

# Egypt's workers defy U.S.-backed junta

By Fred Goldstein

Feb. 15 — The Egyptian military would like to put the genie of the Egyptian Revolution back in the bottle. But it won't go back. The so-called "orderly transition" — backed by the Obama administration, NATO and the Egyptian ruling class — has the immediate tactical goal of pushing the masses of people off the streets and off the stage of history.

But millions of Egyptians for the last few weeks have fought and demonstrated in historic numbers, with passionate intensity, for a better future and against 30 years of police repression, thievery and growing economic hardship. They will not be pushed back into submission by commands from an outmoded, reactionary military junta.

The 19-member Supreme Council of the Armed Forces has assumed power in the aftermath of the downfall of hated former President Hosni Mubarak. The junta quickly declared that the 1979 Peace Treaty with Israel would remain in force. Thus, the generals promised to uphold the cornerstone of Washington's and the Pentagon's strategic policy in the Middle East.

The council issued a series of demagogic communiqués praising the protests and promising to establish democracy, but also calling for an end to protests and for things to go back to "normal."

#### A council of Mubarak's generals

This is a council of Mubarak's generals. They have thrived off \$50 billion in U.S. military aid over the last 30 years. They are intimately tied to U.S. imperialism and the Pentagon. They own businesses in many sectors of the economy and are firmly entrenched. They have operated behind the scenes for 30 years. But having been forced by a titanic mass struggle to get rid of Mubarak, they now have to step forward and rule openly on an emergency basis.

The next phase of the struggle has not yet begun. At this moment things are at the stage of maneuver between the council and its behind-the-scenes backers in Washington, on the one hand, and the

revolution and its various representatives on the other.

The generals have dissolved the old corrupt parliament. They are forming a committee to amend the constitution and are promising elections in six months. But the council did not lift the emergency law of 1981, under which the military/police state can seize and imprison anyone. Neither have they freed the thousands of political prisoners. These were key demands of the revolution.

In a controversial move, two representatives of the 13-member Revolutionary Youth Alliance met with the Council and gave an equally controversial positive reaction to the meeting. The Alliance is a coalition of the various forces, some of whom helped organize or otherwise played a role in the demonstrations. Among them were representatives of the April 6 Movement, the youth of the Muslim Brotherhood and the forces around Mohamed ElBaridei. Another meeting is scheduled.

Of course the aim of the military is to break the momentum of the revolution while keeping the old order in place behind a false democratic façade.

The aim of the revolution is to achieve a genuine popular democracy and an end to the military/police dictatorship, which is still in place but has to act with caution and deception in the face of the revolution. Only the struggle will determine the

ultimate outcome. It has been reported that mass "Victory" demonstrations are scheduled for Friday. The mass struggle is the only genuine leverage that the revolution has.

#### Strike wave sweeps the country

In the aftermath of the downfall of Mubarak, workers all over Egypt have exploded in protest. The Supreme Council has issued "Communiqué No. 5," stating, "Noble Egyptians see that strikes, at this delicate time, lead to negative results." This was a thinly veiled threat, but can the generals enforce it?

The Central Bank had to order all banks closed on Feb. 14 after "massive worker protests apparently drove the chairman of the National Bank of Egypt, Tarek Amer, out of the institution," said CNN. The workers are demanding that their temporary jobs be made permanent, among other things.

The stock exchange had to postpone reopening. It had closed on Jan. 30 and was scheduled to reopen on Feb. 16, but the workers at the stock exchange went on strike. It is now rescheduled to open on Feb. 21.

There are also strikes at textile companies, media organizations, steel companies, the postal service, railways and the health ministry. (Aljazeera.net, Feb. 14) Other strikes were reported among public bus

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## Wisconsin workers demand: 'Kill the bill'



An estimated 15,000 workers from all over Wisconsin descended upon the state Capitol in Madison Feb. 15 for an all-day protest against a proposed bill that attacks the rights of public-sector workers, especially the right to collective bargaining. Not only were the workers outside, but workers inside the Capitol took four floors and legislators' offices. Firefighters and teachers organized strong delegations along with youth and students. Elsewhere in the state, there were student walkouts from schools. A number of the workers' placards paid homage to the struggle of the Egyptian people. Read more on page 4.

—Report and photo by Bryan G. Pfeifer

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# DAVE AXELROD, PRESENTE! Lifelong fighter for a workers' world

**WORKERS WORLD**  
*this week...*

By Sue Davis

Dave Axelrod devoted his entire life to the fight for socialism.

Everywhere he went, he wore progressive buttons, gave out leaflets and Workers World newspapers, and talked to whomever he could find about the pressing issues of the day. He expressed his enthusiasm for political action through Workers World Party, which he joined in the early 1960s, and at work, in unions, with his neighbors and in the communities where he lived.

Axelrod believed wholeheartedly in the working class and its power to overturn capitalism. He unwaveringly supported self-determination for the world's oppressed peoples. How excited he would be about the unfolding Egyptian revolution!

Born to left-wing political parents in 1938, Axelrod organized one of his first political activities at the University of California, Los Angeles, where he earned a degree in electrical engineering. Inspired by the student-led, lunch-counter sit-ins in North Carolina to end Jim Crow segregation, he organized demonstrations at Walgreens in 1960 and 1961 to stop de facto segregation and demand that Black workers be hired.

After he moved to New York City a few years later to help grow WWP, Axelrod worked tirelessly to help build an anti-racist, anti-imperialist, anti-war movement through its youth group, Youth Against War and Fascism. In 1965, he contributed a Black leader's eyewitness account of the Los Angeles Watts rebellion to YAWF's magazine, *The Partisan*.

## Anti-imperialist leader

As a YAWF spokesperson, Axelrod participated in Alternate U meetings attended by anarchist and left-leaning youth beginning in 1966. There he met draft-age men looking for ways to resist the Vietnam War. However, when he raised the need to include draft resistance as part of anti-war organizing at a Student Mobilization Committee meeting in May 1967, members of other parties shot down his proposal, although the Black students supported it.

Axelrod's vision was verified later that year during Stop the Draft Week, when hundreds of youth marched daily from the draft board in lower Manhattan to Times Square. Draft-card burning soon became routine at U.S. anti-war demonstrations.

Driven by Axelrod's leadership, YAWF founded the Coalition for an Anti-Imperialist Movement early in 1968. Co-AIM called its first action in April, after Mayor John Lindsay, who had just instituted a racist stop-and-frisk law designed to stop Black protest, was invited to speak at a peace rally in Central Park. Co-AIM's feeder march protested Lindsay's declaration of war against the Black community and his nonexistent anti-Vietnam war credentials.

As several hundred Co-AIM protesters started to march out of Washington Square Park, undercover cops ambushed and assaulted them. About 150 protesters were arrested, though dozens made their way to the peace rally.

Not to be intimidated, Co-AIM organized a follow-up, "The Streets Belong to the People" demonstration, which successfully marched from the park through the



Dave Axelrod died at age 72 on Jan. 22.

WW PHOTO: G. DUNKEL

East Village. It was the first major U.S. anti-imperialist, anti-war march. It attracted militant activists to YAWF and WWP.

YAWF became famous for its mobile street tactics. Axelrod made "a unique contribution by engineering mobile sound systems," remembers YAWF member Hillel Cohen. "Because the movement couldn't afford professional bullhorns, Dave rigged together batteries that you get at hardware stores with surplus amplification and microphones to create a device that could be assembled quickly and that you could run with to avoid the

police on a mobile demonstration."

Axelrod worked on sound through the ensuing decades, marking countless international anti-imperialist struggles. "Even though he was struggling with cancer on May Day 2010, Dave was still at the controls of the sound system," notes Cohen.

## Community activist

When gentrification of Manhattan's Lower East Side began in the mid-1970s, Axelrod, like many of his Puerto Rican neighbors, moved to Hoboken, N.J., a working-class town that was more than 50 percent Latino/a. However, gentrification began there in the early 1980s, and arsonist fires were set to drive out Latino/a families.

Moreover, landlords sought to renovate apartments and raise rents, so they tried to change the rent control law, won through struggle in 1973, to include vacancy decontrol. Axelrod and neighbor Dan Tumpson swung into action. They found that the city charter included the right to mount a referendum that could be used to try to stop vacancy decontrol.

"We needed to get 25 percent of the registered voters, which would have been 4,500, but we got 2,800 signatures, which was amazing in just five days," recounts Tumpson. When they presented the petition, the city council meeting turned into a community revolt.

After a speaker was thrown out, Axelrod took the microphone. "Dave was asked to take his hat off, but he refused, so they just shut down the meeting," reports Tumpson. Though the activists didn't defeat vacancy decontrol, defending rent control continued for years; it is up again this year. "We stopped them with petitions every time," notes Tumpson. "Dave was always great on strategy."

## Activist on the job

Not wanting a job as a corporate war industry engineer, Axelrod took unskilled jobs, which freed him to do political organizing. Nevertheless, he made a statement by choosing to work in the 1960s and 1970s as a stock clerk at the Margaret Sanger Clinic, which provided vital women's health care. By the 1990s, he worked on the library's technical services staff at the New York City Technical College, now called the NYC College of Technology.

A member of District Council 37 of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, Axelrod met students and faculty at work. He posted flyers about International Action Center activities and left WW newspapers in prominent places. He proofread and wrote articles for the student newspaper, including a series on the struggle to free death-row prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal.

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# Legal Defense Fund joins Mumia Abu-Jamal defense team

From a news release posted on Feb. 7 at <http://tinyurl.com/4h49y7e>.

On Jan. 28, Mumia Abu-Jamal retained the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. to represent him in the ongoing appeal of his capital murder conviction and death sentence. LDF will serve as co-counsel in the case with Judy Ritter, Esq., of Widener Law School in Wilmington, Del., who has represented Mr. Abu-Jamal since 2003.

Mr. Abu-Jamal is the world's best known death-row prisoner. His case has attracted attention from around the world and he is widely viewed as a symbol of the

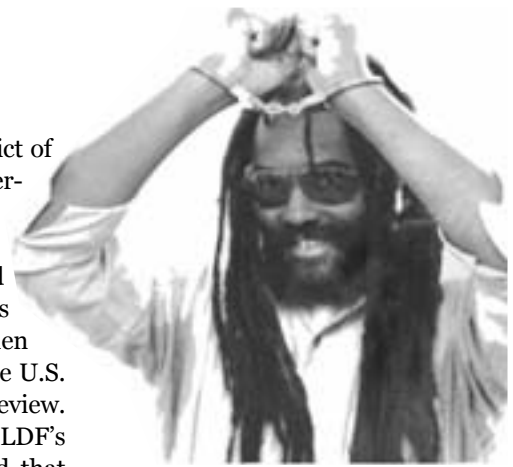
racial injustices of the death penalty.

"Mumia Abu-Jamal's conviction and death sentence are relics of a time and place that was notorious for police abuse and racial discrimination," said John Payton, director-counsel of LDF. "Unless and until courts acknowledge and correct these historic injustices, death sentences like Mr. Abu-Jamal's will invite continued skepticism of the criminal justice system by the African-American community."

Mr. Abu-Jamal is on death row in Pennsylvania for the 1981 murder of a police officer in Philadelphia. His death sentence was vacated in 2001 after the Federal

District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania found constitutional error in the jury instructions and verdict form used in his 1982 penalty phase. That decision was affirmed by the United States Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit in 2008 but then sent back to the Third Circuit by the U.S. Supreme Court in 2010 for further review.

Christina Swarns, Director of LDF's Criminal Justice Project, explained that "LDF seeks to sweep the grave injustices embodied in this case into the dustbin of history and, in so doing, give communities of color reason to believe that they



can and will receive equal justice in Pennsylvania courtrooms."

Mr. Abu-Jamal's appeal is currently pending before the Third Circuit. □

## 'Kids-for-cash' trial opens in Pa.

By Betsey Piette

In a "kids-for-cash" scandal that's being called the most serious cases of judicial wrongdoing in recent decades, two judges in Pennsylvania's Luzerne County allegedly accepted nearly \$2.9 million for locking up juvenile defenders in privately run detention facilities.

According to federal charges against ex-Judges Michael T. Conahan and Mark A. Ciavarella Jr., while presiding over juvenile court the pair took kickbacks from the owner and builder of two private detention centers. In exchange, the judges closed a county-run detention facility in 2002. To keep the private centers busy, for over five years they handed down harsh sentences to nearly 4,000 children as young as 10, largely for minor offenses.

The state investigation that eventually led to federal charges against the two found that in 2007 one out of four juveniles ruled delinquent in Luzerne County was incarcerated. That is nearly double the rate elsewhere in Pennsylvania.

