problems” by Islamabad, and for more progress in crushing the Taliban and other “terrorist groups” operating in its territory, before a nuclear deal similar to the one with India can be considered for Pakistan. It is an offer that doesn’t leave Pakistan’s president Pervez Musharraf with any option other than to accept.

In the last two years, Washington successfully pressed the Pakistani rulers to end trade in nuclear technology with Iran, north Korea, and other countries U.S. imperialism has labeled “rogue states.” While in Pakistan, Bush also withdrew objections to a proposed 1,600-mile natural gas pipeline from Iran to Pakistan and India.

Under the nuclear deal with New Delhi, the Indian government will classify 14 of its 22 nuclear plants as for civilian nuclear energy production. The UN International

Australia to send more troops to Afghanistan



SYDNEY, Australia—SAS special forces from Australia are pictured above on patrol in southern Afghanistan. Defense Minister Robert Hill confirmed February 20 that his government will send another 200 soldiers there by July. This will increase Australian imperialism’s troop commitment in Afghanistan to more than 500. About 110 troops will reinforce the 190 Australian commandos already operating with U.S. forces in the mountainous Pakistan border region. Others will be deployed with Dutch soldiers as part of the NATO occupation force.

—RON POULSEN

being drawn into U.S.-led “coalitions of the willing” on a case-by-case basis.

“We have begun an historic transformation of NATO,” Rumsfeld said at that meeting, and established other military coalitions that have drawn into action a wide range of governments under U.S. leadership. He pointed to the increased combat role European governments have assumed in military operations in Afghanistan under NATO’s command, and Washington’s Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI). Under the PSI, Washington and its allies have conducted piracy on the high seas—boarding ships, and sometimes confiscating their cargo, after alleging the vessels may be transporting material that could be used in building

“weapons of mass destruction.”

When Rumsfeld was asked whether Japan and Australia could be included in NATO, he replied, “It is clear that the old NATO...defending the NATO treaty area, is a NATO of the past.” He added that “linkage of some kind” between NATO and the Japanese and Australian militaries would make sense.

Rumsfeld also pressed NATO member states to increase military spending. “Today 3.7 percent of the gross domestic product of the United States goes toward our national defense,” he said. “Only six of our 25 NATO allies spend even 2 percent or more of their GDP on defense, and 19 Allies—I repeat, 19 NATO allies—do not even spend 2 percent.”

Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) will be able to inspect these now for the first time, even though India is not a signatory to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). The other eight facilities are slated for nuclear arms production and will not be subject to IAEA review.

Under the NPT, the U.S. and other imperialist powers, as well as Moscow and Beijing, are allowed a monopoly of nuclear weapons. The Israeli government, although it is known to have a nuclear arsenal and has never signed the NPT, has also been permitted to acquire whatever nuclear technology it wishes. At the same time, the treaty subjects other governments—primarily those of semi-colonial countries—to dictates such as regular reports on and “inspections” of their nuclear facilities.

Closer ties to New Delhi provide the U.S. rulers with greater access to strategic sea routes from the Middle East to East Asia and North Africa and secure the second most populous country in the world as a bulwark against neighboring China. The June 2005 military treaty included plans to “expand collaboration relating to missile defense,” aimed at China. On February 27 India’s prime minister told parliament that with the nuclear energy deal “decades-old restrictions [are] being set aside to create space for India’s emergence as a full member of a new nuclear world order.”

According to World Bank figures, about half of India’s population of 1.1 billion does not have access to electric-

ity. Nuclear power today supplies about 3 percent of the country’s electrical power. The figure is expected to reach 25 percent by 2050.

U.S. Congress must vote on the March 2 deal. Rep. Edward Markey of Massachusetts, senior Democrat on the House Energy and Commerce Committee, said the NPT has “protected the world from nuclear destruction for over 30 years” and making an exception for India “has blown a hole in the nuclear rules.”

In 1998 Washington had imposed sanctions against New Delhi for carrying out nuclear weapons tests.

IAEA head Mohammed ElBaradei greeted the accord as a “milestone, timely for ongoing efforts to consolidate the non-proliferation regime.” U.S. undersecretary of state Nicholas Burns said India deserved special treatment, defending its history of development of nuclear technology in line with U.S. interests. “Contrast that with Iran and North Korea,” Burns said the day of the signing. “Both acted against the wishes of the international community.”

French president Jacques Chirac signed a similar agreement with the government of India in February, and French energy companies want to gain an advantage over their U.S. rivals. “We are the only ones who can propose technology, equipment, everything to India,” said France’s ambassador to India. “Russia has less sophisticated technology and the Americans have not been constructing nuclear plants for ages.”

Miners in Mexico end three-day strike

Continued from front page refinery in central Mexico.

At the same time, the rest of the 270,000-member National Union of Mine, Metal and Allied Workers (SNT-MMS) struck for two days in response to government attempts to intervene in their union and replace the union’s general secretary.

Workers reported that safety is an ongoing problem at the open-pit Cananea mine, which employs 1,300 union members.

“The biggest problems are with the explosives,” said Ernesto Quijada, a contract worker who is currently installing walkways at the mine. He described how one worker lost his leg when the loader he was operating caused an unexploded charge to go off.

“We went on strike because we want an agreement with Grupo Mexico to resolve all the safety problems that we have in the mines,” Guadalupe Coronado, general secretary of SNTMMS Section 65, which organizes the Cananea mine, told the *Militant* in a March 5 interview here.

“We don’t want the loss of life or limb.” Besides the problems with explosives, Coronado cited poor maintenance of trucks and other equipment, and the danger of silicosis from breathing rock dust. Under pressure from families of those killed, the company resumed efforts March 3 to recover the bodies of the 65 coal miners at Pasta de Conchos, near the town of San Juan de Sabinas in Coahuila state. Many fear the company will close the mine, leaving their loved ones entombed and preventing a full investigation.

Most of the families are refusing to accept compensation from the company until they receive an explanation of how the miners died and who was responsible. More than 200 relatives of miners marched down the main street of Nueva Rosita to the company’s offices March 5 demanding, “Justice, justice, punish those responsible!”

As miners and others pressed the question of safety, Mexico’s labor secretary, Francisco Salazar, announced that the government no longer

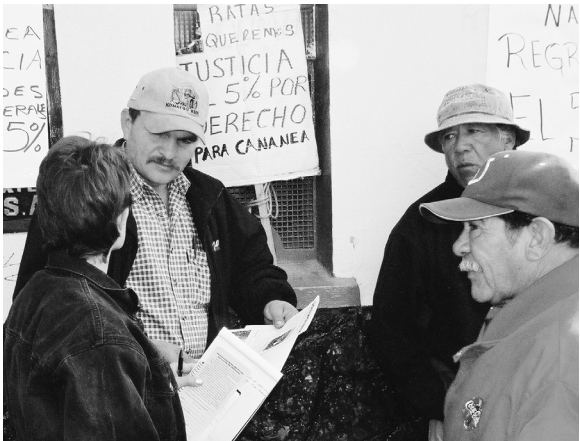
recognized Napoleón Gómez Urrutia as general secretary of the union and that instead Elías Morales, an opponent of Gómez Urrutia, was the new union head.

