

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Rally of 200,000 in Havana
coincides with annual book fair

—PAGE 6

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 70/NO. 7 FEBRUARY 20, 2006

Boss disregard for safety kindles fire at Utah mine

Part of Co-Op mine shut down; 10 miners evacuated
C.W. Mining, gov't officials try to obscure the facts

BY ALYSON KENNEDY

PRICE, Utah—A fire at the Co-Op mine near Huntington, Utah, February 1 forced the company to permanently seal a 4 million square foot section of the coal mine. Ten miners were forced to evacuate. The Co-Op mine was the scene of a hard-fought union-organizing battle in 2003–04 where safety was a central issue.

Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) officials reported that temperatures in the affected area of the mine had reached 130 degrees and carbon monoxide levels rose. There was also smoke in the mine.

Coming on the heels of 19 deaths of coal miners across the United States in the first five weeks of this year, the bosses at the Co-Op mine and government and industry officials went out of their way to downplay the events.

There was a minimal threat to miners, said MSHA spokesman Dirk Fillpot,



Militant/Tamar Rosenfeld

Above: Former Co-Op miners who fought for UMWA representation and their supporters picket near entrance of mine, owned by C.W. Mining, on December 17, the first anniversary of union representation election. Right: Co-Op mine near Huntington, Utah, where fire forced company to permanently shut down a 4 million square foot section of the mine.



ML Coalimages/Lee Buchsbaum

according to the February 4 *Salt Lake Tribune*.

"This is not a rarity," James Springer, a representative of Utah Division of Oil, Gas and Mining, told the *Tribune*. "It happens in mines fairly often."

"Scientists studied a hot spot in that same area a year ago," KSL TV News in Salt Lake City reported.

Former Co-Op miners report this has been a longstanding problem at the mine,

Continued on page 7

Endorse, give to Militant Fighting Fund

Endorse the Militant Fighting Fund! Contribute financially and help broaden its appeal. We urge every *Militant* reader to do so now. Just a week before a court hearing, the stakes in beating back a harassment lawsuit filed by the C.W. Mining Company and its allied International

EDITORIAL

Association of United Workers Union are becoming clearer. The *Militant*, 16 former Co-Op miners, the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA), and other defendants are all fighting to defeat this legal attack on labor rights and free speech.

Within the last week alone a fire forced the owners of the Co-Op mine in Utah to seal a portion of the mine and evacuate 10 miners working underground. And Kentucky officials acknowledged for the first time that coal hauler James Thornsby died January 23 on the job, during a work-related accident, not from a health failure. After incidents in seven mines in three states, the death toll in U.S. coal mines is now 19 since the beginning of the year. (See articles above.)

On the heels of these events more

Continued on page 9

Imperialist powers succeed in referring Iran to UN Security Council

BY SAM MANUEL

WASHINGTON—At a special meeting in Vienna February 4, the United Nations International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) decided in a 27–3 vote to refer Iran's nuclear program to the

Workers subscribe to 'Militant,' ask it to tell their side

BY ARGIRIS MALAPANIS

"One union member we talked to has worked at the mine as a surface equipment operator for 16 years," said James Harris in a note to the *Militant*. While traveling from Atlanta to his new home in Los Angeles, Harris joined a team to sell the *Militant* February 3 outside the San Juan coal mine, owned by BHP Billiton, in Farmington, New Mexico.

"The miner wanted to get something in the *Militant* disputing recent reports here that the San Juan mine is one of the safest underground mines," Harris said. "I challenge that," he told us. "The state inspector doesn't know the conditions here. Becky Boone who made these remarks is an ex-BHP safety officer with the company and is now employed by

Continued on page 3

UN Security Council. The step was a victory for Washington and its allies, particularly in the European Union. These imperialist powers claim Iran is secretly building nuclear arms and have been threatening Tehran with new economic sanctions and military attacks if it doesn't stop developing atomic energy.

The U.S. government and its allies in the EU succeeded in cajoling Moscow and Beijing to go along. Only the governments of Cuba, Syria, and Venezuela voted no. Five governments—those of Algeria, Belarus, Indonesia, Libya, and South Africa—abstained.

"This decision does not contribute to opening new paths of negotiation, but rather to confrontation," Gustavo Marquez, Venezuela's delegate to the IAEA, said in a government news release. "There is an effort by nuclear powers, such as the United States, to develop a monopoly on nuclear energy, thus creating an economic and political dependence."

The government of Iran responded by announcing it would resume "commercial-scale uranium enrichment," a step necessary in the production of fuel for nuclear power, and halt surprise visits of its nuclear facilities by UN "inspectors." Tehran insists nuclear

Continued on page 9

Another coal miner dies on job in Kentucky

Toll: 19 in five weeks

BY PAUL PEDERSON
AND RYAN SCOTT

PIKE COUNTY, Kentucky—A coal miner killed at a mine here has brought the total deaths in U.S. coal mines to 19 in the first five weeks of the year.

The state mine safety office reported that James Thornsby Sr., 72, was killed January 23 at Sassy Coal Company's No. 4 underground mine in Pike County while operating a coal truck. Thornsby was found in the roadway and had reportedly been run over by the rear wheels. According to the Louisville *Courier-Journal*, the office "reclassified" Thornsby's death as work-related after determining it was not caused by a heart attack or other health problems.

This is the second death in a mine here this year, the center of coal production

Continued on page 7

U.S. rulers intensify confrontation with Venezuela

BY ARGIRIS MALAPANIS

The U.S. government is accelerating its course of confrontation against Venezuela. On February 3, the U.S. State Department expelled from the United States Jenny Figueredo, chief of staff of the Venezuelan embassy in Washington. U.S. officials told the press the step was taken in retaliation for the expulsion from Venezuela a day earlier of John Correa, a U.S. naval officer whom Caracas accused of spying for Washington.

On February 2, U.S. secretary of defense Donald Rumsfeld likened Venezuelan president Hugo Chávez to Hitler during a luncheon at the National Press Club. When moderator Jonathan Salant asked Rumsfeld if the election of

Continued on page 3

Also Inside:

- Australia: protesters demand asylum for Papuan patriots 2
- Union safety gains saved Canadian miners' lives 3
- Meat packers at Nebraska plant win prayer breaks in new contract 4
- How Chinese-Cuban brigade defended Cuban Revolution 5

Australia: protesters demand asylum for Papuan patriots

BY RON POULSEN

SYDNEY, Australia—A boatload of 43 prominent independence fighters and their families landed in northern Australia January 18 seeking asylum from Indonesian repression in West Papua. They were rapidly detained by Australian authorities. At an emergency picket two days later, 80 protesters outside offices of the Australian immigration department here chanted, “Free West Papua! Let them stay!” Similar actions took place in other cities over the following days. Some 150 protesters turned out in Melbourne.

The 30 men, six women, and seven children had crossed the Torres Strait in five days in a traditional outrigger canoe, landing on isolated Cape York. A banner on their boat charged genocide against the Indonesian occupiers of their land.

In response to increasing resistance to the occupation of West Papua, the Indonesian regime has announced plans to deploy up to 15,000 additional troops there. On January 20 soldiers fired on a crowd in Wegete, Paniai, killing 14-year-old Moses Douw, a relative of one of the asylum-seekers. Three days later protesters stormed the Papua legislative council building, demanding the Indonesian military be withdrawn.

Australian immigration authorities have flown the 43 asylum-seekers 2,500 miles to a remote detention center on Christmas Island in the Indian Ocean. In 2001, the conservative coalition government headed by Prime Minister John Howard passed measures that include the use of this distant Australian possession as an “offshore” prison for refugees and immigrants without papers.