In 2009 Conahan pled guilty to a single corruption count. He is awaiting sentencing of up to seven years in prison. Initially offered the same option, Ciavarella also pled guilty. He later changed his plea after

federal Judge Edwin M. Kosik killed the deal as too lenient. On Feb. 7 Ciavarella's federal corruption trial got under way in a Scranton, Pa., courthouse.

Charges have been filed against nearly 30 officials, including another judge, a state senator, school board members and county officials. The private detention facility builder, Robert Mericle, and owner Robert J. Powell also pled guilty.

Full details of the kickback scheme, however, have not yet been made public because Ciavarella's case is the first to come to trial. Testifying as a lead prosecution witness, Powell claimed the judges extorted millions from him in exchange for their services. Powell received more than \$30 million in county funds to house children and teen-agers whom Ciavarella sent to his facilities.

### 11-year-old taken away in shackles

Ciavarella has had nearly two years to prepare his defense. The young people he sent to detention were denied their most basic rights to due process and fair trials. Frequently the teenagers and their families were talked into waiving their right to counsel, a major factor contributing to the convictions.

Over half of the youths involved ap-

peared before the judges without attorneys. This is the highest rate of nonrepresentation in any juvenile court in the country, according to Marsha Levick, chief counsel for the Juvenile Law Center in Philadelphia (Philadelphia Inquirer, Feb. 6). Pennsylvania has yet to require that all juvenile defendants be represented by a lawyer.

Ciavarella sent an 11-year-old boy away in leg shackles when his parents could not afford to pay a \$488 fine. The judge imposed a six-month sentence on a teenager who was seen giving the finger to a police officer. A 15-year-old girl was jailed for creating a parody MySpace page that poked fun at an assistant principal.

Frequently trials were over in minutes, leaving stunned parents watching their kids being taken away in handcuffs and shackles after being sentenced to months and even years in detention.

The kids-for-cash scandal was fueled by the growing practice of school officials calling police for minor offenses. Numerous incidents have surfaced across the U.S. of children as young as 6 being arrested simply for bringing a pair of scissors — now considered a "weapon" — to school.

Rather than question the high incar-

ceration rate, local newspapers including the Wilkes-Barre Times Leader saluted Ciavarella, who was named "man of the year" in 2006 by the Friendly Sons of St. Patrick of Greater Wilkes-Barre.

Ciavarella has publicly acknowledged taking hundreds of thousands of dollars from both the owner and the builder of the detention centers and failing to pay taxes on this income. He insists the money was a "finder's fee" for putting the owner in contact with the builder. The alleged bribes supported a lavish lifestyle for the two former judges, including the joint purchase of an \$800,000 condo in Florida.

According to the U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics, in 2009 more than 7.2 million people were on probation, in jail or prison, or on parole in the U.S. — one in every 32 adults. More than 92,854 youth are incarcerated in juvenile facilities. From 1992 to 1997, laws passed in 44 states and the District of Columbia made it easier to try juveniles as adults, a policy that disproportionately affects African-American youth and other youth of color.

Given the thriving prison-industrial complex industry, Luzerne County's prisoners-for-profit arrangement is far from the only one. □

## The fight to protect LGBTQ youth

By Martha Grevatt  
Detroit

In Michigan there is currently a struggle over whether or not to pass "anti-bullying" legislation. To define its opponents as "bigoted extremists" would be an understatement. Who could possibly stand in the way of protecting a child from assault, harassment and intimidation?

Michigan is one of only five states that do not have some sort of legislation that mandates local school districts to adopt a model anti-bullying policy. Physical violence, harassment, intimidation, and verbal, written and graphic gestures — including those that are electronically transmitted — fall under the umbrella of bullying. While the word "bullying" is itself a euphemism for the violent and hate-motivated terror that has led to a spate of widely publicized youth suicides, the push for anti-bullying legislation has spawned a progressive movement uniting the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer communities with teachers and their unions and parent survivors of "bullycide."

Named for Matt Epling, who took his life at the age of 14 after being repeatedly tortured by his classmates, "Matt's Law" has been introduced and reintroduced

in the Michigan Legislature over the past 10 years. A version passed by the House in 2006 defined bullying as abuse "that is reasonably perceived as being motivated either by any actual or perceived characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression; or a mental, physical, or sensory disability or impairment; or by any other distinguishing characteristic." Under the Model Policy, school boards must institute "appropriate remedial actions for a student or staff member who commits one or more acts of harassment or bullying [which] may range from positive behavioral interventions up to and including suspension or expulsion, in the case of a student, or suspension or termination in the case of an employee." ([www.michigan.gov](http://www.michigan.gov))

The Republican-dominated state Senate has repeatedly blocked passage. The bill's most vocal opponent has been Gary Glenn of the American Family Association's state chapter, who objects to protecting LGBTQ youth. "Public school officials have a legal duty not to put children at risk by in any way legitimizing or encouraging homosexual behavior," this bigot stated in 2007, "a practice scientifically proven to result in a dramatically

higher incidence of domestic violence, mental illness, illegal drug use, promiscuity, life-threatening disease, and premature death." (Michigan Messenger)

The LGBTQ movement is split over whether to support a compromise bill eliminating "enumeration" of the various well-documented hate motives, referring instead to acts "motivated by animus or by an actual perceived characteristic." Some activists believe that the substitute language would still give targeted youth a measure of protection; others demand enumeration, citing studies showing that harassment and physical abuse of LGBTQ students are less frequent when their oppression is spelled out. Hundreds representing both viewpoints came out for a Jan. 26 public hearing sponsored by the Michigan Civil Rights Commission, joining in outrage at the failure to pass any kind of legislation protecting youth not only from anti-LGBTQ bigotry, but also from racist, sexist and anti-disability bigotry.

Glenn remains opposed even to the tame version of Matt's Law. In 2009 he argued that "characteristics" language does not define bullying. It defines one of innumerable motivations for bullying. Of all possible motivations for bullying, what makes that one so special that it's the only one cited by

the legislation?" He favors a version that merely defines bullying as "bad." (Michigan Messenger, March 2, 2009)

Some conservative bigots have taken an even more extreme position, opposing any anti-bullying legislation. In Minnesota, where progressive voices are calling for the strengthening of that state's weak law, unsuccessful Republican candidate for governor Tom Emmer stated last year that "it's up to the parents ... how they handle that situation. ... I don't want the government doing that for us." (Minnesota Independent, Sept. 8) Others are parroting the old racist "states rights" line, using Michigan's "home rule" law to encourage local communities to oppose state mandates designed to protect youth.

### Safe schools are a right!

According to The Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network's 2009 School Climate Survey, 84.6 percent of LGBTQ students had been verbally harassed, 40.1 percent physically harassed, and 18.8 percent physically assaulted; LGBTQ youth were reportedly bullied at a rate four times that of non-LGBTQ youth. They had the second-highest rate of reported abuse overall. Frequent attacks

Continued on page 4

## In response to anti-labor attacks

# Wisconsin public-sector unions mobilize

By Bryan G. Pfeifer

On behalf of the banks, the corporations and the Pentagon, Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker has declared all-out war on unions and their allies. Walker's "budget repair bill" proposal, which he unveiled at a state Capitol press conference on Feb. 11, proposes to virtually eliminate collective bargaining for approximately 175,000 public-sector union members. Walker has submitted his proposal to the Wisconsin Legislature with the directive that he wants his bill passed in the Assembly and the Senate by Feb. 17.

In a swift response, unions and their allies across the state are mobilizing to descend upon the Capitol in Madison this week with two major rallies planned for Feb. 15 and 16. Numerous other protest actions by labor-community-student organizations are ongoing across the state, including two major actions on Feb. 14: a march and rally to the Capitol building led by the Teaching Assistants Association-AFT and a rally at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee led by the Milwaukee Graduate Assistants Association-AFT Local 2169 and AFSCME. ([www.mgaa.org](http://www.mgaa.org))

The Wisconsin AFL-CIO is assisting member unions and federations in their

protest actions to unite all workers in the state: union and nonunion, private and public sector. Facebook support pages are also mobilizing for the protest actions.

"This budget repair bill is an all-out assault on you, your families, your careers, your rights and your union. Walker keeps talking about the 'good and decent people who work for the State of Wisconsin,' but his actions speak a different message of divisiveness, cronyism and servitude," AFSCME Council 24 wrote in a letter to its members after Walker's Feb. 11 press conference. ([www.wseu-sepac.org](http://www.wseu-sepac.org))

Some of the provisions in Walker's bill include:

"Collective bargaining: The bill would make various changes to limit collective bargaining for most public employees to wages. Total wage increases could not exceed a cap based on the consumer price index unless approved by referendum. Contracts would be limited to one year and wages would be frozen until the new contract is settled. Collective bargaining units are required to take annual votes to maintain certification as a union. Employers would be prohibited from collecting union dues and members of collective bargaining units would not be required to pay dues. These changes

take effect upon the expiration of existing contracts. Local law enforcement and fire employees, and state troopers and inspectors would be exempt from these changes;" ([tinyurl.com/4t400zh](http://tinyurl.com/4t400zh))

The unions in Wisconsin see their fight as part of a national fight, as many other governors also have "right-to-work," deregulation and privatization legislation that they want implemented. If Walker's proposals are passed, they will have an especially negative effect on women, workers of color, and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender workers.

"It is time for working people to come together, put aside our petty differences and confront the corporate and right-wing assault on our justice, dignity, prosperity, way of life and ultimately, our families. This is a fight over who controls and governs our country and its people: corporate and right-wing America, or the multitude of working people," Dave Boucher of UAW Local 833 told this writer.

For a full list of protest actions and for more information: [www.scfl.org](http://www.scfl.org).

*Bryan G. Pfeifer is a former Wisconsin resident and is presently the staff organizer with the Union of Part-Time Faculty-AFT Local 477 at Wayne State University in Detroit.*



## 'STOP FORECLOSURES'

On Feb. 11 the Moratorium NOW Coalition and the People Before Banks Coalition demanded that the federal government stop using tax dollars to reward banks for evicting workers from homes devalued by the capitalist economic crisis by paying the banks the full value of inflated mortgages. The picket at Michigan Sen. Debbie Stabenow's office in downtown Detroit is the first of a series of actions demanding a national moratorium on foreclosures and evictions.

— Cheryl LaBash

WWW PHOTO: ABAYOMI AZIKIWE

## Fight to protect LGBTQ youth

*Continued from page 3*

also occur against youth of color, girls, immigrants, religious minorities and disabled youth. A majority of youth overall experienced some kind of so-called bullying; the number one bullying motive cited was "appearance."

Emboldened by Tea Party advances, the religious right is willing to shove young people into the lion's den for the crime of being different.

The torment all these precious children and youth face under a patriarchal and racist, capitalistic system — where those deemed "beautiful" are exploited to sell products and those deemed "ugly" are ridiculed for profit by the entertainment industry — is criminal. These brutal statistics are another reason to fight for a world where no child will go to school in fear or commit "bullycide" to escape a life of ridicule and terror.

E-mail: [mgrevatt@workers.org](mailto:mgrevatt@workers.org)

## On the Picket Line

By Sue Davis

## Calif. nurses take action and win victories

On the morning of Feb. 3, Blue Shield of California announced a 60-day reprieve on a rate hike of up to 59 percent on individual and family policies. But that didn't stop nurses in the California Nurses Association, patients and consumer advocates from storming the company's fancy headquarters in San Francisco that afternoon. As the Feb. 3 Healthcare-NOW! article about the protest noted: "We can learn a lesson from the streets of Egypt and other Arab countries. Public pressure is essential to confront tyranny, whether you are faced with political repression or corporate control of our health."

Thousands of the members of the California Nurses Association/National Nurses United — registered nurses and nurse practitioners in northern and central California who work for Kaiser Permanente — approved an exemplary three-year contract. It covers 17,000 RNs and NPs in 21 hospitals and 40 medical office buildings. This contract is the single largest contract for nurses in the U.S. and provides, in addition to a 5 percent pay raise each year of the agreement, regional committees that will determine staffing based on patient need and fixed rotations to protect against arbitrary schedule changes. All health care and retirement benefits for current and retired employees are also protected. As Deborah Burger, CNA/NU co-president, stated, "The contract raises the bar for other [hospital/medical] systems and puts pressure on them to work with their nurses to provide the best care you can." ([blog.aflcio.org](http://blog.aflcio.org), Feb. 11)

## Ohio workers defend collective bargaining

Hundreds of Ohio nurses, sanitation workers, bus drivers, firefighters and other public employees packed a Feb. 8 state Senate hearing on a bill that would eliminate collective bargaining rights for all state workers, including faculty and staff at Ohio state colleges and universities. Ohio AFL-CIO President Tim Burga, speaking clearly in opposition to the bill, pointed out that the bill's backers aim to "scapegoat hard-working public service workers" instead of "focusing on solving the economic problems facing Ohio and creating family-sustaining jobs for the 500,000 Ohioans who still remain jobless."