Workers at silver mines, steel mills, and other workplaces organized by the SNTMMS struck March 1 in response to this governmental interference in the internal affairs of their union. The federal government called the walkouts illegal.

The government says it is investigating Gómez Urrutia for allegedly mishandling \$55 million that Grupo Mexico paid union members to settle a dispute stemming from its purchase of the previously state-owned Cananea and La Caridad copper mines.

Miners in Cananea have a long history of struggle, including a general strike in 1906 that helped spark the Mexican revolution. The copper mines there were nationalized in 1961.

In 1989 the government of Carlos Sali-



Militant/José Aravena
Militant reporter Naomi Craine (left) outside union hall in Cananea, Mexico, with retired miners.

nas sent in the army to smash a strike by workers at Cananea in order to pave the way for the sell-off of the mines. Grupo Mexico—which owns mines, railroads, and other enterprises throughout Mexico as well as in the United States and South America—took over in 1990.

Simultaneous with the strike, a group called the Association of Retired Miners of Section 65, made up of workers who lost their jobs in the 1989 strike, blockaded the Section 65 union hall, demanding a share of the \$55 million and calling for the removal of Gómez Urrutia. They are maintaining a daily presence in front of the hall and refuse to allow union members to enter.

Asked why they are occupying the place, Salvador Stabroff said, “The union is not bad, but there’s problems with the center.”

Workers began returning to their jobs March 2 at Cananea and most other worksites. “We are showing we don’t want to stop production, but we want respect and safe working conditions,” Coronado said.

Betsy McDonald contributed to this article.

Nearly 300 new endorsers back labor defense case

BY PAUL MAILHOT

SALT LAKE CITY—The two-month campaign to sign up by April 1 some 500 new supporters of the fight to defend the *Militant* against the Co-Op coal boss harassment lawsuit in Utah is making progress. Five weeks into the effort, 278 union locals, prominent individuals, and others have endorsed the Militant Fighting Fund, which is helping to raise funds and endorsements for this fight.

In New York City, a union member and supporter of the *Militant* invited co-workers, family, and friends to his house in the Bronx to hear about the *Militant*’s fight against the retaliatory suit. The legal action by the coal company also targets the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) and 16 former Co-Op miners who fought to win UMWA representation at the mine. After a presentation and

discussion, three new people endorsed and donated \$180.

Several new endorsements arrived from Australia, Sweden, and Finland last week. Robert Coombs, secretary of the Sydney branch of the Maritime Union of Australia, and Craig Bulley, a presenter for Workers Radio Sydney, added their names. Workers Radio had earlier featured a program on the fight against the lawsuit by C.W. Mining—owner of the Co-Op mine—and asked for an update on the case.

A brochure in Swedish about the case is

now available at www.themilitant.com.

Contributions last week totaled almost \$5,000. This included sizable donations from International Longshore and Warehouse Union Local 19 in Seattle; the United Transportation Union in Minnesota; and in Canada, from United Steelworkers Local 1005 in Hamilton, Ontario.

Endorsements and contributions can be sent to the Militant Fighting Fund at P.O. Box 520994, Salt Lake City, Utah 84152; Fax: (801) 924-5910; E-mail: MilitantFightingFund@yahoo.com

Utah forum supporters push back eviction threat

BY JACOB PERASSO

PRICE, Utah—“Supporters of the Militant Labor Forum here have

pushed back the threat of immediate eviction from our hall,” said Alyson Kennedy at a March 4 forum on recent

developments in the coalfields in North America.

The Militant Labor Forum hall is located, along with other offices, on the second floor of a building managed by the Far West Bank in downtown Price.

On February 21, a manager of the bank informed supporters of the *Militant*, who help organize the forums, that they will have to get out of the hall by the end of the month. “You can go somewhere else to peddle your poison,” the manager told a couple of the volunteers, Kennedy explained.

“Later in the week the landlord also threatened to change the locks on the doors,” Kennedy said. “This is an attack on the right of working people to come together and discuss important issues facing workers today, like the need to unionize the mines to enforce safety.”

“By winning support from workers in the area and hiring legal counsel we have been able to negotiate effectively. The landlord is now offering this month’s rent free in exchange for breaking the lease early at the end of March,” Kennedy stated.

Volunteers signed up 12 subscribers to the *Militant* in Price and nearby towns over the March 4–5 weekend. They also distributed a statement outlining the facts of the case and calling on working people to support organizers of the Militant Labor Forum in their effort to maintain a hall in Price, whether at the current location or a new one.

‘Militant’ sub renewal campaign

Continued from front page Mexico, which owns the mines and smelter plants workers struck in Mexico, also owns Asarco, the copper giant that forced Steelworkers on strike last year in Arizona and Texas.

There was a similar response by working people to the *Militant* across the United States and other countries last week, resulting in 243 new and repeat subscribers—the best week yet in the seven-week effort to increase the paper’s long-term readership.

Des Moines had a bang-up week, selling 21 subs, including five renewals, said Joe Swanson from that Midwest city. New and repeat readers included a number of meat packers and members of the United Food and Commercial Workers in Perry and Marshalltown, Iowa, he said. “One UFCW member from Omaha, Nebraska, renewed his sub for a year at a special Militant Labor Forum here March 4 that featured Bill Estrada, a coal miner from Utah” (see front-page ad).

Similar forums took place in Miami, Houston, and Philadelphia that weekend. Those present at the four events donated more than \$4,000 to the *Militant*, bringing the amount raised at such events in the last three weeks to over \$12,500.

“We sold 23 papers and 10 subscriptions to the 200 miners and others participating in the March 7 demonstration in Montgomery, Alabama, called by the UMWA,” reported Maurice Williams from Birmingham. “Over the last five days we sold 160 copies and 19 subscriptions to the *Militant* here, including a number of subscriptions people bought at coal mine portals, working-class neighborhoods, and at the yearly festival in Selma celebrating the 1965 Selma-to-Montgomery voting rights march.”

Three readers of the paper sold 25 subscriptions and nearly 250 copies of the *Militant* to workers attending the March 7 labor rally in Frankfort, Kentucky, said Dan Fein from New York.

These results bode well for meeting the international quota of 1,350 renewals and new subs by March 13, when the current circulation campaign ends. You can be part of the effort into the homestretch! Contact the *Militant* to order a bundle or distributors nearest you to join teams they organize (see directory on page 8.)

