

Chinese-Cuban Revolutionaries Still Lead Cuba

'Our History is Still Being Written' Tells the Generals' Stories

[Asian Fortune](#), Book Review, Barbara Greenway, Posted: Mar 11, 2007 [NT Review it on NewsTrust](#)

All serious readers, whether scholarly or general interest, place a special value on first hand accounts of historical events. Memoirs, autobiographies, interviews of "regular people" who find themselves immersed in historic times bring that history to life as no author can. This is why the new book "Our History Is Still Being Written" has such an important role to play in modern Chinese history.

The book is a series of interviews with three Cuban generals of Chinese descent who as young rebels in pre-revolutionary Cuba became heroic fighters in the battle to overthrow the despised Batista regime. In the almost fifty years since, they have each played invaluable roles in the Cuban military in international missions, each rising to the rank of general. chinese cubans

They speak quite eloquently of the days of racial discrimination. Armando Choy, one of the interviewees explained his experience as a youth trying to go to a dance. "When my friend and the girl tried to get in, they were turned away because they were Chinese. It was for whites only! That act of discrimination convinced me of the injustice prevailing in Cuba before the triumph of the revolution."

The generals also give a vivid picture of life for Chinese immigrants dating back to the 1800s, when many came as indentured servants. The detailed descriptions bring to life both the hardships and the contributions of the Chinese who settled in Cuba. Chinese fighters fought in Cuba, for example, in the war for independence against Spain in the 1860s and 1870s.

But perhaps the most fascinating of the discussions in the interviews conducted are the first hand accounts of the role of revolutionary Cubans in international actions from Angola to Nicaragua to Venezuela today. These generals are socialists and partisans of the socialist revolution in Cuba. They defend Cuba's actions within its own borders and its internationalist missions around the world.

They speak proudly of their relationships with Fidel and Raul Castro and their work with Che Guevera. In a discussion of the quality of leadership, Moises Sio Wong explained, "In our army the leader is an example. This was always a characteristic of Che, who was incapable of giving an order he himself was not prepared to carry

out. And it's equally true of Raul and Fidel.”

Today each man still plays a critical role in Cuba. Although in their 70s, their positions of responsibility keep them young and busy.

Armando Choy heads up the massive project to clean up the polluted Havana Bay and leads the modernization of the Port of Havana.

Sio Wong is the president of the National Institute of State Reserves that involves both military defense and rapid response in the area of natural disasters.

Gustavo Chui is head of the Association of Combatants of the Cuban Revolution, an organization of more than 300,000 members that is responsible for the political education program found in schools and communities around Cuba.

One additional noteworthy aspect of the book is the wonderful photo signature.

A variety of maps, sketches, and previously unavailable photographs help the reader visually understand the times described by the generals. Archival photos display everything from mass meetings in Havana's Chinatown in 1960 to Cuban doctors working among the Venezuelan poor in 1999.

Reading this book gives the reader a glimpse of life in Cuba rarely visible in the United States today. And it tells a previously untold story---the Chinese of Cuba yesterday, today, and tomorrow.

Our History is Still Being Written: The Story of Three Chinese-Cuban Generals in the Cuban Revolution.

Pathfinder Press,\$20,216 pp.

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