Stay tuned. ([blog.aflcio.org](http://blog.aflcio.org), Feb. 10)

## S.F. Labor opposes Korean trade agreement

The San Francisco Labor Council voted Jan. 24 for a strongly worded resolution opposing the proposed U.S.-Korea so-called "free trade" agreement (KORUS). The resolution noted that KORUS was modeled on a similar agreement with Mexico that has led to the loss of jobs for millions of workers in both Mexico and the U.S. as well as to privatization, deregulation and repression of unions in Mexico. Noting that the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions and other civil, human rights and worker organizations in Korea oppose KORUS, the resolution called on California congresspeople to vote against KORUS. It also asked its members to participate in an anti-KORUS march to the Korean Consulate on Jan. 29 and to support a Labor Community Educational Conference on Feb. 27 at the University of San Francisco.

## All out for Woodlawn cemetery workers, Feb. 21

Managers and directors of Woodlawn Cemetery in the Bronx, N.Y., are getting the idea that the Woodlawn workers are not alone. It might be because their phone lines have been clogged by calls to sign a contract and stop threatening to lay off two-thirds of the workforce and cut pay by 35 percent to 40 percent. Or it could be from watching a "Band of Sisters," who came to the cemetery to honor famous suffragists buried there, and then unfurled their sashes in solidarity with the Woodlawn workers. Or maybe it was plot holders calling for them to cancel their proxy vote and saying they felt concerned

about all the negative media coverage of management's abusive practices.

A major solidarity rally is planned for Presidents' Day, Feb. 21, at Woodlawn Cemetery, 233rd Street and Webster Avenue in the Bronx. The South Bronx Community Congress initiated the solidarity rally, together with the Million Worker March Movement, the Bail Out the People Movement, the Freedom Party and the Teamsters Joint Council. For more information contact Ramon Jimenez at 917-517-1320, or send an e-mail to [LaborCommunityForum@gmail.com](mailto:LaborCommunityForum@gmail.com).

— Dee Knight

## Time for mass protests

# As capitalists recover, jobless crisis deepens

By Fred Goldstein

The announcement by the U.S. government that unemployment dropped from 9.4 percent to 9 percent in January is pure statistical manipulation meant to deceive workers into thinking that things are getting better.

The government admits that, due to population growth, it takes 130,000 new jobs per month to accommodate those entering the labor force. In January only 32,000 new jobs were created. Yet unemployment supposedly dropped by 0.4 percent! The Obama administration hails this economic wizardry as a sign that things are moving forward.

It is an attempt to calm the waters when, in fact, workers, the labor movement, communities and youth should be mobilizing jobs marches in the streets aimed at city halls, state houses, Washington, and the bosses and bankers all across this country. Mass mobilization is urgently needed to combat the increasingly desperate unemployment crisis, which is concealed by statistical hogwash.

Bob Herbert, the well-known African-American columnist for the New York Times, has been writing about the effects of the crisis on the poor. While part of the media establishment, he has nevertheless raged against the lies and the hypocrisy of the government regarding the economy.

He wrote on Feb. 4: "What data zealots need to do is leave their hermetically sealed rooms and step outside, take a walk among the millions of Americans who are hurting to the bone. They should talk with families that are suffering, losing their homes, doubling up, checking into homeless shelters. ...

"Maybe the data zealots have stumbled on a solution," continued Herbert. "They've created a model in which a radically insufficient number of jobs has resulted in a sharp decline in the official gauge of unemployment. If that trend can be sustained, we'll eventually get the jobless rate down to zero. People will still be suffering, but full employment will have finally been achieved."

### 4.9 million 'missing workers'

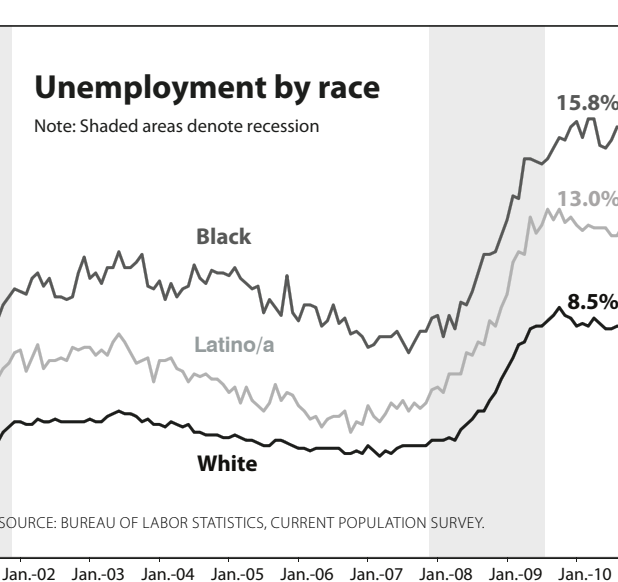
Here are some of the facts omitted by the government in its press releases.

The unemployment rate is calculated on the basis of the number of unemployed compared to the total number of workers considered to be participating in the labor force. This is a very important point to keep in mind.

"Astonishingly, the labor force is three-quarters of a million workers smaller than it was before the recession started," wrote Heidi Shierholz, a researcher for the Economic Policy Institute, a labor-oriented research institute. "It would have been expected to increase by roughly 4.1 million workers from December 2007 to January 2010 given the working-age population growth over this period." (www.epi.org, Feb. 4)

Thus Shierholz concludes there are 4.9 million "missing workers" who either never entered the labor force or dropped out.

If just half of these were calculated as part of the labor force, the official unemployment rate would have gone up to 10.5



percent, according to Shierholz. If all were included, the rate would total 12 percent!

The "missing workers" are undoubtedly disproportionately Black and Latino/a, reflecting the disproportion in unemployment, which is officially 15.7 percent for African-American workers and similar for Latino/a workers. Unemployment is officially 45 percent for African-American teenagers.

### No jobs for three-fourths of unemployed

A more fundamental measure of the crisis is that, even if all jobs available were filled tomorrow, there would not be enough jobs for more than three-quarters of the unemployed workers. The total number of job openings in December was 3.1 million. The official number of unemployed was 14.5 million. The ratio of unemployed workers to jobs was 4.7 to 1. (www.epi.org, Feb. 8)

Shierholz shows that in the 18 months of the very anemic recovery after the 2000-2001 recession, there were 62.6 million job openings. But in the first 18 months of the capitalist recovery from the 2007-2008 crisis, there were only 51.1 million job openings. Today job openings are 18 percent lower than eight years ago, despite a significant increase in population since 2002.

Shierholz concludes that government statistics show that 8.7 million jobs were lost from December 2007 to February 2010. Eleven months later, 1 million jobs had been created — meaning a net loss of 7.7 million. But in addition to that, 3.7 million additional jobs were needed for the working-age population that came into the work force. In other words, the capitalist economy needs 11.4 million more jobs just to get back to the 5 percent unemployment level before the crisis hit.

### View from a worried billionaire

From the other side of the class divide, listen to Mortimer Zuckerman, billionaire real estate developer, publisher and editor of the right-wing magazine "U.S. News & World Report." With \$2.8 billion in wealth, Zuckerman is 147th on Forbes' list of the 400 richest people in the U.S. In an article entitled "The Great Jobs Recession," this ruling-class figure wrote:

"There is no life in our jobs market. The recession officially ended in June 2009, but the Great Jobs Recession continues apace. Not since the government began to measure the business cycle has a deep recession been marked by such high levels of unemployment and underemployment, and followed by such anemic job growth. More jobs were lost in the recession of 2007-09 than in the previous four recessions combined — and this time it is an

agonizingly slow business to replace them." (www.usnews.com, Feb. 11)

Zuckerman goes on: "While the headline unemployment figure is down, the number of 'marginally attached' increased by 300,000, and the decline in the rate from 9.4 to 9 percent is primarily because these workers have just dropped out of the market. But they haven't dropped out of life in [the U.S.]"

Zuckerman also points out that of the 900,000 to 1 million jobs claimed to

have been created in 2010, several hundred thousand were temporary government jobs, like those collecting data for the U.S. Census.

He ticks off a number of issues that he considers crucial. Among them:

- The number of full-time jobs is down by roughly 10 million (his number).
- The number of long-term unemployed, over 27 weeks, is the highest since records have been kept.
- One-third of new jobs in the last year have been from temporary help services which "reflect businesses trying to cut the benefit costs of full-time employment and using just-in-time hiring and part-time hiring to improve the bottom line." (This from a billionaire who is fully aware of his own bottom line.)
- Real hourly pay dropped in the first four quarters since the recession officially ended, instead of the typical 2.5 percent rise during the first four quarters after the last 10 recessions.
- State and local governments, which account for 15 percent of all jobs, are in "downsizing mode."

Toward the end of his piece, Zuckerman gets down to his true concerns.

"Longer-term trends have accelerated in ways depressing for the American worker. There is more outsourcing abroad, more automating, more conversion of full-time jobs to temps and contracts, and a stagnant median wage. Information technologies are advancing dramatically, doubling every couple of years, and increasingly are being employed to eliminate jobs of all types.

"This underscores the downside of advancing technologies, which together with globalization have been the primary forces depressing wages and diminishing opportunities, especially for those jobs that are fundamentally routine and repetitive in nature. The risk that semi-intelligent machines may destroy so many jobs that this trend could literally destabilize the

whole society is one of the greatest challenges facing governments in all countries as they seek to find work for the millions of graduates coming into a labor market that has nothing for them."

Let's hear that again: "could literally destabilize the whole society." This sounds very much like Zuckerman is afraid of an Egypt-style uprising if capitalism continues along its present course.

### Jobless recovery & Marx's law of capitalist accumulation

These findings are completely in accord with Karl Marx's analysis of capitalism. In his epoch-making work, "Capital," Marx showed that as capital grows larger and larger, it becomes more and more productive and has relatively less need for labor. Consequently it creates an ever-growing reserve army of the unemployed. This is dealt with in the "General Law of Capitalist Accumulation" in Volume I. The law described by Marx is now manifesting itself with a vengeance.

The data theoretically and practically important to the working class is the fact that the capitalist recovery — that is, the recovery of business and profits for the capitalists — has reached the stage of economic expansion.

In the fourth quarter of 2010, the capitalist economy grew at a rate of 3.2 percent. This is an improvement over the previous quarter. But most importantly, the gross domestic product, or the sum of all goods and services produced, reached \$13.38 trillion, a new record and higher than the peak in the last upturn. But jobs have not — repeat, not — come back.

Rather, the capitalist economy is growing and jobs are disappearing; unemployed workers are disappearing from the statistics; mass suffering is growing beneath the surface; and the true situation goes unreported. Capitalism has reached a point at which the job market is shrinking as capital grows. This creates a permanent and severe crisis for the masses and for the system itself.

The only way out of this crisis is for the working class and the oppressed in the U.S. to follow in the footsteps of the Egyptian masses who overthrew their dictator, Hosni Mubarak. A very common slogan during that rebellion was "Enough!"

Workers here have had enough unemployment, enough foreclosures and evictions, enough speed-up, loss of wages and benefits, layoffs, hunger and poverty. We have had enough racism, sexism, anti-LGBTQ bigotry, immigrant bashing, police brutality, imprisonment, war, occupation and intervention. Workers are sick and tired of seeing the bankers take in hundreds of billions of dollars while we just try to survive.

Fighting back against capitalism is the only thing left to do. □

## LOW-WAGE CAPITALISM

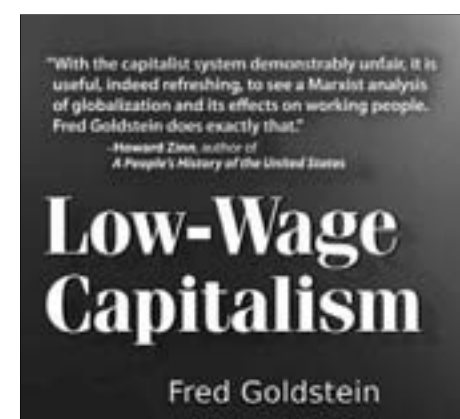
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## BLACK HISTORY MEANS HEROIC FIGHTBACK

# African Americans & the struggle for socialism, 1901-1925

By **Abayomi Azikiwe**  
Editor, Pan-African News Wire

In 1901 the Socialist Party of America, after much ideological and political struggle, emerged as a coalition of various factions within the socialist movement. It had conservative, moderate and revolutionary tendencies within its ranks. Eugene V. Debs, an organizer of workers in the railroad industry, emerged as a charismatic figure, the party's political candidate and a public spokesperson for the socialist movement.