'Militant' Subscription Renewal Campaign January 21–March 13, 2006 Week 6 of 7				
Country/City	Quota	Sold	%	Renewals
AUSTRALIA	30	27	90%	23
NEW ZEALAND				
Auckland	30	28	93%	16
Christchurch	16	12	75%	2
N.Z. Total	46	40	87%	18
U.S.				
Detroit	4	6	150%	3
Albany, NY	16	18	113%	6
Washington, DC	35	38	109%	18
Seattle	35	36	103%	19
Twin Cities	70	67	96%	29
Des Moines	85	80	94%	30
Miami	70	66	94%	27
San Francisco	60	55	92%	27
New York	135	123	91%	61
Houston	65	56	86%	18
Price	70	60	86%	28
Chicago	40	34	85%	17
Philadelphia	60	50	83%	24
Pittsburgh	40	33	83%	12
Boston	40	30	75%	9
Tampa	4	3	75%	1
Birmingham	40	28	70%	7
Atlanta	60	41	68%	13
Salt Lake City	30	20	67%	7
Los Angeles	75	49	65%	25
Newark	65	40	62%	19
New Orleans		4		1
U.S. Total	1099	937	85%	401
ICELAND	12	10	83%	3
SWEDEN	36	28	78%	17
UK				
Edinburgh	22	20	91%	11
London	50	35	70%	23
UK Total	72	55	76%	34
CANADA	75	56	75%	35
Int'l totals	1370	1153	85%	531
Should be	1350	1157	86%	

— ON THE PICKET LINE —

Teamsters strike is solid against Sikorsky Aircraft

STRATFORD, Connecticut—Teamster Local 1150 members remain strong and united since they walked out on strike February 20 here against Sikorsky Aircraft. The giant plant makes helicopters both for commercial and military use. Workers report the company wants to increase health-care copayments for the local's 3,600 members and raise their weekly payroll deductions from \$25 to \$75 for families and from \$8 to \$16 for individuals over a three-year contract.

"This strike is in response to company greed," Barbara Belotti, a striker with five years' seniority, told the *Militant*. "The United Technologies CEO got \$88 million last year and won't leave our health care alone." Sikorsky is a division of United Technologies Corporation.

Picketing is carried out seven days a week. Workers are also on strike at four other smaller plants in West Haven, Bridgeport, and Shelton, Connecticut, and West Palm Beach, Florida.

—Dan Fein

Union forces Bronx, New York, packing plant to reverse firing

BRONX, New York—The bosses

at Garden Manor Farms, a meat plant in the Hunts Point Meat Market here, fired Kevin Carr late in the shift on February 21 for "insubordination." The workers' union, United Food and Commercial Workers Local 342, helped him win his job back. Workers at the plant struck twice a few years ago to win a union election and their first union contract.

Over the two days following the firing, union members carried out a job action to show unity and support for Carr. On February 24, the union delegate and shop steward met with the bosses to demand the firing be retracted. Afterward they returned to the shop floor, where they stopped production and organized all the workers to hear the delegate announce that Carr would

FBI raids New York City Labor Council offices

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

NEW YORK—In an attack on the labor movement here, more than 20 FBI agents raided the offices of the New York City Central Labor Council March 2. The federal agents claimed they were investigating Brian McLaughlin, the council's president for more than a decade. McLaughlin has also served for 14

years as a state assemblyman in Flushing, Queens, in New York's 25th district.

The Central Labor Council, which is officially chartered by the AFL-CIO, has affiliates representing more than 1 million workers here in nearly 400 local unions. These include transit workers, teachers, dock workers, and janitors.

According to media reports, FBI agents sealed off and occupied the labor council offices for eight hours, ordering employees there to go home. The FBI then carted off computers and more than 50 boxes of files containing union books and records.

James Margolin, a spokesman for the FBI's New York office, told the *New York Sun* that the raid was part of an "ongoing investigation," which began years ago, prior to Sept. 11, 2001. The FBI, U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Racketeering and Fraud, and the city's Department of Investigation are all involved in the probe. These agencies claim to be looking into whether McLaughlin was involved in "bid-rigging" with city electrical contractors to help them secure streetlight and traffic-signal contracts. The federal cops also say they're investigating whether electrical contractors gave McLaughlin use of an American Express card.

said, "I didn't think we were going to win. They gave us a hard time for three hours before backing down."

—Dan Fein

Chauvinist U.S. port protests

Continued from front page

February 27 to "ban companies owned by foreign governments from controlling operations at U.S. ports," according to a news release issued by Clinton.

At the same time, top officials of the Teamsters, International Longshoremen's Association, and other trade unions organized rallies at ports at the end of February around the chauvinist theme "Goodbye Dubai."

In a February 24 statement Teamsters president James Hoffa claimed that giving DP World access to the ports would create "a greater risk of infiltration." He added, "We should be beefing up security at our ports." The International Longshore and Warehouse Union took the opportunity to call for tougher enforcement of the Maritime Transportation Security Act of 2002, including demands on the government to "thoroughly screen all vehicle drivers and riders at every port terminal gate."

DP World had been scheduled to take over the British-based Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company on March 2. The latter runs cargo terminals in Baltimore; Miami; New Orleans; Newark, New Jersey; and Philadelphia, and a cruise terminal in New York. The \$6.8 billion acquisition was approved March 6 by Britain's Court of Appeals, clearing all legal hurdles in that country.

On February 27 the White House approved a proposal from DP World for a 45-day U.S. government review of the deal.

President George Bush and his allies are taking advantage of the Democratic-led anti-Dubai campaign to paint themselves as taking the moral high ground in the ruling-class debate on how to win "the war on terrorism."

"What I find interesting is it's OK for a British company to manage some ports, but not OK for a company from a country that is a valuable ally in the war on terror," Bush said at the end of February. "The UAE has been a valuable partner in fighting the war on terror."

In a March 1 editorial titled "Profiles

in Hypocrisy," *Investor's Business Daily* said, "A Democratic Party that habitually accuses Bush and the GOP of racism itself engages in stereotyping and profiling of the worst kind, hanging out a sign saying, 'Arabs need not apply.'"

While bourgeois politicians and labor officials have been pressing this chauvinist line, many dockworkers have not been taken in. After running a number of comments by New Yorkers expressing "security" concerns over going ahead with the port deal, a February 25 *Washington Post* article noted, "The one place in New York, curiously, where the debate sounded almost muted was on the docks." It said that many workers "took the age-old view that a boss is a boss and a contract is greased."

— 25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO —



March 20, 1981

WASHINGTON, D.C.—The United Mine Workers of America hit the Reagan administration and the coal bosses with a powerful show of force. On March 9 and 10 more than 170,000 miners stopped work and about 8,000 rallied in Washington to protest Reagan's announced cutbacks in the black lung program for miners.

The right to organize a walkout like this, called a memorial, is contained in the union contract. And the miners put it to good use.

This is certainly the most powerful union response to Reagan's budget cuts, and it is one of the most important signs yet of American workers fighting back against the capitalist economic crisis.