In recent months tensions have escalated. In one of the largest demonstrations

there ever, 10,000 protesters in August 2005 stormed the Papuan provincial offices in Jayapura, rejecting the Indonesian government’s “special autonomy” plan. On December 1 hundreds of protesters defeated cop attempts to block the marking of West Papuan Independence Day and marched between university campuses in the provincial capital.

Jakarta has demanded the return of the 43 asylum seekers. The Indonesian government, with imperialist backing, tries to cover up the brutality of its rule in West Papua. According to Amnesty International, over 100,000 Papuans have died since the Indonesian takeover of the former Dutch colony in the 1960s. Australian imperialism, seeking to protect lucrative mining interests in the region, is currently negotiating a new treaty with the Indonesian regime that will bring closer military and intelligence cooperation in the “war on terrorism.” The pact is expected to include a guarantee by the Australian government to not “interfere” in Indonesia’s occupation of Papua.

Japan, New Zealand gov’ts clash over whale hunts

BY PATRICK BROWN

AUCKLAND, New Zealand—Ongoing conflict between the governments of New Zealand and Japan over whale hunts by Japanese ships escalated sharply in the first days of 2006. The New Zealand government assigned air force planes to the scene of the ongoing confrontation between anti-whaling protest vessels and whalers in the Southern Ocean, while Tokyo threatened to bring in armed police aircraft.

Marchers mark 1972 Bloody Sunday massacre by British troops in Northern Ireland



Militant/Caroline Bellamy

More than 1,000 people marched through Glasgow, Scotland, January 21 (above), and thousands demonstrated in Derry, Northern Ireland, January 29 to demand justice for the 14 Irish civil rights fighters gunned down by British troops in the Bloody Sunday massacre in Derry 34 years ago. A counter-protest by some 300 rightists chanting “IRA marchers off the streets” failed to stop the action. “The rights of the Irish in Scotland have been upheld,” said march organizer Jim Slaven. BBC News reported that the police are seeking greater powers to “block problem parades.”

—PETE CLIFFORD

THE MILITANT

‘It goes the extra mile’

“The ‘Militant’ is an interesting, informative paper. Once people read it, they’ll see it’s talking for the struggle. The ‘Militant’ is not bought off. It goes the extra mile.”

—Glenn Davis
Member, UMWA Local 2133
Birmingham, Alabama



Coal miner and UMWA member Glenn Davis at his home in Birmingham, Alabama.

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The Militant

VOL. 70/NO. 7

Closing news date: February 8, 2006

Editor and circulation director:

Argiris Malapanis

Washington correspondent: Sam Manuel

Editorial volunteers: Arrin Hawkins, Martin Koppel, Paul Pederson, Brian Taylor, and Brian Williams.

Published weekly except for one week in January and June.

The Militant (ISSN 0026-3885), 306 W. 37th Street, 10th floor, New York, NY 10018. Telephone: (212) 244-4899; Fax (212) 244-4947.

E-mail: TheMilitant@verizon.net

Website: www.themilitant.com

Correspondence concerning subscriptions or changes of address should be addressed to the Militant, 306 W. 37th Street, 10th floor, New York, NY 10018.

Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to the Militant, 306 W. 37th Street, 10th floor, New York, NY 10018.

Subscriptions: **United States:** for one-year subscription send \$35 to above address.

Latin America, Caribbean: for one-year subscription send \$65, drawn on a U.S. bank, to above address. By first class (airmail), send \$80.

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Caracas: 1,000s attend World Social Forum

BY BRIAN TAYLOR
AND RÓGER CALERO

CARACAS, Venezuela—Rural toilers from indigenous organizations, students, trade unionists, representatives of nongovernmental groups, and others from throughout the Americas and parts of Europe and Africa were among the tens of thousands of people who attended the sixth World Social Forum here January 24–29.

The largest delegations came from Venezuela, Colombia, and Brazil. Large groups also came from the United States, Canada, and Cuba. The Cuban delegation included internationalist doctors and teachers currently volunteering in Venezuela on missions to upgrade the country’s medical system and in literacy campaigns.

Conference speakers hailed the recent electoral victories of candidates of the left in South America as the dawn of “socialism in the 21st century.” A prominent sign at many forum events read, “Another America is on the march” and featured photos of presidents Hugo Chávez in Venezuela, Fidel Castro in Cuba, Nestor Kirchner in Argentina, Ignacio “Lula” da Silva in Brazil, Evo Morales in Bolivia, and Michelle Bachelet in Chile. The outcome of these elections reflects a changing mood among working people in the region toward more determined resistance to imperialist domination and increased expectations for better living and working conditions, a number of delegates said.

The six days of activities opened with a march and rally of tens of thousands. Speakers opposed unequal trade relations imposed by imperialists powers on semicolonial countries under “free trade” agreements. They also denounced the U.S.-led occupation of Iraq and the devastation of the environment. Most speakers blamed U.S. president George Bush for today’s social ills. Signs, banners, and buttons with Bush’s name or image crossed out expressed the widespread view that his ouster is a solution to these problems.

Chávez spoke at a plenary session January 27. Others on the platform included U.S. peace activist Cindy Sheehan; Aleida Guevara March,

daughter of Ernesto Che Guevara, a central leader of the Cuban Revolution; Ricardo Alarcón, president of Cuba’s national assembly; and Danielle Mitterrand, widow of former French president François Mitterrand.

Elma Beatriz Rosado, widow of Puerto Rican independence fighter Filiberto Ojeda Ríos, who was killed by FBI agents in Puerto Rico last fall, also spoke, accusing the U.S. government of murdering her husband.

A continental gathering to promote the need for government-guaranteed free health care for all was held prior to the main event. Participants included trade unionists at Provegran, a plant in Tejeria in the Venezuelan state of Aragua. This is a meat by-product factory where workers have been building their union as they fight against unsafe working conditions and for better wages and benefits.

Rafael González, one of the leaders of the struggle, told the *Militant*, that the fight for the union was precipitated by the death of nine workers due to a deadly gas leak in August 2003. Union-minded workers had attempted to organize the plant on several occasions leading up to this disaster.

José López, representing the Regional Coordinator of Workers Health, which provides job safety training, said during a workshop that some 276,000 accidents take place on the job every year in Venezuela. “Only the workers, organized and mobilized, can guarantee safety on the job,” López said.

Another feature of the forum were women’s organizations and individuals from across South America exchanging

Workers subscribe to ‘Militant,’ ask it to tell their side

Continued from front page

New Mexico as a safety inspector.”

Another miner suggested the *Militant* have some coverage on the history of MSHA, Harris said. A third donated \$10 to help the paper out.

The team sold 79 copies and three subscriptions to the *Militant* at two mine portals in Farmington, a third in nearby Kayenta, Arizona, and at a Kayenta shopping mall, February 1–3.

Many working people are reacting to

ela organized a year later to topple the Chávez administration. Both failed due to mass mobilizations by workers and peasants, who have taken advantage of land reform and other laws passed by the government to fight for land, jobs, and decent living conditions.

“If the U.S. government wants to break relations with Venezuela,” Chávez told thousands at a February 4 rally in Caracas, “it wouldn’t cost me anything to shut our refineries in the United States.... And sell our oil to other countries around the world that are asking us to buy more and more fuel and are true allies, like China, India, and European and Latin American countries.”