Debs ran numerous times for presidential office and opposed wars of imperialism waged by the U.S. ruling class. He served prison terms for his outspoken opposition to war and U.S. foreign policy.

African-American figures like W.E.B. DuBois, Hubert Harrison, Chandler Owens, A. Philip Randolph and W.A. Domingo joined the Socialist Party after its founding in 1901.

Within the Socialist Party there were two main currents of thought about the role of African Americans in the working-class struggle. One tendency thought it could broaden the socialist movement by downplaying the racism and national op-

pression suffered by the African-American people. But a more left-wing position spoke directly to the race terror faced by African Americans and demanded that the socialist movement condemn racism and commit to the fight for its eradication.

In an essay published in the International Socialist Review in November 1903, Debs reflected on his experience in Yoakum, Texas, when he came upon a group of white men at a railroad station who made disparaging and racist comments about African Americans.

In this essay, entitled "The Negro in the Class Struggle," Debs described these racists as "the foul product of the capitalist system and held in the lowest contempt by the master class," who nevertheless deemed themselves superior and in this reflected "the hatred of their masters."

Debs went on to proclaim: "The whole world is under obligation to the Negro, and that the white heel is still upon the black neck is simply proof that the world is not yet civilized. The history of the Negro in the United States is a history of crime without parallel."

He concluded the essay, "I have said and say again that, properly speaking,

there is no Negro question outside of the labor question — the working class struggle. Our position as socialists and as a party is perfectly plain. We have simply to say: 'The class struggle is colorless.'"

In this quote it can be seen that Debs, while to the left of other white socialists who wanted to ignore racism, failed to acknowledge the importance of the Black struggle for national self-determination. He fell far short of revolutionaries like Karl Marx who, much earlier during the U.S. Civil War, wrote that white workers could never emancipate themselves from wage slavery as long as Black workers were held in bondage.

Within a few years of the founding of the Socialist Party, the capitulation of the social democratic parties in Europe to national chauvinism at the outset of World War I led to the collapse of the Second International. Out of the war came a profound workers' revolution in Russia in 1917 that led a number of African Americans to lean toward communism.

African-American militants who formed the African Blood Brotherhood in the period after World War I, when there were race riots in various parts of the United States,

looked toward the early communists as allies. Many members of the ABB joined the party during the early 1920s.

### Communism & the national question

In 1919 a series of race riots broke out, the violence in Chicago being the most severe.

White mobs and law-enforcement agencies had often invaded African-American communities to rob, loot, rape and murder scores of Black people. However, in the race riots of 1919-1921, African Americans militantly fought back against the white racist elements seeking to inflict terror on their communities. It was during this period that groups such as the African Blood Brotherhood came into existence.

There was also the growth of nationalism and pan-Africanism in African-American communities throughout the U.S. The movement led by Marcus Garvey grew exponentially after World War I, obtaining millions of adherents during the early 1920s. The so-called "Harlem Renaissance," fueled by this new militancy, also found a strong base among African Americans who had migrated from the South during the war.

The Bolshevik Revolution in Russia and the formation of a Third International in-

## The billionaire vs. "Norma Rae"

# Civil Rights & textile workers

By **Stephen Millies**

When Ezell Blair Jr., Franklin McCain, Joseph McNeill and David Richmond began their sit-in in Greensboro, N.C., on Feb. 1, 1960, just 3.3 percent of textile workers were Black. By 1978 African Americans held a quarter of the jobs in the mills.

This was one of the greatest triumphs of the Civil Rights Movement. Billionaire Roger Milliken, who died Dec. 30, did everything he could to stop this progress.

The textile magnate was the moneybags behind the late Sen. Strom Thurmond's racist political machine in South Carolina. The state's highway patrol killed three African Americans in the "Orangeburg Massacre" on Feb. 8, 1968. They were protest-

ing a whites-only bowling alley.

The same year Milliken became one of the finance chairs for Nixon's successful presidential campaign. Milliken was the financial angel for Pat Buchanan's fascist run for the White House in 1996.

Nixon's "Southern Strategy" was also a textile strategy. Thurmond threw his support to Nixon to keep Black workers out of the textile plants — and unions out of the state.

In 1956 Milliken illegally shut his Darlington, S.C., plant after the workers there voted for a union.

Milliken's lawyers dragged out the appeals. It wasn't until 1980 that anyone got any compensation. Workers throughout the South were intimidated by this exam-

ple of successful corporate law breaking.

### Racism kept all workers poor

Keeping Black workers from Southern textile mills helped maintain racism's stranglehold on white workers who were so desperately poor themselves.

White sharecroppers and small farmers living in poverty could unite with African Americans in similar conditions.

They actually did so during the populist movement that shook the South in the 1880s and 1890s, as described in Vince Copeland's classic pamphlet, "Southern Populism and Black Labor."

In 1895 North Carolina's state legislature adjourned for the day upon hearing that Frederick Douglass died. The last African American in Congress until the mid-20th century, George H. White, kept being reelected.

Between 1880 and 1900 the number of white textile workers in the South increased six times. An even greater expansion of Southern textile mills started in the 1920s.

That's when Northern corporations like J.P. Stevens fled their union-vulnerable plants in New England and moved south. These companies remembered the revolt of immigrant textile workers in Lawrence, Mass., led by the Industrial Workers of the World in 1912.

The South was their salvation. Wages in Southern mills were nearly 40 percent below the Northern average. By 1961 the region accounted for 89 percent of textile production in the U.S.

### Fighting for freedom and jobs

The Carolinas and the whole textile belt became a crucible of the freedom movement. Greensboro, N.C. — the birthplace of the sit-ins — was filled with textile mills.

In 1957 Robert F. Williams — president of the NAACP chapter in Monroe, N.C. — organized armed self-defense against a KKK attack.

Demonstrators waged a long battle during 1963 against segregation in Danville, Va. The city was dominated by the Dan River Mills. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. called the resistance of the white power structure there "the worst in the United States."

Danville cops crushed these protests. They brutally attacked marches in 1963, filling hospitals with the injured, many of whom had broken bones.

Opening up the mills to Black workers was the longest struggle. Textile barons like Roger Milliken didn't rush to comply with civil rights laws.

Black women organized car pools of job applicants to go from plant to plant. They sued companies that refused to hire them.

J.P. Stevens was sued by 3,000 plaintiffs. The biggest textile outfit — Burlington Industries — was taken to court by Betsy Ann Broadnax. A leader of the Danville protests, Julius Adams, brought his bosses at Dan River Mills to trial for massive discrimination.

With struggle there was progress. In 1964 less than 5 percent of textile workers in South Carolina were African American. By 1976 nearly one in three was Black.

Especially dramatic were the gains made by Black women. They increased their share of employment in South Carolina's mills 13 times over between 1965 and 1972.

### Organize the South!

Racism didn't disappear. African Americans had to struggle against vicious supervisors and bigoted workers just to stay on the job. More struggles were needed to break into the better-paid, higher-skilled positions.

But Black and white workers were being brought together in the mills. They would be joined by Latino/a workers.

The physical barriers between them were torn down as separate entrances, time clocks and bathrooms were abolished. Just the fact they could eat together was important.

*'Without struggle, there can be no progress'*



The International Action Center outreach table at the African-American History Month celebration at Southwestern College in Chula Vista, Calif., on Feb. 12 provoked much interest and discussion among student, faculty and community attendees. People were attracted by the IAC banner, which included Frederick Douglass' profound observation, "Without a struggle, there can be no progress." And Egypt was on everyone's mind. Among the IAC literature on display, Fred Goldstein's book, "Low-Wage Capitalism," attracted a lot of interest. Many copies of Workers World newspaper were distributed. Pictured from left to right are Lanetta Wilkes of San Diego African American Writers and Artists, Gloria Verdieu of the San Diego International Action Center and San Diego people's poet Silvia Telafaro.

— **Bob McCubbin**



# The reactionary legacy of Ronald Reagan

By Naomi Cohen

Based on a talk given Feb. 10 at a New York Workers World Party meeting. Go to [www.workers.org](http://www.workers.org) to see the podcast of this talk.

Feb. 6 marked the 100th anniversary of the birth of Ronald Reagan and gave the media and right wing the opportunity to subject the population to yet another celebration of the racist, anti-labor, anti-woman, anti-lesbian-gay-bi-trans and militarist legacy of the man.

For the working class and oppressed people it should be a time for reflection over what the significance of the “Reagan era” was for our class and what lessons can be learned in the fight against racism, reaction and imperialist aggression today.

Ronald Reagan began his campaign for president in 1980 by carefully choosing Philadelphia, Miss., as the site for a speech in which he extolled “states’ rights.” With confederate flags flying all around, the message was clear that the era of giving lip service to civil rights for the African-American population was over. Open racism and reaction would be the order of the day. And he chose to send this message in the very city where three young civil rights workers — James Chaney, Andrew Goodman and Michael Schwerner — had been lynched by the KKK and local police 16 years earlier.

It is worth setting the stage for this rightward turn in U.S. politics with some background to Reagan’s election. In April 1975, the Vietnamese liberation army swept into Saigon and forced the U.S. military and thousands of their puppets to leave Vietnam. All progressive humanity celebrated as they watched the war criminals rush to the roof of the U.S. Embassy in Ho Chi Minh City to be evacuated by helicopter. But for the U.S. military, this was a humiliating and bitter defeat that they would not soon forget.

During this same period in the 1970s liberation movements in Angola, Mozambique and Guinea Bissau drove the Portuguese colonial power out of Africa and almost resulted in a proletarian revolution in Portugal itself. There were revolutions in Ethiopia, Southern Yemen, Nicaragua, Iran and Afghanistan. And the Palestinian struggle was gaining strength. Widespread insurgencies in Central America in El Salvador and Guatemala were also threatening U.S. imperialism in its own backyard.

## Leader needed to assert U.S. hegemony, crush workers

It is no wonder that the U.S. ruling class was looking for a leader who would halt the decline of their fortunes abroad and, in addition, carry out an assault on the working class and oppressed people at home. The time for concessions to the working class was over as far as they were concerned.

The posture of offering peaceful coexistence to the Soviet Union was also over. Reagan labeled the Soviet Union “the evil empire” and initiated a massive arms build-up to force the Soviet Union into a renewed arms race [notably the “Star Wars” program] that was aimed at derailing their planned economy and threatening their very existence.

The Reagan administration spent tens of millions of dollars propping up the contra war against the Sandinista regime that had liberated Nicaragua from decades of U.S. puppet rule under the Somoza military dictatorship. They sent aid to the

creased the desire among more militant elements within the socialist movement to intensify the struggle for fundamental change in the United States.

In 1919 several of the currents within the socialist and communist tendencies sought recognition from the Third International, which encouraged the left-wing tendencies to consolidate and form a workers’ party.

During this period there was tremendous persecution of communists in the United States. Many were imprisoned, deported and driven underground. The communists emerged above-ground in 1921 with the formation of the Workers Party, later to become the Communist Party in 1928.

The rise of the Garvey movement and other political and cultural currents within the African-American community drew the attention of the communists. In 1920 the Second Congress of the Communist International developed its thesis on the right of oppressed nations to self-determination. Soviet leader V. I. Lenin noted that the right of self-determination applied both to the Irish in Ireland and to African Americans in the United States.

During the 1920s the early African-American cadres in what was to become the Communist Party came from the ABB and the Socialist Party. In 1925 the American Negro Labor Congress was launched in an attempt to enhance communist work inside the African-American community. □

Women took the lead in forming friendships. The door was open to organize the South.

Crystal Lee Sutton — who inspired the 1979 movie “Norma Rae” — was a white woman who rejected racism. She went to work in a J.P. Stevens textile mill in Roanoke Rapids, N.C., when she was 17 years old.

Sutton held up a cardboard sign with the word “UNION” inside her plant after she was fired for union activity. Sally Fields portrayed Sutton in the movie.

As Martha Grevatt wrote in *Workers World*, “The Black workers were solidly behind the union, but Sutton saw she had a lot of work to win over the white workers.” (Oct. 10, 2009)

The first union meeting Sutton attended was in a Black church in 1973. Seventy African Americans attended, along with 10 whites.

The union won the election at Roanoke Rapids in 1974, but it took an international boycott to force J.P. Stevens to finally sign a contract in 1980.