The miners fought hard to win black lung benefits. They provide some income compensation, safety standards, and special medical programs for miners and their survivors.

Ohio: AK Steel locks out 2,700 workers



Militant/Jay Ressler

MIDDLETOWN, Ohio—Workers picket AK Steel plant here March 5. The company locked out 2,700 unionists, members of Armco Employees Independent Federation, after six-year contract expired March 1. Working people from area drop off food and honk in solidarity. Company is demanding pension and health-care concessions.

—MAURA DELUCA

be back on the job Monday morning. "This proves it was worth the fight to get the union here," shop steward Robert Roman told the *Militant*. Carr

A statement released by the Central Labor Council (CLC) the day of the raid said, "There are currently no charges or allegations against the Central Labor Council or any of its officers, directors, or employees. The Central Labor Council is fully cooperating with this investigation."

An editorial in the March 3 *New York Post*, titled "New York's Union Mob," exposed the antilabor venom of the city's capitalist rulers behind the "antiracketeering" veneer of this raid. It showed this is a probe by the ruling class targeting the entire labor movement and, in particular, unions that have resisted takeback demands by the employers and city and state authorities.

"Gotham labor unions have a sordid record of every type of corruption imaginable," the *Post* said. "This may seem harsh, but labor unions lately don't regard laws—or even generally accepted moral codes of behavior—as anything that applies to them." The *Post* singled out the transit workers union, charging that TWU Local 100 "held up the entire city during Christmas week by illegally shutting down the buses and subways—sending New Yorkers out into the freezing cold, and robbing businesses and other workers of \$1 billion."



March 19, 1956

The Montgomery Improvement Association, which is conducting the magnificent protest movement against Jim Crow segregation on the bus lines of Montgomery, Alabama, has issued an urgent appeal for funds. The bulk of this money was raised until recently by the underpaid Negro people of Montgomery through voluntary contributions of their nickels, dimes and dollars.

But the struggle to batter down color segregation on the bus lines of Montgomery is not the concern of the Negro community alone. On the contrary. It is a cause which is vital to all of the working people of this country and especially to the organized labor movement. The inspiring action organized and led by the Montgomery Improvement Association has done more to prepare the ground for the union organization of the open-shop South than anything the leaders of the combined AFL-CIO have done in the past decade.



March 15, 1931

The splendid revolutionary struggle of the Indian masses against the rule of British imperialism has suffered another betrayal by their leader, Gandhi. It is not the first time that the "little man" played this ignominious role. In 1922, when the struggle for independence reached proportions threatening to the Empire, Gandhi was again at the helm of the movement and then, as now, he was there to call off the fight at the moment when the ferment in the masses reached a point too dangerous to the tottering rule of Great Britain.

Britain's fierce struggle against Indian independence is easily understood when it is realized that without India, there is no British Empire. This is the key to the question. Gandhi and the Nationalist Party represent the interests of the native bourgeois and petty-bourgeois classes and in the present struggle, as in all others, they reflect the deep fermentation in the masses.

Cuban combatants host tour on book of interviews with Chinese-Cuban generals

BY MARTÍN KOPPEL

HAVANA—"How is it possible for Cuba today to send nearly 20,000 doctors to Venezuela, and 2,500 doctors to Pakistan as volunteers, just as we previously sent thousands of combatants to Angola to defend that country's independence?" asked Brig. Gen. Moisés Sío Wong.

"It's possible because we have a socialist revolution, a revolution that has educated our people in the spirit of solidarity and internationalism. And that's why this book is important for the new generations. It explains what the Cuban Revolution is about, what socialism is about."

Sío Wong was speaking at the National Combatants Center in Havana to an enthusiastic audience composed of multiple generations of revolutionary fighters as well as students from a nearby high school. The February 16 meeting of 125 people was one of seven such events held in Havana and in cities across central Cuba to present *Our History Is Still Being Written: The Story of Three Chinese-Cuban Generals in the Cuban Revolution*, recently published by Pathfinder Press in both English and Spanish.

In the book Armando Choy, Gustavo Chui, and Sío Wong recount how, as young rebels of Chinese-Cuban ancestry, they joined the 1956–58 revolutionary war that overthrew the U.S.-backed Batista dictatorship and opened the door to the first socialist revolution in the Americas. Each of the three, who became generals in Cuba's Revolutionary Armed Forces, today continue to shoulder important leadership responsibilities.

The book was launched at the February 3–12 Havana International Book Fair (see coverage in the February 27 issue). The following week it was presented at three events in Havana and in four cities and towns where some of the events recounted in the book occurred: Matanzas, Santo Domingo, Santa Clara, and Fomento.

The Association of Combatants of the Cuban Revolution, an organization that brings together 300,000 Cubans who have participated in revolutionary struggles at home or internationalist missions abroad, hosted the event.

Each of the meetings held outside Havana was hosted by the city government and the provincial Communist Party of Matanzas, Villa Clara, or Sancti Spiritu. Local leaders of the Communist Party and the government warmly welcomed the speakers and joined them on the platform. Altogether, nearly 600 people attended the events, most of them revo-

lutionary combatants—including many comrades-in-arms of Choy, Chui, or Sío Wong—as well as a number of high school and university students.

Two of the generals spoke at each of the events, as well as Mary-Alice Waters, Pathfinder president and editor of the book, and Iraida Aguirrechu of Editora Política, the publishing house of the Communist Party of Cuba.

Introducing Waters at the National Combatants Center, Aguirrechu noted that in recent years the national leadership of the Combatants Association has hosted a number of meetings—both in Havana and other cities—to present Pathfinder books featuring interviews with Cuban revolutionary combatants.

Waters explained that Pathfinder has published *Our History Is Still Being Written* "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."

Meeting in Havana's Chinatown

One of the meetings was held at the House of Chinese Arts and Traditions in Havana's historic Chinatown. Most in the audience of 60 were involved in various Chinese cultural activities, from members of Chinese societies—founded in the 19th and early 20th centuries—to a group of young Ministry of Interior immigration officials taking Chinese languages classes there. Many expressed pride in what they called "our three generals" and were excited about the new book.

"This book is a dream become reality," said Sío Wong. He told the audience how *Our History Is Still Being Written* came about through the course of several interviews over four years.

Chui explained that the new title describes how tens of thousands of Chinese immigrants were brought to Cuba as indentured labor in the 19th century, and their weight in Cuban history. "Thousands of Chinese fought in our independence wars, including some all-Chinese battalions. As Gen. Gonzalo de Quesada said at the time, 'There was not a single Chinese-Cuban deserter. There was not a single Chinese-Cuban traitor.'"

For more than a century, Sío Wong said, there was discrimination against the Chinese in Cuba, especially poor Chinese-Cubans. "It took a socialist revolution to end that systematic discrimination," he noted.

The example of the Cuban Revolution needs to be known worldwide, Sío Wong said. "We are working to ensure this book is translated to Chinese too. In China little is known about our revolution."