Venezuela is the fifth-largest oil producer in the world and the third-largest supplier of oil to the United States. Citgo, a U.S. subsidiary of the Venezuelan state-owned oil company PDVSA, owns eight refineries in the United States and 13,500 gas stations.

Gains from union fight for safety on job saved lives of 72 potash miners in Canada



Militant/Michael Pennock

Miners who are members of the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union of Canada (CEP) at the K-2 potash mine in Esterhazy, Saskatchewan, meet with *Militant* reporters February 4 at union hall. From left: CEP member Ray Miller, *Militant* reporters Nelson Gonzalez and Joe Young, CEP members Dale Burman and Hugh Davis, and *Militant* reporter Annette Kouri.

BY ANNETTE KOURI
AND JOE YOUNG

ESTERHAZY, Saskatchewan—Seventy-two potash miners were trapped underground here January 29 after a fire filled the

K-2 mine with toxic smoke. The miners—members of locals 890 and 892 of the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union of Canada—spent up to 30 hours in
Continued on page 6

experiences on efforts to decriminalize abortion.

Several hundred people attended meetings hosted by the Cuba-Venezuela Association for Friendship and Solidarity. The events were held to aid the campaign to free five Cuban revolutionaries imprisoned in the United States on frame-up charges brought by Washing-

ton, which include conspiracy to commit espionage for Havana. Participants also protested Washington’s refusal to extradite to Venezuela Luis Posada Carriles, a CIA-trained mass murderer. Born in Cuba and later becoming a naturalized Venezuelan citizen, Carriles masterminded the bombing of a Cuban airliner in the 1970s that killed 73 people.

U.S. confrontation against Venezuela

Continued from front page

Evo Morales, a leader of the Movement for Socialism, as the president of Bolivia is part of a troubling trend, Rumsfeld responded that Morales’s victory does worry Washington. “I mean...you’ve got Chávez in Venezuela with a lot of oil money,” Rumsfeld said. “He’s a person who was elected legally just as Adolf Hitler was elected legally and then consolidated power and now is, of course, working with Fidel Castro and Mr. Morales and others. It concerns me.”

“Let the gang in Washington know it: We will stand firm in the country’s defense,” Venezuela’s vice president, José Vicente Rángel, told a crowd that welcomed Figueredo as a hero February 7, when she returned home to Caracas. Rángel accused Washington of unceasing aggression aimed at “destabilizing and overthrowing President Chávez.”

The U.S. government backed a military coup attempt in 2002 and an “oil strike” wealthy capitalists in Venezu-

the *Militant* in a similar way: They want to talk about their struggles and share their experiences. The *Militant* is increasingly becoming their voice.

To allow more time to expand this integration of the paper with working-class struggles, the *Militant* has extended its current subscription renewal campaign by one week, to March 13. Responding to many reports like that from Harris, which show more workers subscribing for the first time when they see the paper at plant gates, in particular, the *Militant* has started counting introductory subscriptions in the campaign to increase its long-term readership. From the 375 subscriptions received the last two weeks, 210 are renewals or new long-term subs, and 165 introductory subscriptions.

The overall goal is now 1,350, up from the initial 1,000, after most distributors increased their quotas (see chart).

Between February 11 and February 19, *Militant* supporters are organizing a special effort, a “target week,” to get ahead in the circulation campaign. Its focus will be to accelerate meeting with readers whose subs have expired or are about to run out, and convince them to renew, along with selling other subs. The effort will be combined with winning new endorsements and contributions to the Militant Fighting Fund (see editorial).

Other reports point to what’s coming. *Militant* supporters who visited the K-2 potash mine in Esterhazy, Saskatchewan, Canada, last weekend sold 28 copies and two introductory subs. In addition, the union local there ordered 50 copies of this issue that carries these miners’ story

(see article above). You can be part of the effort. Order your bundle or join other teams near you (see directory on p. 8).

‘Militant’ Sub Renewal Campaign January 21–March 13, 2006 Week 2 of 7			
Country	Quota	Sold	%
SWEDEN*	16	10	63%
AUSTRALIA*	25	11	44%
ICELAND*	9	4	44%
UK			
London	35	15	43%
Edinburgh*	22	7	32%
UK Total	57	22	39%
NEW ZEALAND			
Auckland*	25	10	40%
Christchurch*	10	1	10%
N.Z. Total	35	11	31%
CANADA*	75	20	27%
U.S.			
Price*	65	31	48%
Pittsburgh	30	14	47%
Albany, NY*	16	7	44%
Chicago*	40	16	40%
Los Angeles	60	22	37%
Twin Cities*	70	25	36%
Atlanta*	60	17	28%
Des Moines*	85	24	28%
Philadelphia*	60	17	28%
San Francisco*	60	16	27%
Birmingham*	40	10	25%
Wash., DC*	35	8	23%
Boston*	40	8	20%
Houston*	65	13	20%
Newark*	65	13	20%
Salt Lake City*	30	6	20%
Miami*	70	13	19%
New York*	175	28	16%
Seattle*	35	5	14%
Detroit	4	0	0%
New Orleans		4	
U.S. Total	1105	297	27%
Int'l totals	1322	375	28%
Should be	1350	386	29%
*increased quota			

—ON THE PICKET LINE

Workers strike in Vietnam, demand higher wages

Since late December tens of thousands of workers in Vietnam have participated in wildcat strikes to demand higher wages. These job actions have swept through the industrial zones surrounding Ho Chi Minh City.

In early January the Vietnamese government issued a decree raising the minimum wage in foreign-owned factories to \$45 a month, a 40 percent increase that was to start February 1. Then the country's prime minister postponed the raise until April, sparking new strikes.

To attract foreign investors the government lowered workers' monthly wages in 1999 from \$45–\$50 to around \$35.

While most of the affected factories are owned by East Asian companies, the European Chamber of Commerce sent a letter to the Vietnamese prime minister reminding him that business had come to his country because "the workforce is not prone to industrial action."

—Brian Williams

Meat packers at Tyson Nebraska plant win prayer breaks in new contract

BY EDWIN FRUIT

NORFOLK, Nebraska—Members of United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Local 271 at Tyson Fresh Meats here approved a five-year contract December 23 that workers say registered gains for their rights.

The agreement grants workers the right to have 10-minute prayer breaks for workers who are Muslim, according to Said Yousuf, a shop steward and vice president of the union local. In addition, the company offered reinstatement to 10 workers who were fired last year for taking such breaks.

"When people stick together there are good things possible," Yousuf told the *Militant*. "At this time there is no problem with the company over prayer breaks."

On September 17, some 300 workers walked out of the plant to protest company denial of prayer breaks and the firing of 10 workers for "unauthorized breaks." Those who walked out are Muslims, originally from Somalia. Half the employees at the plant are Somali.

—MILITANT LABOR FORUMS

ALABAMA

Birmingham

The Importance of Malcolm X's Ideas for Today's Working-Class Fighters. Speaker: John Benson, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Feb. 17, 7:30 p.m. 3029A Bessemer Rd. Tel.: (205) 923-5010.

NEW JERSEY

Newark

Cuba's Role in Africa: 45 Years of Solidarity and Struggle. Speaker: Michael Ortega, Young Socialists. Fri., Feb. 17, 8:00 p.m. 168 Bloomfield Ave. Tel.: (973) 481-0077.

NEW YORK

Manhattan

U.S. Hands Off Iran! Speaker: Ma'mud Shirvani. Fri., Feb 17. Dinner, 7:00 p.m.; program, 8:00 p.m. Donation: \$5 dinner, \$5 program. 306 W. 37th St. 10th floor (north elevators). Tel.: (212) 629-6649.