Since that time hundreds of thousands of textile workers have lost their jobs. But Roger Milliken didn’t lose any of his billions. He was 95 years old when he died, conveniently less than 48 hours before his heirs would have had to pay hundreds of millions of inheritance taxes. (Bloomberg BusinessWeek, Jan. 5)

Crystal Lee Sutton became a full-time union activist. She died of brain cancer on Sept. 11, 2009, after her insurance company refused for two months to pay for necessary medication.

Nobody will remember the union buster Milliken. We will never forget Crystal Lee Sutton and the courageous Black and white women workers who helped build the textile unions.

Source “Hiring the Black Worker” by Timothy J. Minchin.



PHOTO: WORKERS WORLD NEWSPAPER 1981

death squad regimes in El Salvador and Guatemala, resulting in mass killings, torture and imprisonment of opposition forces. And his administration was a staunch supporter of the apartheid South African regime.

In 1982 Reagan sent the Marines as part of a so-called international force into Lebanon after giving the green light to their Israeli puppets to invade Lebanon earlier that year. Israel launched an all-out assault on the Palestinian refugees there and the Palestine Liberation Organization. After giving Israel cover for the massacre of Palestinians in the refugee camps of Sabra and Shatila, the expedition turned into a disaster for the U.S. when the Marine barracks in Beirut was bombed in 1983. Over 200 Marines were killed, and the U.S. was forced to withdraw their troops in 1984.

In 1983 Reagan again used the U.S. military to invade the tiny island of Grenada, which had a revolutionary government headed by Maurice Bishop of the New Jewel Movement. Bishop had opened friendly relations with Cuba. When this government was destabilized by an internal struggle, the U.S. military invaded under the excuse that the Cubans and Soviet Union were aiding Grenada to build an airport that would be a security threat to the U.S.

At the same time that Reagan was carrying out aggression abroad, he sent a chilling message to the workers at home. When 11,000 members of the Professional Air Traffic Controllers Organization went on strike for shorter hours and better pay in 1981 soon after he took office, Reagan told them to get back to work within 48 hours or face dismissal for life. When the workers did not return to work, they were all fired and banned from working as air traffic controllers. PATCO had endorsed Reagan for president.

He initiated a hateful campaign against what he called “welfare queens” as a way to sow hatred of those on welfare and justify cutbacks in Aid to Families with Dependent Children. He slashed job training programs (the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act), which in 1978 were providing 750,000 jobs across the country, many for inner-city youth. He labeled the AIDS epidemic as a “gay” disease, refusing to do anything to fund medical research for treatment. And who can forget that the Department of Agriculture under Reagan tried to reclassify ketchup as a vegetable to save money on school lunch programs for poor children.

The Reagan presidency elicited an immediate response from the movement in the U.S. The People’s Anti-War Mobilization was formed, involving anti-war groups as well as community activists, labor unions, anti-racist, LGBT, Native American, Central American and Palestinian solidarity groups. PAM mobilized more than 100,000 protesters to march on the Pentagon on May 3, 1981, under slogans of “U.S. out of El Salvador,” “Defend Atlanta’s children” and “No to racism, sexism and anti-gay bigotry.” It was

the first such mobilization of that size that aimed to beat back the Reagan attack. It was also the first major mobilization that featured a Palestinian speaker.

## Legacy of hatred, oppression

In June and July 2004, following Reagan’s death, Fred Goldstein summarized the essence of the Reagan presidency in *Workers World* this way: “Reagan’s task was to prepare for military adventure abroad; to push back the USSR, the socialist camp and the national liberation movements; to overturn all the remaining economic, social and political concessions won by the workers’ struggles during the Roosevelt period; and to take back the gains of the Black people and all the oppressed nationalities won during the 1950s and 1960s and of women and lesbians, gay, bi and trans people during the 1970s.

“This aggressive orientation arose out of the predatory need of the capitalist class to rescue its position as the dominant exploiter of the world. This orientation has not changed since and has been pursued by every administration, Democrat and Republican, since then.”

We can easily recognize these characteristics in the policies of the Bush Sr., Clinton and G.W. Bush presidencies that followed Reagan. While the neoconservative inheritors of the Reagan legacy in the Republican Party and Tea Party heap abuse and racist slurs upon President Barack Obama, nevertheless the needs of Wall Street and big business and the demands of the military for continued occupation in Iraq and Afghanistan have gotten the highest priority from his administration.

In the last two years the hopes of the labor movement to win the Employee Free Choice Act were quickly dashed; the yearning for genuine rights for immigrant workers was answered by mass deportations of the undocumented; the expectations by women that reproductive choice would be safeguarded have been met by continuing violence against women’s health clinics. And through it all, the aggressive stance of the U.S. military not only in Afghanistan, but against the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, China and Iran keep the world at the brink of wider war.

Following Reagan’s militarist posturing, in 2002 George Bush and Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld assumed that all it would take was “shock and awe” (that is, massive bombing, followed by a limited number of special forces on the ground) to bring the Iraqi people to their knees. But the whole U.S. military establishment was in for a shock of their own. Ten years later they have had to draw down their forces in Iraq and escalate the war in Afghanistan, with no end in sight.

The ground has now given way under the puppet Mubarak, with all his billions of dollars in U.S. military aid. We can see in the living struggle the feet of clay of the tyrants once the people are in motion. And we look forward to the next chapter in the unfolding revolution in Egypt. This is the future, not the legacy of hatred and oppression of a man like Ronald Reagan. □

# Stop FBI repression meetings across U.S.

By Deirdre Griswold

*The Committee to Stop FBI Repression (www.stopfbi.net) has called regional conferences the weekends of Feb. 12 and 19. The committee was formed after 14 activists in Minnesota, Illinois and Michigan were ordered to testify before a federal grand jury in Chicago after the government raided some offices and homes. Another nine activists in Chicago who had participated in Palestine solidarity activities were subpoenaed in December. All 23 have refused to testify. Below are reports from the Chicago and Oakland meetings.*

## CHICAGO: Three-point strategy for action

Labor, international solidarity and social justice activists from across the Midwest met in Chicago on Feb. 12 to respond to what the federal government calls an investigation of “material support for foreign terrorist organizations,” but those subpoenaed say otherwise.

“From the time the FBI first knocked on my door, it was clear that this was all about our ideas and political beliefs,” said targeted activist Jess Sundin of Minneapolis. “They were after flyers, address books and information about political events.”

Federal law prohibits sending aid to any group on a list of organizations maintained by the U.S. secretary of state. “None of us sent guns or money to anyone on the list. ... We have called for freedom for the peoples of Colombia and Palestine. Some of us have given modest contributions to

humanitarian groups which are doing legal work on the ground. The government seems particularly interested in funds that were raised for the Union of Palestinian Women’s Committees, a group that is not on the list and which is not banned by Israel,” Sundin explained.

Sundin also challenged the government’s designation of groups like the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine as “terrorist,” pointing out that in the past the U.S. similarly labeled freedom fighters like Nelson Mandela’s African National Congress and El Salvador’s FMLN.

Jim Fennerty of the National Lawyers Guild, a lead attorney for the targeted activists, stated that the FBI is continuing to ask people about Palestine solidarity activities, including humanitarian trips to Gaza.

The conference was welcomed by Carl Rosen, regional president of the United Electrical Workers, who pointed out that the FBI “hampered our ability to get justice at Quad City Die Casting,” a plant in Illinois that faced closure. As the UE was preparing to hold a peaceful protest, the FBI contacted police there to warn them that “dangerous people” were coming; two labor activists from Chicago, whose homes were later raided by federal authorities

Dr. José López, a Puerto Rican community leader in Chicago, described how grand juries have been used as political weapons against the Puerto Rican independence struggle since 1936.

## WW interviews Stop FBI spokesperson

*Workers World newspaper contributing editor Bryan G. Pfeifer interviewed Tom Burke of the Freedom Road Socialist Organization, editor of FightBack newspaper and spokesperson for the Committee to Stop FBI Repression, about the FBI-led attack on anti-war and solidarity activists starting Sept. 24, when Burke was subpoenaed. The following article paraphrases this Jan. 28 interview, which is published in full at www.workers.org.*

Nine of the 23 solidarity activists subpoenaed since September were due to appear on Jan. 25 before a Chicago grand jury, and I’m happy to say all nine declined to appear. Hundreds of groups and thousands of activists came to more than 50 protests on that day throughout the U.S. and in Ireland, Ukraine, Canada and Australia.

Allowing the government to say that a humanitarian donation to refugee camps is a crime can affect thousands of organizations. Church groups that send clothing to a refugee camp in a war zone could face charges. Whatever their motivation, all are threatened by this court case that’s coming up. We think the Obama administration should put a halt to it and say international solidarity is not a crime, free speech is important, and the right to organize is a right that we cherish.

On Feb. 12 we’ll be having regional conferences for the West Coast in Oakland at the Humanist Center and in Chicago at Teamster’s City to mobilize and broaden our defense. The following weekend on Feb. 19 in New York City and in Durham, N.C., there’ll be other regional conferences.

An original FBI infiltration began during the Republican National Convention, when we were able to unite all the groups in the anti-war movement and all the

different kinds of trends that wanted to protest against the Republicans. We understand that they are claiming that their investigation is to look at material aid to groups on their terrorism list, but in more than two years they found nothing because it doesn’t exist.

It’s really the case that the thought police raided homes, and we’re going to be put on trial for our ideas. The raids turned people’s lives upside down, especially those whose homes were gone through and had their things taken away. It’s like being robbed; robbed of your dignity; robbed of your actual things.

At the same time, because we understand that the government is repressive towards people who want social change in the U.S. and that the White House and the Justice Department target people who are revolutionary, who believe in actual socialism, we were and are prepared to fight back.

Ten of the original 14 activists subpoenaed had ties to trade unions, many elected as stewards or officers of union locals. The outpouring of support has been terrific, especially from those unions that we’re directly connected to such as AFSCME and the SEIU. The Chicago Teachers Union, the United Electrical Workers and the San Francisco Labor Council have passed resolutions supporting us.

The movement since the raids has been overwhelming. We saw more than 70 cities protest in the three weeks following the Sept. 24 raids. And we have over 500 solidarity statements from big unions; from student networks such as Students for a Democratic Society and Students for Justice in Palestine. Churches like the Presbyterian Church have made statements; Jewish, Christian and Muslim denominations of all kinds have made statements supporting us.

Christina Abraham, an attorney for the Council on American-Islamic Relations, said, “The FBI is not only about crime investigation, but also about gathering intelligence on the political opinions and activities of people who never engaged or will engage in criminal activity.”

Abayomi Azikiwe of the Pan-African News Wire in Detroit described the activities of the FBI against the Black community, from J. Edgar Hoover’s effort to destroy Marcus Garvey’s organization to its spying on and sabotaging of the activities of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Malcolm X, the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, and the Black Panther Party, to the “targeted assassination” of Imam Luqman Ameen Abdullah, who was shot 20 times by federal agents in Dearborn, Mich., in 2009.

By acclamation, the conference approved a three-point action strategy: participation in national anti-war events in March and April; mass protests when activists are forced to appear at grand jury sessions; and emergency protests when indictments are handed down.

## OAKLAND:

A West Coast Conference to Stop FBI and Grand Jury Political Repression packed Humanist Hall in Oakland, Calif., on Feb. 12 and pledged support for the 23 activists subpoenaed by the Grand Jury in Chicago.

Four of those targeted by the witch hunt — Anh Pham, Hatem Abudayyeh, Thistle Parker-Hartog and Tom Burke — all raided or served subpoenas by the FBI,

said they believed this was only the beginning of a new wave of political repression but were heartened by strong initial support for their cause.

Two past targets of government repression — Palestinian activist Michel Shehadeh of the Los Angeles 8 and former Black Panther Richard Brown of the San Francisco 8 — said their cases proved that determined political struggle can push back and defeat a witch hunt by the repressive state apparatus.

Masao Suzuki, a Skyline College professor who was himself visited by the FBI recently, recalled how, when his mother and father, who had been U.S. delegates to a 1952 Pacific Rim Peace Conference in Beijing, reported on the conference in the very same Humanist Hall in Oakland, two FBI agents in business suits ostentatiously stood at the back of the hall making notes.

The regional organizing conferences across the country follow “Stop FBI repression” demonstrations in 50 cities on Jan. 25.

*L. Paulsen contributed to this article from Chicago.*

## !DAVE AXELROD PRESENTE!

*Continued from page 2*

Axelrod was so liked that the college declared an all-day open house in the library so that people could wish him well when he retired in 2004. Black Students Union and Haitian Club members were well represented among other students, staff and faculty.