It is no secret to anyone, he said, that between the mid-1960s and the end of the 1980s, relations between China and Cuba were not good. For example, he noted, "Chinese troops served as advisers to mercenary forces from Zaire invading Angola," while Cuban volunteer troops were fighting alongside the Angolan army to beat back the imperialist-backed invasion by the South African and Zairean regimes.

As a result, during that period "nothing was published in China about Cuba,

and nothing was said here about China," Sío Wong said. "That's why this book is so important today."

After the speakers' remarks, several members of the audience took the



Militant photos by Brian Taylor

Above: Carmen Eng, director of House of Chinese Arts and Traditions, speaks February 15 at launching of *Our History Is Still Being Written* in Havana's Chinatown. Left: veteran Cuban revolutionary combatant takes floor at similar event in Fomento, Cuba, three days later.

floor. Meiling Wong, a 19-year-old martial arts instructor and Tai Chi champion, said, "This book allows us, as young descendants of Chinese, to read about our roots. It's a source of pride." Carmen Eng, director of the House of Chinese Arts and Traditions, spoke along similar lines, as did Roberto Vargas Lee, president of the Cuban Wushu Association, and Li San, a leader of the Chung Wah Casino, a major cultural center in Havana's Chinatown.

Sugar workers in struggle

In Santo Domingo, a town of 26,000 in what is now Villa Clara province, the exchange between the speakers and the working-class audience brought to life Cuba's revolutionary history. The meeting was held at the National Research Center on Tropical Root Vegetables (INIVIT), which, workers at the facility said, played an important role in developing strains of pest-resistant plants as part of Cuba's successful efforts to overcome the food shortages of the 1990s.

Santo Domingo, residents reported, had the largest proportion of combatants of any town in the province during the revolutionary struggle. It was a stronghold of the sugar workers union, and one of the towns that sugar workers took over during the 1955 strike of 200,000 cane cutters and mill workers.

Choy spoke along with Chui. He explained that he was born in nearby Fomento and went to high school in Santa Clara, where he became a member of the July 26 Movement. In May 1958 he joined a July 26 guerrilla unit led by Commander Víctor Bordón, which later that year became part of the Rebel Army's Column 8 led by Ernesto Che Guevara. "In Column 8 there were six of us who were sons of Chinese immigrants," he said.

"The victory of this struggle, led by Fidel [Castro], opened the door to a total change. At the time, 99 percent of us didn't consider ourselves socialists. We didn't learn about socialism through documents," Choy said, referring to the young ranks of the Rebel Army. "It was through the measures Fidel led us to carry out that benefited the Cuban people."

One of those speaking from the audience at the Santo Domingo meeting was Edelberto González, who was Choy's commander when he joined the July 26 guerrilla front in the Escambray moun-

tains. González, known by his nom-de-guerre Captain Cente, recounted how Choy led a combat unit in storming the Santo Domingo army barracks in the days before the Jan. 1, 1959, revolutionary victory.

"Today we can be proud of what the Cuban people accomplished. Because of the blood we shed, no imperialist power can come in and take away what we have won," González said.

After the program, Ricardo Uz and other workers described how they had organized underground cells of the July 26 Movement at the George Washington sugar mill, owned by dictator Fulgencio Batista. "In 1956, on the last day of the harvest, after we had all left the mill, we blew up Batista's warehouses, destroying 250,000 sacks of sugar—his entire harvest there," he said with a grin. About a third of the 300 mill workers were organized into revolutionary activity.

Experiences in Angola

The three generals also drew on their experiences in Angola told in *Our History Is Still Being Written*. Speaking at the National Combatants Center in Havana, Chui noted, "More than 300,000 Cubans went to Angola between 1975 and 1990, all of them volunteers," responding to the request for aid by the newly independent government of Angola to defeat the imperialist-backed invasion by South Africa's apartheid regime. "Angola is a country rich in resources, but we didn't go there for the resources, not even for a barrel of oil. When we returned, we brought back only our dead," Chui said. He explained that as a result of these efforts, "we defeated the apartheid regime and won independence for Namibia."

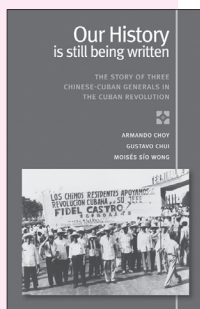
The presentation of *Our History* received substantial media coverage. It was covered by the daily *Granma*, Prensa Latina news agency, the online cultural magazine *La Jiribilla*, and several radio stations. The Santa Clara event was covered by the provincial paper *Vanguardia*, the national evening TV news, and the Havana TV channel, which ran a 20-minute segment featuring the remarks by Waters.

Over the course of the book fair and subsequent events, some 750 copies of *Our History Is Still Being Written* were sold or distributed to individuals, organizations, libraries, and other institutions.

Our History Is Still Being Written

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

ARMANDO CHOY
GUSTAVO CHUI
MOISÉS SÍO WONG
\$20



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

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Alabama miners rally

Continued from front page

made their way from Birmingham to Montgomery, the motorcade of miners stretched for over a mile. Upon arrival, they marched to the front of the statehouse, chanting, “Safety Now!” Chants continued until Daryl Dewberry, UMWA District 20 international vice president, began the rally.

“We almost had 300 coal miners subjected to disaster at the PinnOak and Shoal Creek operations,” Dewberry said. “I say no more!”

The decision to shut down the mines and assemble in the state capitol was announced at a February 21 meeting in Brookwood, Alabama, at the hall of UMWA Local 2245. The meeting came two weeks after federal inspectors ordered the Oak Grove mine, owned by PinnOak Resources, evacuated. Union members told the inspectors that management had sent three shifts to work after being informed that explosive levels of methane gas had been found in an area of the mine.

Three days after the meeting an explosion occurred at the Shoal Creek mine. According to UMWA international safety representative Tom Wilson, there were 140 people working underground at the time of the blast.

“In both of these examples, it was union workers that stepped up and forced the authorities to take action,” Wilson said.

“They said they had an ignition at 1:30 a.m., but it was 10 minutes to four before we got out,” said Richard Glasgow, a miner at Shoal Creek who was underground when the explosion occurred. “Instead of evacuating, they tried to keep the men working. The union called MSHA, which told the bosses to pull the men out.” After the evacuation, multiple explosions occurred inside the mine.

Demand for more inspectors

Both the Oak Grove and Shoal Creek mines were inspected by the state Department of Mine Safety in the weeks before the near disasters occurred. In both cases, citing resource constraints, the inspectors did incomplete checks and did not venture into the areas where later problems originated.

“There are only three state inspectors protecting the lives of 6,000 miners in this state,” Dewberry told the rally. Lieutenant Governor Lucy Baxley, who addressed the rally, said the Depart-

ment of Mine Safety has received only \$499,000 in federal funding.