Taxi drivers in Ontario strike to reduce 84-hour workweek

WINDSOR, Ontario—Some 332 cab drivers have been on strike against Veteran Cab since January 11. The workers, who are members of Canadian Auto Workers (CAW) Local 195, are fighting for one day off per week and against a raise in their lease payments for the cars. They are currently working 84-hour weeks. "Last year four guys died from stress and seven had a heart attack. The hours are too long," said Haidar Aouli, chairperson of the local unit. The drivers reported that several pro-union workers had their cars spray-painted and tires slashed.

"The owner is trying to break the union, which we've had for four years, but they won't succeed," Aouli stated. Strikers reported getting support from unionized workers at a nearby funeral home, government workers, and CAW-organized auto workers. They said flying pickets are preventing a small number of scab drivers from picking up fares.

On February 3, the drivers re-

Jean-Juste released from prison in Haiti



Militant/Bernie Senter

MIAMI—Hundreds of working people turned out here January 29 to celebrate the release of Rev. Gérard Jean-Juste from prison in Haiti. A long-time fighter for immigrant rights, Jean-Juste returned to Miami to receive medical attention for leukemia. He had been imprisoned in Haiti since July 2005. Upon arriving at Miami International Airport, he told supporters, "I am happy but other men and women are still in prison. I hope the doors of freedom will be opened wide."

—DEBORAH LIATOS

jected by an 83 percent margin the company's latest offer. To win support, they're putting 50 free taxis on the road.

—Natalie Doucet

Striking laundry workers in California win support

COLTON, California—More than a month into their strike for higher wages and a pension, some 300 members of UNITE HERE at the Angelica industrial laundry here are winning broader support throughout the region. In addition to maintaining a large picket line and makeshift kitchen outside the plant, they have begun informational picketing at the hospitals that receive linen service from Angelica.

Adelaida Vega, who has worked at the Colton facility for 25 years, said that at the San Bernadino and Loma Linda hospitals some of the nurses and staff joined their picket in solidarity. Paula Magaña, who works on pressing machines, said she and other strikers have been speaking to union bodies in the region, including the Los Angeles County Federation of Labor and the teachers union.

On Sunday afternoon, January 29, more than 50 strikers, family members, and supporters were picketing and congregating in front of the plant. Bob

Dausilio, president of Alhambra Fire Fighters Local 1578, was cooking up hamburgers that his union had donated. "It's not right what this company is doing," he said. "We're all union people and have to stick together."

—Naomi Craine

Alabama auto workers vote to be represented by UAW

BIRMINGHAM, Alabama—After months of stalling, the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) in mid-January ruled that the majority of workers at Plastech Engineered Products in McCalla, Alabama, had voted to be represented by the United Auto Workers (UAW). Plastech makes parts for vehicles produced at the Mercedes auto plant in Vance.

The election took place October 24 last year. NLRB official Douglas Marshall said the ballots were counted January 6 with a final tally of 91 in favor of the UAW and 42 against.

In November 2004 workers at the plant had approved union representation for the 160 employees through a union-card signing effort. The NLRB later nullified this after a challenge filed by the Burr & Forman law firm claimed that some workers were misled into signing the cards.

—Maurice Williams

Socialist Workers launch campaign for city offices in Newark, New Jersey

BY ANGEL LARISCY

NEWARK, New Jersey, February 4—The Socialist Workers Party launched its ticket here today for this city's municipal elections set for May 9: Nancy Rosenstock for mayor, and Chauncey Robinson for city council, west ward. SWP campaign supporters began petitioning to get 3,000 signatures—more than double the requirement of 1,159 for mayor and 232 for city council—to place the socialist candidates on the ballot.

More than 750 people signed petitions the first weekend of campaigning, and nearly 50 bought copies of the *Militant*, and two subscribed. Seven candidates are running for mayor in Newark, including the fifth-term incumbent Sharpe James, a Democrat.

"We are getting a good response to the SWP campaign platform," said Rosenstock. "Workers and youth are

happy to learn about a working-class alternative to the capitalist parties that speaks to issues on their minds, like the need to organize unions, socialize health care so that it's guaranteed by the government for a lifetime for all, and oppose the imperialist wars abroad and escalating threats against Iran. A member of the Teamsters signed right away when he read our first demand to support workers' struggles to organize unions and use union power to defend themselves and other working people from the bosses' attacks."

Rosenstock, 56, is a meat packer and member of the United Food and Commercial Workers. Robinson, 19, is a retail worker and member of the Young Socialists. Robinson spent the first weekend of campaigning in West Virginia, helping to get the *Militant* into the hands of coal miners and others.

‘We became a force of revolutionary order’

Leader of Chinese brigade in Cuba describes role played defending Cuban Revolution

The following are excerpts from an article that appeared in the June 19, 2005, edition of the Spanish daily El Mundo, under the headline, “Castro’s Chinese Militia.” We are publishing it on the occasion of the release by Pathfinder Press of Our History Is Still Being Written: The Story of Three Chinese-Cuban Generals in the Cuban Revolution (see ad below). Translation is by the Militant.

BY ANGEL T. GONZÁLEZ

HAVANA—Tai Chao, who commanded the brigade, remembers perfectly the cloudy morning of February 17, when they went out into the streets for the first time. Three platoons marching briskly through Havana’s Chinatown, facing the agitated and frightened reaction of the community’s residents. “Tai Chao, communist!” some shouted by way of insult. Overseas Chinese were considered then citizens of the secessionist Taiwan, which was allied to the U.S. and was an enemy of the People’s Republic of China.

The Cuban Revolution was barely a year old. Fidel Castro had not declared himself the leader of a socialist country, and Cuba still maintained diplomatic relations with Taiwan. But many wealthy merchants and groups that controlled Chinatown’s prostitution and drugs already sensed that Cuba would wind up entering the orbit of communist countries, and had begun packing their bags.

The events of Feb. 17, 1960, were therefore a type of confirmation. But above all, it was the first time that the José Wong Brigade of the Revolutionary National Militia (MNR) went out into the street: 50 uniformed Chinese wearing sky-blue shirts, olive-green pants, and black berets; armed with German Mauser rifles from the Second World War; and giving and taking orders in the Cantonese dialect. A historical oddity in Cuba and in the entire continent....

“[My mother] lived in the Canary Islands,” [Tai Chao said], “and was a novice in a convent.” When she didn’t get enough votes to become a nun, the family, in shame, sent her off to Cuba with other relatives. There she studied nursing. And there, in 1928 in Havana, she married Guillermo Eng, a merchant and journalist who covered Chinese so-

cial events (Wu Gu Xiang was his real name). He had arrived on the island at the beginning of last century to engage in trade. Elvira Herrera Pérez, Tai Chao’s mother, died when her only son was less than 18 months old.

The future head of the José Wong Brigade lived with his father, the one who gave him the name Tai Chao, which means “shield of the emperor”—officially his name is Pedro Jesús Eng Herrera. Raised by an Asian nanny until he was five, he didn’t learn Spanish until he began attending school in Chinatown.

Afterward he began earning a living selling “foods and fine liquors,” he says with pride. Until a few months after the triumph of the revolution, in 1959, when he, like thousands of Cubans, joined the MNR. That was when the idea of organizing a detachment of oriental militiamen began to take hold in his mind.