Petra Johnson, a Trinidad native who worked with Axelrod at NYCCT, valued his friendship. “Dave was such an amazing guy. He was so warm and loving. He would reach out and have conversations with everybody. He genuinely cared about people. He often made copies of articles from Workers World to share with me, and I became aware of various issues because of him.”

Karuna Madal valued Axelrod, her neighbor, as a close friend. “David was a very caring person. We used to sit and have good discussions about politics even though we were on two different sides of the coin. We agreed to disagree. Dave was also knowledgeable about natural remedies, and I’m into homeopathy, so we talked about that too. I was glad to go with him on doctor appointments after he was diagnosed with prostate cancer in 2008.”

Marsha Goldberg, a WWP member who often walked home with Axelrod after Friday meetings, valued him as a teacher and mentor as well as a comrade. “Dave had such a strong understanding of the class struggle and of the importance of the national question. I always learned so much every time we talked. He was such a tough, dedicated fighter for the working class and for self-determination for oppressed people.”

Axelrod was so well known and liked in all parts of his life that scores of people showed up at a Hoboken funeral home to pay their respects after his death on Jan. 22. The local newspaper’s obituary noted that he was “a well-known local activist. He will be remembered for enthusiastically voicing his opinions at City Council meetings, especially for maintaining rent control. ... David was a lifelong fighter for human rights throughout the world.”

*A Workers World Party memorial for Dave Axelrod is being organized. More detailed information will be announced in WW.*



Tom Burke

WW PHOTO: BRYAN G. PFEIFER

We think the repression at home is a result of the decline of the empire overseas. The U.S. “American century” is over, and it’s not coming back. The government has also been oppressing Muslim and Arab groups, putting individuals in jail and setting them up in sting operations. Now they are beginning to treat people who want social change in the U.S. as an internal enemy.

Regarding Palestine, we are able to unite with many groups and individuals to protest the Israeli occupation, to protest U.S. funding of Israel and its occupation of Palestine and war making in Palestine. And Israel is becoming more and more isolated in the world as young people around the world see that it’s an apartheid state the way South Africa used to be, and there’s no turning back now.

International solidarity is not a crime, and we will continue to organize. I also want to encourage people to turn out for the protests on April 9 against the war in Afghanistan and the occupation of Iraq and to continue building the movement to stop U.S. aid to Israel. □



# Is another Egypt brewing in Mexico?

By Teresa Gutierrez

The overwhelming majority of U.S. media coverage of Mexico is on the brutal drug violence there. That violence is real.

The struggle on both sides of the border over booty from the enormously lucrative drug industry has without a doubt resulted in horrific violence. More than 35,000 Mexicans have died in the last four years alone as a result of the drug industry.

But that is not the whole story.

The news on drug violence is a diversion orchestrated by the U.S. and Mexican ruling classes to take attention away from the real story: a deepening, vibrant and diverse mass struggle in Mexico that is so profound and so dynamic that it is slowly but steadily challenging the status quo in unprecedented and historic ways.

Massive unemployment, unbearable social conditions, a lack of basic bourgeois democratic rights and brutal repression for the masses are also creating an untenable situation for the U.S. and Mexican ruling classes.

Sooner or later, the conditions in Mexico will lead to an upsurge like that in Egypt. Momentous history will be made once again on the U.S. border. Sooner



Zócalo Square

than later, the revolutionary tide for change that is sweeping the Americas will reach the border with U.S. imperialism. It may even be accurate to say that not too long from now dual power will exist in Mexico.

Mexicans are organizing like never before.

On Jan. 31, for example, a major demonstration of more than 200,000 people was held in Mexico City at the Zócalo plaza, Mexico's Tahrir Square. It was held in response to attacks on unions and rising prices. It brought together a concentration of forces from many sectors of the working class, the unions, farmers and progressive movements. The event was called by a new umbrella coalition, the National Movement for Sovereignty, Workers and Civil Rights, and is an example of the growing unity in the work-

ers' movement.

This huge rally is just one of a thousand examples of the growing struggle in Mexico.

It is important for the progressive and workers' movement in the U.S. and around the world to take note of the struggle in Mexico. It should get ready to organize massive solidarity with the Mexican people. As in Egypt, where U.S. imperialism desperately depends on a puppet government to subjugate the Middle East, Washington counts on a puppet government in Mexico to do its bidding. Global solidarity and condemnation of U.S. intervention in Mexico will be decisive if the Mexican masses are to be victorious in their quest for change.

A revolutionary development on U.S. imperialism's doorstep would change the course of class history. The U.S. will stop at nothing to prevent that.

This is why the drug industry is so successful in Mexico and why the drug violence has led to an astonishing and entrenched climate of impunity on both sides of the border.

## Behind the drug war

In 2006 U.S. intervention in Mexico stepped up after a tumultuous presidential election. For all intents and purposes,

current President Felipe Calderón stole the election from the popular candidate, Andrés Manuel López Obrador, commonly called AMLO by his supporters.

Millions of Mexicans demonstrated not just once but several times at the Zócalo square and in cities across the nation to demand AMLO's rightful place in Los Piños, Mexico's White House. Felipe Calderón nonetheless took power, with the support of the U.S. The situation was so tense that the Mexican military had to escort him into Los Piños. He was not even able to hold a public address, his security was so precarious.

To deal with this tumultuous period, Felipe Calderón and the U.S. powers-that-be intensified the so-called "war on drugs," not only as a diversion from the stolen election but to quell resistance.

Like in Colombia, the U.S. is fighting drugs with special military forces, SWAT teams and Pentagon arms. Instead of opening drug rehab centers or raising wages, U.S. imperialism further militarized Mexico. Its aim is to stop the resistance to imperialist domination and instill fear and terror.

The death and destruction in Mexico today is a direct by-product of the U.S. war on drugs and of the drug industry.

*To be continued.*

## UPR strike offensive starts to expose hidden scandals

*Some 15,000 people defied the administration's ruling Feb. 12 and marched into the Rio Piedras campus of the University of Puerto Rico to demand that the police be removed from campus and to reject the imposition of the \$800 tuition hike that excludes more than 10,000 students from university education. This led to one more victory. On Feb. 14 Gov. Luis Fortuño ordered police out of the campus. The following vivid description of these events by Puerto Rican investigative reporter Jesús Dávila for NCM News is slightly condensed here.*

The orgy of violence unleashed by the national police in an effort to contain the student uprising had an unexpected result: It opened such a wide breach in the wall of internal support for Gov. Luis Fortuño that it has allowed complaints and information about criminal plans and the squandering of the University of Puerto Rico treasury to flow through it.

Meanwhile, the strike continued unabated at the university. That weekend [Feb. 12] a human wave surrounded the UPR, blocked traffic with a sit-in on one of the main thoroughfares and later entered the main university campus. There students once again took over the Tower [the main office building] — to the cheers of the crowd — and even danced defiantly less than a yard from the police who were besieged by the students.

Thus the pitch of this crisis rises just as various social protests are shaping up. The president of the Puerto Rican Bar Association, Osvaldo Toledo, chose civil disobedience to confront a U.S. District Court order and is being held in federal jail. The protest by attorneys, in a case in which the state can seize their headquarters, joins the university crisis and is inspired by it.

Some 72 social, civic and political entities, including all the opposition parties, joined the gigantic Feb. 12 march.

[Adapting the lyrics of a popular plena song,] "Last night at the UPR you hit my Lola charlatan, last night at the UPR charlatan, come hit her now!" parents and student sympathizers sang at a line of cops that watched them from a prudent distance. The song referred to Feb. 9's violent incidents [where police fondled a student's breasts while arresting her]. So shocking was the riot police's scandalous actions against the students that it provoked a crisis within the pro-government officials to the point where some of the police involved were removed and UPR President José Ramón de la Torre had to resign after demanding the police withdraw from the 11 campuses in the system.

Similarly, the first report arrived of a student being fired from his job in tourism as retaliation for participation in the strike.

In fact, professors, administrative employees, and the cleaners and maintenance union closed down the campus on Feb. 10-11 in order to prevent further violent confrontations.

## Gov't plots to frame up students

The Puerto Rican Association of University Professors reported having information about a Feb. 7 meeting where people from the highest governmental levels evaluated that "everything was working out fine" in the UPR crisis and that the only thing missing was a death — to be blamed on the students. After this news was made public, NCM News obtained specific information about the participants in this alleged meeting and their links to Santa Catalina Palace, the government headquarters.

The fact is that on Tuesday, Feb. 8, anti-riot units known as "shock troops" fondled female students in the vicinity of the school of social sciences, after which a crowd of students forced them to retreat.

The next day the police began videotaping students who painted slogans in the traditional "Street of Consciousness." This taping is a blatant violation of the law against creating a police dossier of citizens conducting legal activities.

A group of students surrounded the police and attempted to physically prevent the continuation of the illegal practice. A few minutes later the shoving, beating, throwing stones and even paint began. Riot police, arrest units and a squad of mounted police went into action, beating all who came nearby and arresting indiscriminately those they caught, leading the courts to throw out the charges.

The students dispersed but reappeared on the other side of the campus in a march that quickly grew to more than 1,000 demonstrators. When two cops tried to confront the crowd as they arrived in front of the General Studies building, the students forced them out of the way, with a police cap sent flying through the air.

When motorbike police squads arrived, the students let them enter only to surround them and throw them off their vehicles. The mounted units fared no better as the students aimed stones at the riders, who had to retreat. As the riot police arrived, the students vanished only to reappear

University of Puerto Rico, Feb. 14.



PHOTO: OMAR RODRIGUEZ ORTIZ / ESTUDIANTESINFORMAN.COM

pear minutes later, surrounding the University Tower where since mid-morning the Brotherhood of Unaffiliated Non-Educational Staff was controlling the rectory, demanding the immediate withdrawal of the police.

The day ended as two community marches in support of UPR entered the campus and with the news that attorneys for the Confederation of University Professors had begun preparing criminal complaints against police for torturing students.

In a remarkable development, a student member of the Board of Trustees, Rene Vargas, made a formal request for copies of the inventory of the wealth of properties without heirs. By law this property was turned over to the UPR during the last 80 years. Vargas was told that these properties are sold as soon as they are received.

This raises two problems: "Where is the accounting that guarantees that all benefits are being received?" and a bigger question, "How could the Governmental Development Bank accept these properties, which no longer exist, as part of collateral for a \$100 million line of credit?" □

## Rainbow Solidarity In Defense of CUBA

By Leslie Feinberg,  
author of 'Stone Butch Blues'

This groundbreaking book documents revolutionary Cuba's inspiring trajectory of progress towards liberation of sexualities, genders and sexes.

Available at [Leftbooks.com](http://Leftbooks.com)



## WWP rejoices with the Egyptian people

Feb. 11 — Workers World Party rejoices in the historic achievement of the Egyptian people.

After 18 days of struggle they have achieved the goal that united the country — a goal that was unthinkable 19 days ago. They have driven the long-entrenched U.S.-backed dictator, Hosni Mubarak, from the presidential palace. Through sacrifice and unshakable determination of millions, they have forced the corrupt Egyptian military high command to send their patron packing to his home in Sharm el Sheikh.

In 18 days the Egyptian people have stepped onto the stage of history with a thunderous stride that has shaken the foundations of the entire imperialist edifice constructed by the U.S. government in Egypt and the Middle East for the past 30 years.

The ignominious departure of Mubarak, driven out in humiliation by the glorious Egyptian uprising, will reverberate in the palaces and shake the thrones of all the puppets of Wall Street in the entire region — including the Zionist regime in Tel Aviv.

This political victory will strengthen the struggle of the Palestinian people, oppressed and exploited people of the Middle East and of the entire world.

The sight of the millions demanding national rights and popular democracy is viewed with the greatest trepidation in the board rooms of the oil monopolies, the bankers, and the transnational corporations on Wall Street that have stolen the wealth, plundered the resources and exploited the people of Egypt and the Middle East since the days of colonialism.

The revolution has forced the very architects of the Mubarak dictatorship — the White House, the Pentagon, the State Department and the CIA — to hasten to cover their bloody tracks and to curry favor with the Egyptian people, after vacillating and double talking throughout the 18 days. President Barack Obama, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, Secretary of Defense Robert Gates and CIA director Leon Panetta were all finally compelled to embrace the uprising and distance themselves from their long-time client, Mubarak.

The U.S. government wants to take the minds of the masses off the fact that Washington gave \$50 billion in military aid to the hated oppressors of the millions of Egyptians who are now in the streets.

Washington has gone from Clinton's statement on Jan. 25, the first day of the uprising, that the Mubarak regime "is stable," to finally trying to push him out the door. This is for one reason only — the masses were adamant that they would not accept anything less. The people camped out in the square by the tens of thousands, never knowing whether or not repression would come down on them.