The UMWA has filed a lawsuit charging that “the health and safety of the coal miners in the State of Alabama are being compromised” by the lack of funding for inspectors. The union says that by its own admission, the state would need to spend between \$3.6 and \$4 million annually to carry out the necessary inspections. The state mine safety office is responsible for 550 mines and quarries, 50 of which are coal mines that are required by law to be inspected every 45 days.

When the mine inspectors do issue citations, the mining companies often ignore the penalties. PinnOak Resources, for example, was fined \$476,561 for 776 safety violations at its Oak Grove mine in 2005, and has paid only \$144,791.

Other speakers at the rally included state senators Edward McCain and Bobby Singleton, and state AFL-CIO president Stewart Burkhalter.

Lack of training

“We need to teach the new miners safety, ’cause the company is not doing it,” T.C. Cole, who works at the Oak Grove mine, called out during the rally.

Many miners commented on how the bosses have whittled away at training new miners.

“If it wasn’t for these old timers the new miners wouldn’t know anything,” Chastity Farr, a new miner who worked previously in mine construction, told the *Militant*. She said the new miners classes here are inadequate. “There are many serious accidents among young miners as a result,” she said.

Continued from front page

them were Machinists, Steelworkers, Teamsters, auto workers, carpenters, electrical workers, teachers, skilled trades workers, and others. Many carried hand-lettered signs reading, “Right to Work for Less!” and “Let Prevailing Wages Prevail!”

Janice Keith said she and her co-worker Betty Bowman came to the rally because “the companies just want to take and take!” Keith, a former machine operator, was injured on the job and now drives a forklift at Bendix Brakes in Frankfort. Bowman is a

ahead. Planned Parenthood and others have called a national “day of solidarity” March 9, with rallies planned at federal courthouses in many cities.

“Patients can continue to receive the full range of services at our South Dakota health center,” said Cecile Richards, president of Planned Parenthood, the only abortion provider in that state. The Planned Parenthood clinic in Sioux Falls performs some 800 abortions in South Dakota a year.

“What you’re going to see is bans don’t stop women from getting abortions. It just makes it unsafe and illegal,” Amy Everitt of NARAL Pro-Choice America, told the *San Mateo Daily Journal*. Women who have the means to travel



Militant/Sara Lobman

United Mine Workers of America members rally for job safety in Montgomery, Alabama, March 7. Some 10 women coal miners were part of the action.

“When you get on that elevator, you don’t know if you’re going to make it back,” said James Davis, a miner who has worked at Shoal Creek for the past two years.

“It used to be that a new miner had to work in the mines for 90 days before they could be assigned to a job on production at the [coal] face,” Davis said. “My brother-in-law got a job at Shoal Creek and was sent to work at the face right away. He lost his leg in an accident three weeks into the job. Another miner from his training class, Ken Holliday, lost his foot with two weeks on the job in another accident.”

‘Safety starts at union hall’

“Mine safety begins in the union hall,” called out Tom Wagner, a miner at Jim Walter No. 4 Mine. “The union is only as strong as its members.”

The need to strengthen the union to defend safety was a topic of discussion

throughout the rally. Three miners from the No. 4 Mine discussed the union’s importance for them.

Frank Green, in his 20s with two years’ experience at that mine, said this was his first time being in a union, and it has taught him a lot.

Standing next to him, his co-worker Matthew Wright, who worked for 15 years in a nonunion mine, said the difference between a union and nonunion mine is sharp. “At the nonunion mines it’s work or go to the house,” Wright said. “The UMWA protects you from that. You have individual rights to stand up if something is unsafe.”

“The young people don’t know about the union,” said Jarrod James, who has worked for six months at No. 4.

“But we’re learning quick,” Green said.

Brian Taylor contributed to this article.

Kentucky labor rally draws 5,000 unionists

Continued from front page

machine operator and was one of the first two women hired at Bendix. Both are members of the United Steelworkers union.

Tracie Little, Tom Denton, and Maria Schrieneger were among the members of the Jefferson County Teachers Association at the rally. Little said new teachers are getting hit hard. She has been teaching for five years and makes \$32,000 a year. Older teachers in the system average \$40,000 to \$50,000 a year. “Classroom sizes have continued to climb and you don’t have enough prepara-

tion time,” Schrieneger explained. She said teachers often have to take work home with them.

Pauline Martin, president of International Union of Electrical Workers Local 761, said 50 members had come from Louisville. The union organizes workers at the General Electric washer and dryer assembly plant. “Working people are getting it from all sides,” Martin said, citing rising health-care and insurance payments. Wages have been cut in half for new hires, she said. The average hourly wage in the plant is \$27 an hour. New hires make \$13 an hour.

“We have also got to stand up for jobs,” Martin said. She pointed out that 20,000 workers have lost their jobs at the plant in the last 15 years. The companies are sending the work to Mexico, Martin said, echoing a protectionist theme promoted by many state elected officials and top union officials who spoke at the rally.

Speakers at the rally also included Richard Trumka, AFL-CIO secretary-treasurer; Bill Londrigan, president of the Kentucky AFL-CIO; Terri Davenport, Jefferson County Teachers Association; and Mary Blevins, United Steelworkers Local 14581. A number of state legislators also appeared on the platform. Earlier that day, members of the House Labor and Industry Committee voted to kill the disputed legislation.

South Dakota governor signs ban on abortion

Continued from front page

form the procedure unless a woman’s life is threatened.

Since the 1973 *Roe v. Wade* ruling by the Supreme Court, which decriminalized abortion, opponents of a woman’s right to choose have sought to chip away at this gain in the struggle for women’s equality. Rounds and his allies say they expect the new South Dakota law to be legally challenged in the courts. But they say they intend to use its passage by a state legislature as an opening to go all the way to the high court in “a direct assault on *Roe v. Wade*.”

In response, defenders of a woman’s right to choose abortion are organizing protests and raising funds for the battle

Gov't censorship is always aimed at working class

The following excerpt is from the article "Why I Consented to Appear Before the Dies Committee," in Writings of Leon Trotsky (1939–40), published by Pathfinder Press. We are reprinting it in place of the regular Books of the Month column, as a contribution to the discussion on the Danish cartoon controversy (see Letters and Reply to a Reader on page 9). This book is part of a 14-volume series of Trotsky's writings. The entire series is available at www.pathfinderpress.com, other book distributors, or book centers listed below. Trotsky was a central leader of the Bolshevik party, the October 1917 Russian Revolution, and the Communist International (Comintern). He was expelled from the Communist Party and the Soviet Union after a bureaucratic clique headed by Joseph Stalin usurped political power in the USSR in the 1920s, following the death of V.I. Lenin, the central leader of the Bolsheviks. Under Stalin's regime, the Communist Party in the Soviet Union and the Comintern degenerated politically and were turned from proletarian organizations into instruments of implementing the counterrevolutionary policies of the ruling Stalinist bureaucracy. Trotsky led the international fight to oppose the betrayal of the Russian Revolution by the Stalinist regime and to continue implementing Lenin's political course and the program of world revolution developed by the Communist International under Lenin's guidance. Copyright © 1973 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

BY LEON TROTSKY

Why did I agree to appear before the Dies Committee? Naturally not in order to facilitate the realization of Mr. Dies's political aims, particularly the passing of federal laws against one or another extremist "party." Being an irreconcilable opponent not only of fascism but also of the present-day Comintern, I am at the same time decidedly against the suppression of either of them.