With Chinese patience, Tai Chao obtained the official approval of the MNR’s leadership to train Chinese militarily.... September 2, 1960, was seven and a half months after the Chinese militia brigade had burst onto the scene under Tai Chao’s sponsorship. On that day, Fidel Castro, speaking to a mass rally in the Plaza of the Revolution that called itself the General Assembly of the People, announced the establishment of relations with Communist China and the breaking of all relations with the “puppet regime” of Taiwan. To shouts of support, the General Assembly of the People approved Cuba’s entry into red diplomacy.

The definitive assault by the Asian militia against vice in Chinatown was not long in coming. It happened on October 10, 1960, the eleventh anniversary of the People’s Republic of China. On that day the Chinese-Cuban troops symbolized the conquest of the territory by raising the flag of Communist China atop the Chung Wah Casino, symbolic building of the Chinese community.



Bohemia

Members of Chinese New Democracy Alliance in Cuba at rally where First Declaration of Havana was read and approved, Sept. 2, 1960. Banner reads: “Resident Chinese support the Cuban Revolution and its leader, Fidel Castro.”

Days earlier, the casino’s president had absconded with all the association’s money and taken asylum at the U.S. Naval Base in Guantánamo.

It was the first time in the history of the young Cuban republic that the flag of a Communist country flew overhead....

The building, which had also been the office of the Chinese Nationalist Party, was expropriated by Tai Chao’s militiamen. “We became a force of revolutionary order, and we watched over all the dens of iniquity that existed in Chinatown, devoted to prostitution, gambling, and the sale of opium. All were closed down,” Tai Chao recalls.

This was not the only mission of this brigade, however. In 1961 the revolution-

ary government learned that a landing of Cuban exiles was being prepared with logistical support from the U.S. Army. But it did not know the date or place of the attack. Together with other militia battalions, the Chinese brigade was assigned the defense of the Isle of Pines (today the Isle of Youth)... where it was expected the invasion would take place....

The invasion finally occurred in April 1961, but it was at the Bay of Pigs in Matanzas province. The Chinese militia members were sent to study at a military school. Later most of them joined the Revolutionary National Police. The rest returned to their jobs as waiters and store clerks. Of the 50, only five survive today as octogenarians.

‘Granma’ runs article on new Pathfinder book

The front page of the February 6 online edition of the Cuban daily *Granma* published the article “Chinese Ancestry, Cuban Blood: History and Present-Day of Three Combatants, in a Pathfinder Edition.” It describes the new book *Our History Is Still Being Written* (see ad below) and says the book “will begin circulating today, in a Spanish version, at 4:00 p.m. in the José A. Portuondo Hall” of the Havana book fair. The article, one of four *Granma* featured that day on the Havana book fair, can be found at www.granma.cubaweb.cu

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



February 20, 1981

Residents of New York City woke up to an unusual news story last Decem-

ber 31. Officials of the New York Civil Liberties Union were quoted as lauding Police Commissioner Robert McGuire for his policy on political spying by the New York cops. What McGuire did was to agree with the Civil Liberties Union on an out-of-court settlement of a nine-year-old lawsuit against the Red Squad. The suit is a class-action one, brought on behalf of all victims of police spying, harassment, and disruption activities. Does the settlement ban future spying? Hardly. According to the *Times*, the cops “will continue to keep ‘generic information’ about some political activities.”



February 20, 1956

Demonstrations by French settlers in Algeria against concessions to the Algerian population stole the headlines last week. But though the fascist-led rabble scared French Premier Mollet into backtracking on his promises of “reforms,” nothing it did could halt the steady progress of the national independence revolution of nine million Arabs and Berbers. Since Nov. 1, 1954, when the Algerian liberation war began until now, the French government has increased

its U.S.-equipped armed forces from 10,000 to 200,000. In addition, the colons (French settlers) numbering about one million, organized vigilante committees. In combination, the repressive forces slaughtered, tortured, murdered, and burned out the Arab and Berber militants. Tens of thousands of these heroic people have been herded into concentration camps.



February 15, 1931

It took altogether extraordinary conditions like czarism, illegality, prisons and deportations, long years of struggle against the Mensheviks and especially the experiences of the three revolutions to produce militants like Kote Zinzadze. His life was bound up entirely with the history of the revolutionary movement for a period of more than a quarter of a century. He passed through all the stages of proletarian uprising, beginning with the very first propaganda circles to the barricades and the seizure of power. For long years he conducted menial labors of illegal organization and at the time when the revolutionists were tied up in the net of the police he devoted himself to untying them.

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200,000 join rally in Cuba coinciding with 15th Havana International Book Fair



Granma/Miguel Bonazo



Militant/Jonathan Silberman



Militant/Jonathan Silberman

HAVANA—The 15th Havana International Book Fair opened here February 3. Venezuela is this year's country of honor. The inauguration was postponed one day to coincide with a visit by Venezuela's president, Hugo Chávez. That evening Chávez was awarded UNESCO's José Martí International Prize at a rally of 200,000 in the Plaza of the Revolution (above left).

Among those speaking at the opening ceremony of the 10-day book fair were Venezuelan author Tarek William Saab and Venezuela's minister of culture, Francisco Sesto, as well as Cuban minister of culture Abel Prieto (above right; from left to right: Saab, Sesto, and Prieto). Among the guests of honor were the two Cuban writers to whom this year's fair is dedicated, Angel Augier and Nancy Morejón, who were seated in the front along with Cuban president Fidel Castro and fair organizer Iroel Sánchez, president of the Cuban Book Institute (right; front row from left to right: Augier, Castro, Morejón, and Sánchez). Sesto paraphrased a well-known statement by Castro in the early years of the revolution: "We don't tell people 'believe.' We say, 'read.'" With the success of the initial literacy campaign in Venezuela, Sesto noted, the government's goal is to continue to widen access to culture, including the expansion of state-run bookstores—carrying books at subsidized prices—from 47 today to 60 across the country by the end of this year.

The inaugural ceremony was the occasion to present a new book by Saab, *Los niños del infortunio* (Children of Misfortune). It tells the story of the Cuban volunteer contingent of 2,540 doctors who have been providing health care in the region of Pakistan devastated by last October's earthquake. Saab is the governor of Venezuela's Anzoátegui state.

At the fair's opening, Chávez and Castro signed an agreement between their governments establishing a new joint fund to promote cultural projects. Prieto said the fund, among other things, will be used to launch a new publishing house to print books by Latin American authors, two cultural magazines, and a recording label to promote music throughout the continent. Chávez spoke briefly at the conclusion of the inauguration (above center).

—MARTÍN KOPPEL



Militant/Jonathan Silberman

'Our History is Still Being Written' is presented at Havana's int'l book fair



Militant/Jonathan Silberman

HAVANA—*Our History Is Still Being Written: The Story of Three Chinese-Cuban Generals in the Cuban Revolution*, a book newly published by Pathfinder Press in English and Spanish editions (see ad on page 5), was presented at the Havana International Book Fair. The February 6 meeting featured the three generals interviewed—Gustavo Chui, Armando Choy, and Moisés Sío Wong; Cuban vice president José Ramón Fernández; and Mary-Alice Waters, the book's editor and president of Pathfinder. Some 80 people attended the standing-room-only event; nearly 90 copies of the book were sold there. From left: Fernández, Chui, Choy, Sío Wong, Waters, and Iraidá Aguirrechu of Cuban publisher Editora Política, who chaired the meeting.

—MARTÍN KOPPEL

Gains from union fight for safety saved lives of Canada potash miners

Continued from page 3

refuge stations before being rescued. An initial investigation indicates a cutting torch set the fire in some polyethylene pipe.

The mine is owned by the U.S.-based Mosaic company. The media here lauded the mine owners for safety measures that led to the rescue.