The masses answered every

challenge to their struggle with resistance. In the first two days of the uprising, they drove the police from the streets. When the regime responded to the Million Person March by sending thugs and police agents to take the square away from the demonstrators by violence, the counterrevolutionary goons were pushed back in two days of heavy fighting.

We hail the heroic fighters of Liberation Square who held off the thugs and held the square for the people. This was a decisive moment for the revolution. Their victory paved the way for the massive Day of Departure demonstrations and everything that followed.

We mourn and celebrate the lives of the hundreds of martyrs who were killed during the uprising; the present great victory shows that their lives were not given in vain.

We pay tribute and will give continued support to the heroic Tunisian people who first ignited the struggle that swept into Egypt and is spreading throughout the Middle East.

Of course, Washington's ultimate goal is to find a way to undermine the revolution from behind the scenes. U.S. imperialism has much at stake in Egypt and will do everything possible to retain its position there.

The role of the movement in this country is to keep U.S. imperialism from intervening openly or covertly, economically, politically or militarily, to subvert or derail the Egyptian Revolution.

By their statements, the Egyptian people have made clear their goals. They want to tear up the old constitution and write a new one that inscribes a popular democracy. They want to dissolve the old parliament. They want an end to corruption and the return of the billions of dollars stolen by Mubarak and his cronies. They want a representative government of national unity, freedom for political parties and general democratic freedoms, freedom for thousands of political prisoners and a genuinely democratic election. They want an established minimum wage and the right of workers to organize; an end to poverty and mass unemployment, and the right to a future for the youth of the country.

In short, they are demanding a national democratic revolution.

The next phase of the struggle will bring all these questions onto the agenda. And the Egyptian people will cope with these issues, including the all-important questions of the role of the military, questions of popular leadership, etc. They will deal with these and other issues when they have savored this first, indispensable and historic step of having driven the dictator from the palace and have time to assess the situation.

But today is the time to join the people of Egypt in rejoicing in their momentous victory.

Victory to the Egyptian Revolution! □

## President Aristide prepares return to Haiti

By G. Dunkel

President Jean-Bertrand Aristide's lawyer said on Feb. 13 that necessary paperwork has begun in Port-au-Prince and that the Haitian leader is expected back shortly. Year after year tens of thousands of Haitians have marched, some have even died in police attacks, to demand the Haitian leader's return after U.S. Special Forces flew him into exile in 2004.

While Aristide's expected return has been widely reported internationally, the maneuvering and the rumors that are being circulated are mainly restricted to the Haitian press and the wire services.

U.S. State Department spokesman P.J. Crowley said at his Washington press briefing on Feb. 9: "We would be concerned if former President Aristide returns to Haiti before the election. It would prove to be an unfortunate distraction to the people of Haiti."

Félix Ansyto, a leader of Aristide's Fanmi Lavalas party, responded to Crowley, "This is intimidation." He continued: "It is not for the U.S. to know what will cause a problem or not. The Americans may comment on the presence or absence of an American citizen, but not on the return home of a Haitian — nobody can stop a Haitian from returning home whenever they want." (Haiti's Alter Press, Feb. 11)

U.S. spokespeople have pushed getting a "successful" election in Haiti — one that produces a reliable tool for the subjugation of Haiti. Crowley's comments indicate the State Department fears that if Aristide calls for a boycott of the upcoming election, this could have a major impact and that his mere return could lead to an eruption of popular anger.

Ansyto also commented on the rumors that the U.S. has a secret indictment against Aristide for allegedly stealing money from the sale of Haiti's telephone company, saying that the U.S. should stick to its own crooks — like George W. Bush.

U.S. interference included maneuvering to remove Jude Célestin from the number two spot in the first round of voting, which took

place Nov. 28. This maneuver was at best deceptive, if not outright illegal. The electoral commission is supposed to arrive at decisions by majority vote, but four of eight members say they did not vote to replace Célestin with Michel "Sweet Mickey" Martelly. However, an announcement was made the morning of Feb. 3 that the deed had been done. (Haïti-Liberté, Feb. 9-15).

Martelly made his career as a Haitian konpa singer. But during the military's rule after the first coup against Aristide in 1991 he participated in death squads run by Col. Joseph-Michel François. (haiti-liberte.com, Dec. 17) Mirlande Manigat, his opponent in the runoff, was Haitian first lady while her spouse was president after the fall of Duvalier for a few months under the military in the late 1980s. She has been a politician and an academic on and off for most of her life.

While the current president, René Préval, constitutionally was supposed to turn over his government to a caretaker on Feb. 7, he had a law passed a few months ago extending his term until May. Tèt Kole Oganizasyon Popilè (Heads Together of Popular Organizations) held a protest demonstration that marched on the National Palace before it was broken up by the cops, who, using tear gas, chased the participants into the tent encampment in the park across the street.

Later that day, when the leaders of Tèt Kole were meeting at the office of a movement lawyer, the national police sent in a heavily armed squad to arrest them on warrantless minor charges.

Both the Haitian National Police and the U.N.'s occupying force, called Minustah, are working hard to keep the lid on the rising anger in Haiti over fraudulent, costly elections; 80 percent unemployment; the growing misery of more than 1.5 million people living in tents or under tarps for over a year with no safe water, electricity or sanitation and no schools for their kids; and a cholera epidemic that is killing around 100 people a week and sickening thousands. □

## 'No Aristide! No peace!'



Oganizasyon Fanmi Lavalas de Boston and their supporters picketed in front of Boston's JFK Federal Building on Feb. 11, demanding the immediate return of democratically elected President Jean-Bertrand Aristide to Haiti. Aristide was kidnapped in a U.S. imperialist inspired coup on Feb. 29, 2004. Haiti has suffered an extremely brutal occupation since that time, first by U.S., French and Canadian imperialist troops, and then by Minustah U.N. forces. The occupation has intensified since the devastating earthquake of Jan. 12, 2010. The effects of the earthquake, which killed more than 316,000 people and injured hundreds of thousands, continue to present a massive crisis for this country, already terribly impoverished by imperialism.

On the picket line, the Haitian community

was joined by the International Action Center; the Boston School Bus Drivers, Steelworkers Local 8751; Fight Imperialism, Stand Together (FIST); and other anti-war activists. Bilingual placards and chants declared, "U.S./U.N. Imperialists — Hands Off Haiti!" "Obama/State Department — Hands off Haiti!" "No Aristide, No Peace!" "Jean-Claude Duvalier to Jail! Aristide to Haiti!" and "Victory for Fanmi Lavalas!" The protesters stated that the current "elections" are an imperialist-designed fraud. They explained that the most popular party, Fanmi Lavalas, has been barred from the process. Many spoke of the tremendous people's victory in Egypt and vowed to continue the struggle to bring people's power to the streets of Haiti.

— Report & photo by Steven Kirschbaum

# The upheaval in Egypt: what impact on U.S. imperialism?

## The Nasser epoch & the role of the 1979 treaty with Israel

By Joyce Chediak

What is at stake in Egypt for Washington, and what is at stake for the people of Egypt?

Egypt was not always the colony of a foreign power. In the era of Gamal Abdel Nasser, Egypt was a symbol of Arab dignity and freedom and a leader in the Arab world. Egypt was also seen by the world as an anti-imperialist leader.

This era of Egyptian history, which is very different from the current era, began in 1952, when the Free Officers Movement, led by Gamal Abdel Nasser, overthrew Egypt's ruler, King Farouk, who fronted for British colonial domination of Egypt.

This kicking out of the colonial power and seizure of the government by middle-ranking Egyptian officers was the most progressive event in centuries in the Arab world. It ushered in a whole series of anti-colonial revolutionary developments. Soon Syria, Algeria, Libya and Iraq threw out their colonial masters.

The world was electrified again in 1956 when Nasser, then Egypt's head of state, nationalized the Suez Canal. The canal was on Egyptian soil and has been built by Egyptian workers, but it was "owned" by British and French companies. The Nasser government also nationalized many corporations and all banks and insurance companies in Egypt.

In this era the Egyptian army defended its own sovereignty and Arab dignity in four wars. In 1948 it fought the Zionists who dismembered Palestine. In 1956 it defended Suez Canal nationalization against British, French and Israeli troops. It fought Israel again in 1967 and 1973.

### Nasser raised the standard of living for Egypt's poor

In the 1952-1970 Nasser era the standard of living of Egypt's workers and peasants rose dramatically.

With help from the Soviet Union, a giant irrigation project, the Aswan Dam, was built to bring more land under cultivation so Egypt could feed its people. Nasser put in place land reform that benefited the Egyptian peasantry.

Under Nasser urban workers saw their wages rise as a minimum wage and a paid-weekly day off became law.

Nasser introduced a new constitution, the National Charter, which called for universal health care and made provisions for housing, building of vocational

schools, widening the Suez Canal, increasing women's rights, and developing a program for family planning.

In short, in this period Egyptians enjoyed unprecedented access to housing, education, health services and nourishment as well as other forms of social welfare.

In 1956 Egyptians took to the streets to defend the Suez Canal nationalization. Again they came out en masse to defend Nasser as their leader after Egypt lost the 1967 war with Israel. And when Nasser died in 1970, mourners filled the streets to show respect for their leader and to affirm the course he had set for Egypt.

Egypt's revolution was anti-colonial and not socialist. But Egypt still had respect and dignity, was viewed as a world leader in the fight for sovereignty and independence, and had made major economic and social gains for its population.

### Egypt's 'peace' with Israel is a war pact

In 1979, however, Egypt's then head of state, Anwar el Sadat, took Egypt out of the anti-imperialist camp and placed it on the side of the U.S. and Israel. This was done through a U.S.-brokered "peace" treaty that year between Egypt and Israel.

But this was no peace treaty. It was a war pact aimed at the heart of the Arab people. By neutralizing Egypt's large army on Israel's southern border, this treaty left the Arab people on Israel's northern flank vulnerable to attack.

This was not even a sovereign treaty for Egypt. It required Cairo to check with Tel Aviv before it could even send troops into the Sinai Peninsula, Egyptian territory.

This treaty was a huge boon for Washington and Tel Aviv, and has given them the upper hand in this oil-rich, strategic area of the world for the past 30 years. In the words of Gloria Eiland of the Institute for National Security Studies at Tel Aviv University, "During the last 30 years, when we had any military confrontation, whether in the first or second Lebanon wars, the intifadas, in all those events we could be confident that Egypt would not try to intervene militarily." (New York Times, Jan. 31)

This treaty made possible Israel's 1982 invasion and occupation of Lebanon, which killed 20,000 people and forced the Palestine Liberation Organization out of Lebanon, and it then allowed the terrible massacre of unarmed civilians in the Sabra and Shatila Palestinian refugee camps.

This treaty contributed to Israel's occupation of southern Lebanon for 18 years and to its 2006 war on Lebanon.

This treaty allowed the Pentagon to have a stronger and more menacing presence in the area. Egypt permits U.S. military flyovers, and the Pentagon staged regular maneuvers with the Egyptian military in both the Mediterranean and the Red Sea.

Thanks to this treaty, U.S. Navy nuclear warships receive expedited processing to pass through the Suez Canal. This is crucial for quick U.S. Navy access to the Persian Gulf. "A lot of U.S. military strategy in the Middle East and, in the Persian Gulf especially, presupposes very close relations with the Egyptian government and essentially free access to use the Suez Canal," reads a February 2010 Congressional Research Service report.

So this 1979 treaty paved the way for

the U.S. invasions of Iraq in 1991 and 2003. Egyptian troops invaded Iraq in 1991 alongside the U.S. military.

This treaty with Israel was also a prerequisite for Israel and Washington's increased pressure in the recent period on the Palestinians in the Occupied Territories. This pressure precipitated the split in the Palestinian leadership. The Israel-Egypt agreement made possible the bombardment and blockade of Gaza, with the Egyptian regime enforcing the blockade on Gaza's other border.

Under Nasser, many Egyptians saw the military as giving pride and hope. Under Mubarak, the purpose of Egypt's military became to suppress that very pride and hope in other Arab national liberation struggles.

*To be continued in Part 2: The role of U.S. military aid and IMF demands in Egypt.*

## Egypt's workers defy U.S.-backed junta

Continued from page 1

drivers, phosphate miners and state electrical workers. (online.wsj.com, Feb. 15)

Hundreds of public transport workers demonstrated outside the television and state radio building demanding higher pay. Hundreds more ambulance drivers lined up their vehicles on a road along the Nile in the capital's Gaza district demanding higher pay. Workers at a key Cairo traffic tunnel threatened to shut down the route unless they got a raise in pay. (abcnews.go.com, Feb. 14)

Striking employees at EgyptAir, the national commercial carrier, got their boss fired. And 500 employees at the Opera House demanded the dismissal of the chairman of the facility, accusing him of corruption.