The outlawing of fascist groups would inevitably have a fictitious character: as reactionary organizations they can easily change color and adapt themselves to any kind of organizational form since



Leon Trotsky (center) during 1937 hearings of Commission of Inquiry into Charges Made against Trotsky in Moscow Trials, chaired by John Dewey. Standing by Trotsky is attorney Albert Goldman. Next to Trotsky is Natalia Sedova, his wife. The Bolshevik leader also agreed to appear before the Dies Committee to get out the truth about Moscow's frame-up trials, but the Dies Committee canceled its invitation to Trotsky at the last minute.

the influential sections of the ruling class and of the governmental apparatus sympathize considerably with them and these sympathies inevitably increase during times of political crisis.

As for the Comintern, suppression could only help this completely degenerated and compromised organization.

1. "Why I Consented to Appear Before the Dies Committee" was first published in the Dec. 30, 1939, edition of *Socialist Appeal*. Trotsky had prepared this statement as a press release to be issued upon his arrival in the United States, where he had been invited on October 12 of that year to appear before the Dies Committee. Shortly before he was due to make the trip, however, on Dec. 12, 1939, the Dies Committee retracted its invitation to Trotsky. U.S. congressman Martin Dies was the first chairman of the House Un-American Activities Committee established in 1937 to conduct a witch-hunt against communists and other labor militants. The Dies Committee was named after him.

The difficulty in the Comintern's situation is a result of the irreconcilable contradiction between the international workers' movement and the interests of the Kremlin ruling clique. After all its zigzags and deceptions, the Comintern has obviously entered its period of decomposition. The suppression of the Communist Party would immediately re-establish its reputation in the eyes of the workers as a persecuted fighter against the ruling classes.

However, the question is not exhausted by this consideration. Under the conditions of the bourgeois regime, all suppression of political rights and freedom, no matter whom they are directed against in the beginning, in the end inevitably bear down upon the working class, particularly its most advanced elements. That is a law of history. The workers must learn how to distinguish between their friends and their enemies according to their own judgment and not according to

the hints of the police.

It is not difficult to predict an ad hominem objection: "But just that Soviet government in which you yourself took part proscribed all political parties except the Bolsheviks?" Entirely correct; and to this day I am ready to bear responsibility for its actions. But one cannot identify the laws of civil war with the laws of peaceful periods; the laws of the dictatorship of the proletariat with the laws of bourgeois democracy....

It is true that the dictatorship in the Soviet Union did not die out, but on the contrary took on monstrous totalitarian forms. This is explained by the fact that out of revolution arose a new privileged caste, which is incapable of maintaining its regime except through measures of a hidden civil war. It was precisely over this question that I broke with the Kremlin ruling clique. I was defeated because the working class, as a result of internal and external conditions, showed itself to be too weak to liquidate its own bureaucracy. I have, however, no doubt that the working class will liquidate it.

But whatever the situation in the USSR may be, the working class in the capitalist countries, threatened with their own enslavement, must stand in defense of freedom for all political tendencies, including their own irreconcilable enemies. That is why I do not feel the slightest sympathy for the aims of the Dies Committee.

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Writings of Leon Trotsky (1939–40)

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Anti-Dubai actions hurt labor

The effort led by Democratic politicians who are now joined by an increasing number of Republicans—to oppose the takeover of six U.S. port facilities by a United Arab Emirates-based company is a reactionary campaign that working people should reject. It will boost the U.S. employing class’s use of “homeland security” to beef up the cops, curb political rights, and step up the militarization of civilian life. The ultimate targets of such moves are workers and farmers and our organized capacity to resist the bosses’ attacks.

This chauvinist campaign seeks to convince workers to join with bosses and identify with “our country.” But “we Americans” is a fabrication of the bosses. In reality, this country is divided between tens of millions of working people—us—and a handful of propertied families—they—in whose interests the government acts at home and abroad.

The dispute over Dubai Ports World is yet another factional move orchestrated by Democratic politicians against the Bush administration, as Sen. Hillary Clinton and others portray themselves as the best defenders of U.S. imperialism in the “war on terror.”

MILITANT LABOR FORUMS

ILLINOIS

Chicago
Support Naming Chicago Street after Murdered Black Panther Party Leader Fred Hampton. Fri., March 17. Dinner, 7:00 p.m.; program, 8:00 p.m. 3557 S. Archer. Tel.: (773) 890-1190.

IOWA

Des Moines
Defend Abortion Rights. Protest South Dakota Abortion Ban. Fri., March 24. Dinner, 6:30 p.m.; program, 7:30 p.m. 3707 Douglas Ave. Tel. (515) 255-1707.

NEW YORK

Manhattan
Coal Miners Demand Job Safety! Eyewit-

ness Reports from UMWA March in Alabama and AFL-CIO Rally in Kentucky. Speakers: Paul Pederson, Militant reporter; Dan Fein, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., March 17.
Robert F. Williams, the Fight for Black Liberation, and the Coming American Revolution. Speaker: Joel Britton, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., March 24. Both events: Dinner, 7:00 p.m.; program, 8:00 p.m. Donation: \$5 dinner, \$5 program. 306 W. 37 St., 10th floor (near 8th Ave, use north set of elevators). Tel.: (212) 629-6649.

PENNSYLVANIA

Pittsburgh
Oppose Moves to Criminalize Abortion in South Dakota! Keep Abortion Safe and Legal. Speakers: Maura DeLuca, Young So-

The “Goodbye Dubai” rallies organized by Teamsters and longshore union officials are cut from the same cloth as the protectionist campaigns they have previously organized against the World Trade Organization and the North American Free Trade Agreement. These all seek to tie the fortunes of working people to those of the U.S. bosses.

International Longshore and Warehouse Union officials call for police to “screen all vehicle drivers and riders at every port terminal gate.” That’s the kind of measures bosses are pushing for, under the banner of “homeland security,” to be able to crack down on union struggles. In 2002, as California dockworkers fought for a contract and resisted an employer lockout, federal officials invoked the antilabor Taft-Hartley Act to order them back to work, arguing that the union was endangering “national security.”