Interviews with union members here over the February 4–5 weekend, however, point to the union-led struggle for safe working conditions as the reason for the survival of the trapped miners.

Workers report they won a union at the mine after a strike in 1972. "There were a lot of close calls," before union-initiated safety measures were implemented, said Ray Miller, who has worked in the mine for 27 years. Among the gains were refuge rooms throughout the mine. These are airtight areas with enough oxygen to last at least 36 hours.

The mine rescue team members are volunteers from the mine. Hugh Davis, a mechanic who was part of the team that rescued the trapped miners January 29, told the *Militant* he received a call at 3:00 a.m. that day. Within 15 minutes he was at the mine, he said. His team entered the mine at 5:00 a.m., after backup teams arrived,

about two-and-a-half hours after the fire had started.

Dale Burman, the union co-chair of the safety committee, described the situation when water began seeping into the mine in the mid-1980s. "We didn't have a strong safety committee so we had to start one," he said. "If I didn't have the union backing me it would have been very hard to get safety up to snuff."

While the Saskatchewan provincial government has adopted mine safety regulations, Glenn St. Marie explained, "If you don't have a union, the government will not look after you as good or as fast. You have to have a force to implement them."

"We're just lucky that this happened on the weekend," said Doug Millham, another unionist. "I hate to think what the refuge stations would have been like with 200 or so people down there."

"It's a constant vigil, a day-to-day battle," Ray Miller said. Referring to the recent rash of deaths in U.S. coal mines, he added, "We know it can happen here."

THE MILITANT

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Kentucky miner killed on job

Continued from front page

in eastern Kentucky. Both occurred at nonunion mines, which make up the bulk of mining operations in this part of the state. Less than 1 percent of underground miners and 3 percent of surface miners in the region are unionized.

“I think the union should be in all of them,” a young miner, who asked that his name not be used to avoid victimization by the boss, told the *Militant* February 6 as he was leaving the Excel No. 3 mine near Pikeville, Kentucky. Safety conditions in that mine are bad, he said. They include the bosses sometimes forcing miners to work in spite of higher-than-legal methane gas levels.

On February 1, two miners died in two mines in Boone County, West Virginia. Paul Moss, 58, was killed after his bulldozer struck a natural gas line at Massey Energy’s Black Castle surface mine. Edmund Vance, 46, was killed when part of the mine wall collapsed on him at Long Branch Energy’s No. 18 tunnel, the first mine fatality this year in a union-organized mine.

Vance’s cousin, Steve White, spoke to *Militant* reporters about the conditions in nonunion mines. “I worked for Massey’s

Shumate mine,” White said. Massey is the largest coal company in West Virginia and eastern Kentucky. Most of its operations are nonunion. “They used to have a slogan, ‘S1’ for Safety First. But many of the men would say ‘P1’ was the real slogan—Production First. Some of the fellas would keep a book to record safety violations so they would have a record to report in case something happened to them. I about got killed in an accident on the mantrip in that mine,” White said, referring to the vehicle that transports miners around the mine. He suffered serious head injuries, he said, and the company was forced to pay a settlement. “They told me it would have been easier for them if I had died and they had just had to pay my wife.”

Following the most recent deaths, West Virginia governor Joseph Manchin called for a statewide “Mine Safety Stand Down” on February 1. The federal Mine Safety and Health Administration then followed with a similar nationwide call for February 6. Much of the media initially said the stand down meant production would be shut down temporarily. In most cases, however, the coal companies simply turned it into a brief lecture

Boss disregard for safety kindles fire at Utah mine

Continued from front page

which has been allowed to continue. “I once installed a conveyor belt on a crew in that area when it was getting hot,” said Rodrigo Rodríguez who worked at the Co-Op mine for 14 years and was part of the fight for representation by the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA). The company would rotate miners into that part of the mine, he said, and sometimes crews “had to come out to cool off and go back again because it was too hot.”

“Fires just don’t break out,” Bob Butero, director for organizing in UMWA Region 4, told the *Militant*. “When it gets to that point in a mine it means the company has been ignoring earlier problems. Workers are being exposed to greater dangers. Something could happen where the miners are trapped, and even having to go in and seal off the mine is dangerous.”

C.W. Mining owns Co-Op, an underground coal mine where 75 workers were on strike for nearly 10 months. The company fired the miners Sept. 22, 2003, after they began organizing for UMWA representation, better wages, and working conditions. One of the central issues in the strike was on-the-job safety.

The miners won their jobs back in July 2004 after a solid strike, which received widespread solidarity by unions and working people throughout the area and compelled the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) to broker a deal between the UMWA and the company. C.W. Mining was forced to offer reinstatement to all terminated miners. Many of the miners were fired a second time right before a union representation election in December 2004. C.W. Mining contested most of the ballots, and the NLRB has yet to announce the results.

“Safety was a big issue for the miners at Co-Op,” said Butero, who worked with the miners in the union-organizing effort at Co-Op. “Miners reported they were continually forced to work unsafe. They wanted to be able to refuse to work in that situation, and have

the backing of the union.”

Funeral for Utah miner

While the Co-Op bosses were dismissing the serious situation at that mine, another event was taking place a few miles away, highlighting the life-and-death questions involved in the struggle for safety and unionization of the mines. A standing-room-only crowd attended the February 2 funeral for Shane Jacobson in Helper. Many miners who work at the nonunion Aberdeen mine where Jacobson, 37, was killed January 29 took the day off or made arrangements to work a different shift in order to attend. In a show of solidarity with his family, coal miners from other operations and working people from surrounding towns were also present.

Jacobson was operating the cutting head of longwall mining equipment when a blowout from the coal seam blasted chunks of coal that fatally struck him.

A miner at the Aberdeen mine, which is owned by Andalex Resources Inc., told the *Militant* he was part of a crew a few days after Jacobson’s death that the bosses sent to the longwall section where the blowout occurred. Asking that his name not be used for fear of being fired by the company, he reported his crew shoveled a large amount of coal in an area 40 to 50 feet wide, much of it large chunks.

Some citations on safety violations MSHA has written in connection with Jacobson’s death are posted on a bulletin board at the Aberdeen mine, workers reported. According to a miner working there, who also asked the *Militant* that his name not be used, one of the citations clearly puts responsibility on the company because “bounce guards [were] improperly fastened according to the plan.” Bounce guards are four-by-six feet sheets of thick rubber that hang from the longwall shield and are fastened to the floor to protect the miners from coal bursting out of the seam.

A full report from MSHA on the accident is not expected soon. This initial citation, however, makes clear safety pro-



AP/Jerry Boggs



Courtesy: Cathy Thornsby

Above: Entrance to Maverick Mining Co. coal mine in Pikeville, Kentucky, where Cornelius Yates was killed January 10, when a section of the roof collapsed. Left: Miner James Thornsby Sr., 72, was killed January 23 at Sassy Coal Co.’s No. 4 mine in Pike County, Kentucky, after he fell from a moving coal truck. Mine safety officials initially said he died from a heart attack.

cedures could have been in place to safeguard Jacobson’s life. It refutes claims by the media here that have echoed company pronouncements in stating that Jacobson died due to a “freak accident.”

on safety by the bosses, who then told workers to get back on the job quickly. “It was an hour at most and then we were back at work,” a miner at the Rockspring mine in East Lynn, West Virginia, told the *Militant*. He asked that his name not be used to avoid being fired by the boss. “I told my co-workers that they would never shut down production. The governor couldn’t keep his job and shut down the mines.” This mine is owned by Foundation Coal Corporation and is non-

union. Miners there have been fighting to organize into the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA). A majority of the workers voted for the UMWA in 2003, but the company appealed the results to the National Labor Relations Board, which has yet to rule on the case.