One of the activists in the revolution, Hossam El Hamalavy, posted pictures of striking workers outside the Ministry of Petroleum building. Hamalavy said that thousands of workers were demanding the ouster of the oil minister and, in addition to economic demands, were making political demands such as "stopping gas exports to Israel." (hinuonett.com, Feb. 15)

Outside Cairo, strikes were reported in the southernmost city of Aswan and the northernmost city of Alexandria. In Beni Sweif and Qalioubiya, impoverished cities south of Cairo, thousands of people demanded distribution of state-built, low-cost apartments. Police reports said that the people seized 60,000 empty units of such housing.

A strike was reported at the Sukari gold mine near the Red Sea, near the coastal

town of Marsa Alam. This gold mine is one of the largest in the world.

More than 700 workers who service the multinational peacekeeping forces in the Sinai Peninsula staged sit-ins. These forces watch over the enforcement of the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty of 1978. Hundreds gathered outside the headquarters in Sharm El-Sheik and El Gorah demanding raises in pay.

In general, it was impossible to keep track of all the strikes triggered by the revolution. The strike wave actually started during the struggle to oust Mubarak. Toward the end, 6,000 workers went on strike at five service companies owned by the Suez Canal Authority. More than 2,000 textile workers and others in Suez demonstrated also. At a factory in the textile town in Mahalla, 1,500 striking workers blocked roads. More than 2,000 workers at the Sigma pharmaceutical company went on strike in Quesna. And 5,000 unemployed youth stormed a government building in Aswan. (nytimes.com, Feb. 9)

In the last few years, 3,000 strikes have been reported in Egypt, involving more than 2 million workers. This formed a militant background to the revolution that began on Jan. 25.

Thus it is clear that the Egyptian proletariat has entered the arena of struggle in the midst of a political upheaval of monumental proportions. It will eventually assume its proper place in the political leadership of the Egyptian revolution. When it does, this will have the greatest long-term significance for the ultimate victory of the revolution. □



WW managing editor, Monica Moorehead, speaks at Egypt victory rally at U.N. in NYC, Feb. 11.

WW PHOTO: G. DUNKEL

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## GAZA: Symbol of Resistance

WW compilation, edited by Joyce Chediak

The compelling story of how Gazans withstood blockade and bombardment only to stand tall, refusing to give up the right to determine their own lives and to choose their own government; how Gaza's courage inspired a worldwide solidarity movement determined to break the blockade and deliver aid; exposes the forces behind the punishment of Gaza, and how a growing people's media is breaking the mainstream media's information blockade on this event.

Available at [Leftbooks.com](http://Leftbooks.com)

Editorial de WW/Mundo Obrero

## Solidaridad con Leonard Peltier

El imperialismo estadounidense ha cometido tortura en el Guantánamo ocupado y en las cárceles de Afganistán e Irak. Ha arreglado “la rendición especial” de algunos prisioneros, entregándolos a torturadores profesionales como el colaborador egipcio Omar Suleiman, recientemente nombrado vice presidente de ese país. Este pavoroso tratamiento de presos políticos en el exterior es solamente una extensión del tratamiento dado a los/as presos/as políticos/as de la clase dominante estadounidense aquí en este país. La crueldad de las instituciones de “justicia” es especialmente implacable cuando el/la preso/a es de una de las naciones oprimidas que vive dentro de las fronteras de los Estados Unidos y el supuesto crimen es contra el aparato del estado.

Así es como Leonard Peltier, líder del heroico levantamiento del pueblo indígena en Wounded Knee a mediados de los años 70, ha estado encarcelado en prisiones federales en Estados Unidos por más de 35 años. Él fue acusado en un caso montado y ha sido castigado por supuestamente disparar a agentes del FBI en Oglala en Dakota de Norte, donde los agentes estaban conduciendo actividades ilegales de contraespionaje con el objetivo de destruir el Movimiento Indígena Americano. Ningún testigo identificó a Peltier como el que le disparó a los dos agentes del FBI. Un hombre indígena, Joseph Stuntz, también fue matado por un balazo a la cabeza. Nadie jamás fue acusado por su muerte.

Durante estos 35 años en prisión, a Peltier se la ha negado atención médica adecuada y ha sufrido abuso lo cual ha dañado gravemente su salud. El Comité de Defensa y Ofensa de Leonard Peltier ha pedido que todas las fuerzas progresistas escriban para exigir que él reciba atención médica necesaria. Para más información y para imprimir el material, visite la página [www.whoisleonardpeltier.info](http://www.whoisleonardpeltier.info). La petición del comité es la siguiente:

### Alerta médica: un llamado a la acción

Actualmente, la necesidad más urgente del Sr. Peltier es tener cuidado médico adecuado. Su única esperanza de ser atendido por médicos calificados y tener el cuidado que cumpla con protocolos médicos normales es ser trasladado inmediatamente a otra facilidad. Para información sobre esta crisis actual, lea nuestro comunicado de prensa de noviembre de 2010.

Usted puede ayudar. Favor de imprimir la siguiente carta. Firme la carta, apunte su nombre y señas y envíe hoy su carta por correo o fax.

Envíe a: Federal Bureau of Prisons, 320 1st Street NW, Washington, DC 20534, o fax: (202) 514-6620.

Frecuentemente, una carta sincera escrita en su propia letra es muy efectiva. Recuerde siempre escribir en un tono respetuoso y hacer breves comentarios que vayan al punto. Si usted desea, puede adaptar el siguiente texto.

Ejemplo de texto:

Harley G. Lappin  
Director, U.S. Bureau of Prisons  
320 First Street NW  
Washington, DC 20534

Estimado Sr. Lappin:

Ha llegado a mi atención que Leonard Peltier #89637-132, un prisionero en la Penitenciaría Federal en Lewisburg, Pennsylvania, tiene necesidad urgente de cuidado médico.

Yo creo que las necesidades médicas del Sr. Peltier son urgentes. Necesita ser atendido por personal médico calificado. Por lo tanto, pido respetuosamente que Leonard Peltier sea trasladado a FCI-Oxford en Wisconsin ó a FMC-Rochester en Minnesota. Una u otra facilidad puede tratar adecuadamente las necesidades médicas del Sr. Peltier.

¡Gracias de antemano por trasladar a Leonard Peltier y atender inmediatamente sus necesidades médicas!

Sinceramente,  
(su firma) □



LIBERTAD PARA LEONARD PELTIER

## El Partido WW/MO se regocija con el pueblo egipcio

11 de febrero — El Partido Workers World/Mundo Obrero se regocija por el histórico logro del pueblo egipcio.

Después de 18 días de lucha, ellos/as han logrado el objetivo que unió al país — un objetivo que era impensable hace 19 días. Han expulsado del palacio presidencial al dictador Hosni Mubarak que desde hace mucho estuvo arraigado gracias al respaldo de Estados Unidos. El pueblo, a través del sacrificio y la determinación inquebrantable de millones, obligó al alto mando del corrupto ejército egipcio a enviar su protector a su casa en Sharm el-Sheij.

En 18 días el pueblo egipcio subió al escenario de la historia con pasos de gigante que han sacudido los cimientos de todo el edificio imperialista construido por el gobierno de los EEUU en Egipto y en Medio Oriente durante los últimos 30 años.

La salida ignominiosa de Mubarak, expulsado humillantemente por el glorioso levantamiento egipcio, repercutirá en los palacios y agitará los tronos de todos los titeres de Wall Street en toda la región - incluyendo al régimen Sionista de Tel Aviv.

Esta victoria política reforzará la lucha del pueblo palestino, de los/as oprimidos/as y explotados/as del Oriente Medio y del mundo entero.

La escena de millones exigiendo sus derechos nacionales y democracia popular es vista con gran inquietud en los salones de las juntas de los monopolios petroleros, los banqueros y las corporaciones transnacionales de Wall Street que han robado la riqueza, saqueado los recursos y explotado al pueblo de Egipto y del Medio Oriente desde los tiempos del colonialismo.

La revolución ha obligado a los arquitectos mismos de la dictadura de Mubarak — la Casa Blanca, el Pentágono, el Departamento de Estado y la CIA — a apresurarse para cubrir sus huellas sangrientas y congraciarse con el pueblo egipcio, después de hablar vacilantemente y con doble discurso a lo largo de los 18 días. El presidente Barack Obama, la secretaria de Estado, Hillary Clinton, el secretario

de Defensa Robert Gates y el director de la CIA, Leon Panetta, se vieron finalmente obligados a aceptar el levantamiento y a distanciarse de su viejo cliente, Mubarak.

El gobierno estadounidense quiere distraer a las masas del hecho de que Washington dio \$50 mil millones en ayuda militar a los odiados opresores de los millones de egipcios que ahora están en las calles.

Washington ha ido de la declaración de Hillary Clinton el 25 de enero, primer día del levantamiento, diciendo que el régimen de Mubarak “es estable”, hasta finalmente tratar de empujarlo fuera del cargo. Esto es por una sola razón — las masas estaban firmes en su determinación de no aceptar nada menos. El pueblo acampó en la plaza por decenas de miles, sin saber si la represión vendría sobre ellos/as.

Las masas respondieron con una gran resistencia a todos los desafíos a su lucha. En los primeros dos días del levantamiento expulsaron a la policía de las calles. Cuando el régimen respondió a la Marcha de un Millón de Personas desplegando matones y agentes de la policía para retomar la plaza a través de la violencia, los matones contrarrevolucionarios fueron rechazados en dos días de intensos combates.

Saludamos a los/as heroicos combatientes de la Plaza de la Liberación, que mantuvo a raya a los matones y mantuvo la plaza para el pueblo. Este fue un momento decisivo para la revolución. Su victoria abrió el camino para las manifestaciones masivas del Día de la Salida y todo lo que siguió.

Un gran impulso fue añadido al levantamiento cuando decenas de miles de trabajadores se declararon en huelga exigiendo demandas económicas y políticas en la fase final de la lucha.

Lamentamos y celebramos las vidas de los cientos de mártires que fueron asesinados durante el levantamiento; la gran victoria demuestra que no perdieron la vida en vano.

Rendimos homenaje y damos continuo apoyo al heroico pueblo de Túnez que encendió primero la lucha que se extendió a Egipto y se

está propagando por todo el Medio Oriente.

Por supuesto, el objetivo último de Washington es encontrar una manera de socavar la revolución tras bastidores. El imperialismo estadounidense tiene mucho en juego en Egipto, y hará todo lo posible para mantener su posición allí.

El papel del movimiento en este país es prevenir que el imperialismo estadounidense intervenga abierta o clandestinamente, económica, política o militarmente para subvertir o descarrilar la revolución egipcia.

En sus declaraciones, el pueblo egipcio ha dejado en claro sus objetivos. Quieren el fin del estado policial/militar y la revocación de la ley de emergencia. Quieren dar al traste con la vieja constitución y escribir una nueva que inscriba una democracia popular. Quieren disolver el viejo parlamento. Quieren terminar con la corrupción y quieren el regreso de los miles de millones de dólares robados por Mubarak y sus compinches. Quieren un gobierno representativo de unidad nacional, libertad para los partidos políticos y libertades democráticas generales, libertad para miles de presos políticos y una elección realmente democrática. Quieren un salario mínimo establecido y el derecho de los/as trabajadores/as a organizarse; un fin a la pobreza y al desempleo masivo, y el derecho a un futuro para los/as jóvenes del país.

En resumen, están exigiendo una revolución democrática nacional.

La siguiente fase de la lucha traerá todas estas cuestiones a la agenda. Y el pueblo egipcio hará frente a estas cuestiones, incluyendo cuestiones de suma importancia como el papel del ejército, las cuestiones de liderazgo popular, la organización de masas, etc. Se ocupará de estas y otras cuestiones luego de que hayan saboreado este primer, indispensable e histórico paso de haber expulsado al dictador del palacio y tengan tiempo para evaluar la situación.

Pero hoy es el momento de unirse al pueblo de Egipto y regocijarse en su trascendental victoria.

¡Victoria a la Revolución Egipcia! □

## LIBERTAD PARA LOS CINCO CUBANOS



Gerardo Hernández Nordelo, Ramón Labañino Salazar, Rene González Sehwerert, Antonio Guerrero Rodríguez y Fernando González Llort. Para más información visite: [thecuban5.org](http://thecuban5.org)