Working people should reject that deadly trap. Our interests lie not with U.S. bosses but with fellow toilers from the Middle East to China to Mexico. We should oppose the “homeland security” offensive—part of the war on working people at home—as well as Washington’s “global war on terror;” used to assault our brothers and sisters abroad.

cialists; Marty Ressler, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., March 17, 7:30 p.m. Donation: \$4. 5907 Penn Ave., Suite 225. Tel.: (412) 365-1090.

WASHINGTON

Seattle
Malcolm X: His Legacy for Today. Speaker: John Naubert. Sat., March 18. Dinner, 6:30 p.m.; program, 7:30 p.m. 5418 Rainier Ave. S. Tel.: (206) 323-1755.

NEW ZEALAND

Auckland
The Fight to Defend Abortion Rights, and the Struggle for Women’s Equality. Fri., March 17, 7:00 p.m. Donation: \$3. 7 Mason Ave., Otahuhu. Tel.: (09) 276-8885.

the bait. The cartoons are a furthering of the racist and war-mongering attacks on Arabs and Muslims as the imperialists step up their attacks on the Middle East.

The genuine outpouring of rage by Muslims is not a call for censorship but a reply to this demeaning assault.

It used to be common in the U.S. to have overtly racist cartoons, movies and radio/TV shows. Denny’s restaurants were named “Sambos” and were complete with racist murals.

These depictions are no longer acceptable, not because of censorship but because of the gains of the civil rights movement. If an editorial cartoonist depicted Martin Luther King with a Sambo face, the outrage of Black Americans would be well justified. If the paper retracted its racist cartoon, it would be a victory and a reflection of a relationship of class forces.

Similarly, the cartoons of Muhammad must be seen as part of the propaganda war that inflames anti-Arab and anti-Muslim sentiment. The appropriate response is to take to the streets and denounce it. If the capitalists use this to attack civil liberties, it is not the fault of Muslims (or Blacks) for speaking out.

Eric Huffman
Seattle, Washington

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.

Banning Danish cartoons is trap for working people

BY SAM MANUEL

Reader Eric Huffman writes that the *Militant* got wrong the analysis of the controversy over the publication by a Danish right-wing newspaper of cartoons of Muhammad. “The cartoons,” he says, “are a furthering of racist and war-mongering attacks on Arabs and Muslims as the imperialists step up their attacks on the Middle East.”

But calls to censor the cartoons, pressed mainly

REPLY TO A READER

by capitalist governments and state-sponsored clerics in majority-Muslim countries, fall into that very trap. They allow the imperialist powers to pretend to take the moral high ground and to appear in the eyes of millions of working people throughout the world as defenders of free speech and democratic rights, and as opponents of attempts to impose religious tenets on them.

Huffman further states, “The genuine outpouring of rage by Muslims is not a call for censorship but a reply to this demeaning assault.” The *Militant* article and the accompanying editorial kept their fire on Washington and other imperialist powers, not on the thousands of Muslims who undoubtedly joined protests because they felt their beliefs had been insulted.

But Huffman ignores the fact that no large protests occurred until several capitalist regimes in the Middle East and international bodies they dominate threw their weight behind them. Washington took full advantage of the tacit backing of the protests by the governments of Iran and Syria—particularly the burning of the Danish and Norwegian embassies in Syria while police stood by—to advance its campaign of presenting these governments as “rogue regimes” and win broader support across Europe for its “war against terrorism.”

The call by the largest Iranian daily for an international competition for cartoons on the Holocaust, and the posting of a cartoon by the Arab-European League of Nazi death-camp victim Anne Frank in bed with Adolph Hitler, further underscored the bankruptcy of the bourgeois leaderships of so-called Islamist movements.

Contrary to Huffman’s analogy this course has nothing in common with the mass, proletarian-led social movement against racist segregation in the United States from the 1950s to the early 1970s. As Huffman himself points out that movement focused its fire on the segregationist policies of state governments in the South and the federal government’s complicity with them. In doing so it maximized the numbers of people, Black and white, who could be mobilized to take action against racist discrimination. Segregation was ended and racist prejudice was pushed back through countermobilization against racist and fascist-like attacks, not through censorship.

Calls for censorship go in the opposite direction. They close down room for the broadest possible discussion, debate, and education. They undermine the capacity of working people and their allies to politically isolate and defeat those espousing racist, or for that matter religious, hatred. They lead toward advocating laws that make denying the Holocaust a crime as a way to oppose anti-Semitism, and others that proscribe “hate crimes” as the tool to fight anti-woman violence.

All such measures to suppress speech or organizations, “no matter whom they are directed against in the beginning, in the end inevitably bear down upon the working class,” Russian revolutionary leader Leon Trotsky explained in the 1939 article excerpted on the facing page. “The workers must learn how to distinguish between their friends and their enemies according to their own judgment and not according to the hints of the police.”

Solidarity with Mexican miners

Thanks for the update on the miners’ strikes in Mexico. This is fantastic news and I wish them all the best and offer our solidarity in their fight for improvements to their conditions. In numbers there is strength and solidarity will overcome. For the families of the 65 coal miners who were killed on the job, I wish them our heartfelt sympathy. Their deaths will not be in vain. Hopefully this will be the event that changes their lives for the better and brings the solidarity of all these miners in Mexico and around the world together to realize that they are more than a number. Safety and people should always come first.

God bless our brothers in Mexico and best wishes in their struggles.

Phil Polsom

President, CEP Local 890

Esterhazy, Saskatchewan

Rail worker killed on job

Jimmie Lee King Jr., 55, a carman for the Burlington Northern & Santa Fe (BSNF) Railway in Tacoma, Washington, was crushed to death February 7 while attempting to rerail a freight car. He had worked for BNSF for 28 years. His death was shocking to family and friends, and to co-workers, especially carmen, some of whom I was able to talk to in the Seattle BSNF rail yard where I work.

His death is part of the carnage in the rail industry, as major freight railroads press their productivity drive, cutting crew sizes, while trying to move unprecedented volumes on less track with deteriorating equipment.

In the last three years, train collisions increased by more than 42 percent and rail worker fatalities were up 17 percent.

I’m sure the close attention paid in our breakroom to the deaths of coal miners mirrors the situation in many rail yards. The miners’ fight for safety and unions will be followed closely.

Chris Rayson

Burien, Washington

Cartoons controversy I

There is a major international debate in Europe and the Middle East around the cartoons of the prophet Muhammad published by a right-wing Danish newspaper. Working people are being really confused by the capitalist media around what is presented as “free speech” vs. “race-hate offences.” The UK government has also very recently passed some scary laws around the “glorification of terrorism” and incitement to “religious hatred,” which are part of this crisis and confusion. I would really like the *Militant* to comment and help working people think through the political implications.

Helen Colley

Manchester, England

Cartoons controversy II

I have been reading the *Militant* for 35 years and rarely disagree with its positions. However, I think the *Militant* has gotten the analysis of the cartoons of Muhammad wrong.

The issue is not one of censorship. The imperialist media want to frame it that way and the *Militant* has taken