“A ‘stand down’ is up to the company,” said William Chapman, an underground miner for 20 years in eastern Kentucky. “The union safety committee is one of the best things to prevent deaths and injuries. In a union mine, the union representative goes with the mine inspector during inspections. In a nonunion mine it’s usually a boss. And I would say that most mine inspectors are past coal bosses.”

A number of miners said that as the percentage of unionized mines has dropped, the coal bosses have increased the hiring of contract labor to divide the workforce, drive down wages, and deflect liability for safety and discriminatory hiring practices. Several workers said there is a need to organize everyone into the union, contractors and full-time miners. According to the *Charleston Gazette*, on any given day there are 12,000 contractors in West Virginia mines, about the same number as full-time miners employed directly by coal companies.

“In the mines you operate on the buddy system,” said Bethel Purkey, who worked for 28 years at underground mines owned by Pittston Mining company and served as a local union president and head of the safety committee during that time. “You always need to know where the other miner is. That is key to safety. Having the same miners work together, who know the mines, who know the escape ways. Now the mine bosses are sending in contractors who are totally new to the mine. They might work one place one day and another place another. This is dangerous.

“When you don’t have the union, you don’t have miners’ reps that can shut that mine down,” Purkey continued. “We never had to ask to shut the mine down if we felt it was unsafe.”

Paul Mailhot contributed to this article.

Appeal to our readers

Help ‘Militant’ continue coverage from coalfields!

The ‘Militant’ has spent over \$1,500 the last two weeks to provide first-hand coverage from the coalfields and other mines across North America, like the articles above and on the facing page. In addition, we have so far incurred over \$1,000 in unanticipated expenses for shipping thousands of extra copies of the February 6 issue that featured the banner headline “Unionize the mines! Build the UMWA! No worker has to die! Only with a union can workers enforce safety.” Some 18,000 copies of that issue have been distributed or continue to be sold at the special price of 25 cents per copy at mine portals, factory gates, working-class neighborhoods, and elsewhere. We plan to continue, with your help. Please contribute generously. Send your check or money order to The Militant at 306 W. 37th St., 10th Floor, New York, NY 10018.

Malcolm X: ‘You and I are living in a time of revolution’

Below is an excerpt from February 1965: The Final Speeches by Malcolm X, one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for February. In the speeches and interviews in this collection Malcolm brings a revolutionary internationalist outlook to young civil rights fighters in Selma, Alabama; details for the first time some of the conflicts that led him out of the Nation of Islam; and speaks out against U.S. military intervention in Africa, Vietnam, and

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

elsewhere. The excerpt below is from a speech Malcolm gave to a rally of the Organization of Afro-American Unity in Harlem, New York, on Feb. 15, 1965. Copyright © 1992 by Betty Shabazz and Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

BY MALCOLM X

You and I are living at a time when there's a revolution going on. A world-wide revolution. It goes beyond Mississippi. It goes beyond Alabama. It goes beyond Harlem. There's a worldwide revolution going on. And it's in two phases.

Number one, what is it revolting against? The power structure. The American power structure? No. The



Robert Parent

Malcolm X speaking at the founding meeting of the Organization of Afro-American Unity held at the Audubon Ballroom in New York City, July 28, 1964.

French power structure? No. The English power structure? No. Then what power structure? An international Western power structure. An international power structure consisting of American interests, French interests, English interests, Belgian interests, European interests. These countries that formerly colonized the dark man formed into a giant international combine. A structure, a house that has ruled the world up until now. And in recent times there has been a revolution taking place in Asia and in Africa, whacking away at the strength or at the foundation of the power structure.

Now, the man was shook up enough when Africa was in revolt and when Asia was in revolt. All of this revolt was actually taking place on the outside of his house, on the outside of his base, or on the outside of his headquarters. But now he's faced with something new. Just as the French and the British and the Americans formed one huge home

or house or power structure, those brothers in Africa and Asia, although they are fighting against it, they also have some brothers on the inside of the house.

And as fast as the brothers in Africa and Asia get their independence, get freedom, get strength, begin to rise up, begin to change their image from negative to positive—this African image that has jumped from negative to positive affects the image that the Black man in the Western Hemisphere has of himself. Whereas in the West Indies and in Latin American countries and in the United States, you or I used to be ashamed of ourselves, used to look down upon ourselves, used to have no tendency whatsoever or desire whatsoever to stick together. As the African nations become independent and mold a new image—a positive image, a militant image, an upright image, the image of a man, not a boy—how has this affected the Black man in the

Western Hemisphere? It has taken the Black man in the Caribbean and given him some pride. It has given pride to the Black man in Latin America and has given pride to the Black man right here in the United States. So that when the Black revolution begins to roll on the African continent, it affects the Black man in the United States and affects the relationship between the Black man and the white man in the United States.

When the Black man in the Caribbean sees the brother on the continent of Africa waking up and rising up, the Black man in the Caribbean begins to throw back his shoulders and stick out his chest and stand up. [Applause] Now, when that Black man goes to England he's right inside the English power structure, ready to give it trouble. When the Black man from the French West Indies goes to France, why the effect upon him of the African revolution is the same as the effect upon us here in the States by the African revolution. This is what you have to understand.

Now, up to now there have been Black people in France, divided. Black people in England, divided. Black people here in America, divided. What divided us? Our lack of pride. Our lack of racial identity. Our lack of racial pride. Our lack of cultural roots. We had nothing in common. But as the African nation got its independence and changed it image, we became proud of it. And to the same degree that we became proud of it, we began to have something in common to that same degree. So, whereas formerly it was difficult to unite Black people, today it is easier to unite Black people. Where formerly Black people didn't want to come together with Black people, but only with white people, today you find Black people want to come together with Black people. All they need is someone to start the ball rolling. [Applause]

February

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

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Malcolm X

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Endorse, donate to labor defense case

Continued from front page

and more working people are willing to support the fight to defeat the C.W. Mining lawsuit. They see more clearly its nature. They understand better how this coal boss filed the suit to retaliate against workers who struggled uncompromisingly for decent pay, safe working conditions, and for representation by the union of their choice—the UMWA.

The wealthy owners of C.W. Mining also want to silence and financially strangle the *Militant*—a socialist newsweekly published in the interests of working people that dares to report what the workers have to say and tell it like it is on the facts of every struggle. The *Militant* never backed down from editorially supporting the Co-Op miners’ struggle, and that of other miners fighting for union recognition, safety on the job, and dignity.

The *Militant* has embraced the effort organized by the Militant Fighting Fund to win as many new endorsers as possible for the defense campaign prior to the February 17 court hearing. On that day attorneys for the defendants will argue their motions to dismiss the C.W. Mining lawsuit in a federal courtroom in Salt Lake City, Utah. Let’s go into that hearing having added 100 new endorsers or more to the already substantial list of supporters

of the Militant Fighting Fund.

Growing support for defending labor rights, freedom of the press, and freedom of speech will also be a boost to former Co-Op miners and the UMWA as they prepare for a March 14 hearing in Price, Utah. A National Labor Relations Board judge will hear testimony that day on the UMWA’s pending claim that the miners were illegally fired by the company in December 2004, on the eve of a union representation vote at the mine.

Any reader can download from www.themilitant.com the latest brochure and endorser card issued by the organizers of the Militant Fighting Fund. Take the brochures with you on the job. Discuss the defense effort with co-workers or fellow students and sign them up. Share the material with family, friends, and colleagues. Contribute financially and ask others to do the same.

The bosses have large resources at their disposal. They are using the lawsuit to wear out the defendants and drain them financially. The Militant Fighting Fund, which is raising the funds for the *Militant*’s defense, is counting on workers, farmers, students, and others like you to beat back this assault on workers’ rights, freedom of speech, and freedom of the press.

Join the effort!

Support grows for Militant Fighting Fund

BY PAUL MAILHOT

SALT LAKE CITY, Utah—As the February 17 court hearing in the C.W. Mining retaliatory lawsuit against the *Militant*, United Mine Workers of America (UMWA), 16 Co-Op miners, and others approaches, supporters of the *Militant* are winning new endorsers for the Militant Fighting Fund, which organizes the public defense campaign. “On behalf of our 25,000 members in Baltimore, Delaware, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia, we also would like our Local Union included with those groups in support of the United Mine Workers of America and the Co-Op miners...fighting for dignity and respect,” said Buddy Mays, president of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 27, in a recent letter to the Militant Fighting Fund.

Kathy Black, president of the Philadelphia chapter of the Coalition of Labor Union Women, and Bob Guild from New Jersey, a member of the Venceremos Brigade that organizes solidarity trips to Cuba, endorsed over the last week too.

Support is coming from other countries as well. “The workers’ movement needs a voice,” said Per Johansson, president of the Union of Service and Communication Employees (SEKO) Local 119, in

Stockholm, Sweden, as he endorsed the Militant Fighting Fund.

Johansson was fired from his job as a subway driver September 29 for “disloyalty” and “insulting conduct,” according to Connex, his employer. Two weeks earlier Johansson had publicly criticized the company for lack of safety on the trains and for putting drivers at risk in case of fire, when emergency exits did not function. His firing was followed by two protest strikes by members of Local 119 in October and November. According to the union, more than half the trains stood still during both strikes. Johansson’s support comes as part of other endorsements in Sweden for the Militant Fighting Fund. “We send our greetings of commitment with the fight and our support of international solidarity. Here is a combative hug from the team at Radio Nueva America in Stockholm,” said a note from Hector Abarca, director of the Stockholm-based Spanish-language radio station.

Please send endorsements and contributions to the Militant Fighting Fund, P.O. Box 520994, Salt Lake City, Utah 84152. Email: MilitantFightingFund@yahoo.com

Björn Tirsén contributed to this article.

LETTERS

Mine safety

Thank you for fighting to protect coal miners and other workers. Criminal charges should be pressed against the owners of the mines in West Virginia and Utah. When company owners have to do time in prison for causing injuries they will think twice about unsafe conditions.

*Daniel Barker
Lakeland, Florida*

Safety and profits

With the increasing injury and death rate facing workers, it would be useful to mention past writings on this by leaders of the communist movement. I came across the following in Vol. 3 of *Capital* by Karl Marx: “The capitalist mode of production leads to count the

squandering of the life and health of the worker... [as] a means for raising the rate of profit.” In this respect, nothing has changed since this was written 150 years ago.

*Rick Young
Chicago, Illinois*

Restart bundle

The latest edition (Feb. 6, 2006, No. 5) is excellent. Its lead story and headline accurately describe the trajectory of the class struggle and what must be done now and how to do it. Worker-correspondents wrote the articles that provide the factual basis for the editorial “Unionize the Mines! Build the UMWA!” and the campaign to increase the *Militant*’s long-term subscription base.

I would like to see more short

articles in the “On the Picket Line” column. A factual snapshot of current fights is just as important as the “big picture” articles and editorials. It is a good way for new worker-correspondents to provide facts and the views of fellow workers around the globe.

I am sending a check to recharge my account. Please restart my bundle.

*Robin Maisel
Waco, Texas*

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.

Iran’s nuclear program

Continued from front page

power is necessary to meet its energy and development needs and denies it is trying to build an atomic bomb.

Many U.S. allies in Europe have closed ranks with Washington on the matter. “We must prevent Iran from developing its nuclear program further,” Angela Merkel, Germany’s chancellor, said in a speech to the annual Munich Conference on Security Policy, held in the German city with the same name, as the IAEA was holding its meeting in Vienna.

Merkel said Iran’s government has “blatantly crossed the red line,” not just with its nuclear program but with its president’s statements against Israel. “A president that questions Israel’s right to exist, a president that denies the Holocaust, cannot expect to receive any tolerance from Germany,” she said.

“The Iranian regime is today the world’s leading state sponsor of terrorism,” declared U.S. secretary of defense Donald Rumsfeld at the Munich conference, adding that Washington and its allies must work together to “prevent a nuclear Iran.”

The imperialist powers succeeded in getting most of the 16 members of the Non-Aligned Movement represented in the IAEA—including Argentina, Brazil, Egypt, India, and Ghana—to vote for referring Iran to the UN Security Council. To save face, a number of these regimes rationalized their vote by pointing to a clause that they argued be included in the IAEA resolution. It states: “A solution to the Iranian issue would contribute to global non-proliferation efforts and to realizing the objective of a Middle East free of weapons of mass destruction, including their means of delivery.”

Washington succeeded in watering down this clause to avoid explicit reference to nuclear arms, since Tel Aviv, the strongest U.S. ally in the region, has such weapons without admitting it publicly.

The IAEA resolution says there is an “absence of confidence that Iran’s nuclear program is exclusively for peaceful purposes.” It demands that Tehran “re-establish full and sustained suspension of all enrichment-related and reprocessing activities, including research and development, to be verified by the Agency.” It also orders the Iranian government to give UN snoops additional powers to investigate Iran’s nuclear program, including “access to individuals, documentation relating to procurement, dual use equipment, [and] certain military-owned workshops.” And it instructs the IAEA director general to report to the UN Security Council in March on whether Iran adhered to these demands.

Javad Vaidi, deputy secretary of Iran’s National Security Council, said his government would resume uranium enrichment and stop cooperating with UN inspectors.

Appealing for support to other countries oppressed by imperialism, Iran’s president, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, said that a few nuclear states, “the hegemonic powers, assume if they would manage to block Iran’s path, they would also succeed in blocking other nations’ path.”

Tehran says it must develop atomic energy to meet the country’s growing needs. In an article in the January 19 *New Zealand Herald*, Iran’s ambassador to New Zealand, Kambiz Sheikh-Hassani, made the case succinctly. He pointed out that Iran’s nuclear program began under the U.S.-backed regime of the shah, which was toppled through a popular revolution in 1979. Since then, he noted, “The Iranian population has more than doubled, from 32 million to nearly 70 million.... Iran’s installed electrical capacity is 30,000 megawatts and the country needs additional generation of 2000 megawatts each year, which under the best possible circumstances, including the immediate lifting of U.S. sanctions and a flow of vast investment capital into Iran, cannot be produced by oil and gas alone.” The Iranian official said if current trends don’t get reversed, Tehran will become a net importer of oil by the end of this decade. The country today relies on oil for 80 percent of its foreign currency and 45 percent of its annual budget.

Corrections

The Books of the Month column “Seasoned workers led February 1917 Russian Revolution” in issue no. 6, dated Feb. 13, 2006, should have read that workers “meditated [not mediated] hundreds of times about the question of the army.” The headline of an article in issue no. 4, dated Jan. 30, 2006, should have read, “Cintas-backed lawsuit aims to crush unionization efforts,” not “Cintas-funded” lawsuit.