

# Egypt rocks world

## Millions in streets try to oust U.S.-backed regime

By Fred Goldstein

Feb. 1 — The outpouring of Egyptians on Tuesday, Feb. 1, is one of the greatest manifestations of mass protest in history. More than 1 million people overflowed Tahrir Square in Cairo; hundreds of thousands came out in Alexandria, Suez, Mansoura and other cities throughout the country. It is truly world-historic in proportion. Nothing will be the same after this.

All classes, all but those strata irreversibly tied to the old regime, have united behind a national democratic revolution to topple Hosni Mubarak's 30-year dictatorship. They have risen on a scale and with the power of a social volcano.

These demonstrations took place even though the regime shut down trains and other mass transportation and blocked the Internet. Many people walked miles to reach the demonstrations.

Direct reports to Workers World from Tahrir Square are that the slogans are anti-imperialist, anti-U.S., very anti-Israel, pro-Palestinian, against the Egyptian business class, against the entire regime and calling for a new "pro-people" constitution. There is no turning back.

The protests have risen and spread within the extraordinarily short time of eight days. And, most importantly, the movement is still on the rise. The mass upsurge has leapt over the heads of everyone — the Mubarak regime, its imperialist backers and the political opposition in Egypt. All forces are rushing to catch up to developments. But with each recalibration by the Obama administration or the Mubarak regime, or those who call themselves "the opposition" in Egypt, the masses take another leap forward, leaving everyone behind.

At this writing Egyptian television is showing the bizarre scene of Mubarak sitting in his office, discussing measures to be taken with his newly appointed cabinet,

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while more than 2 million people just blocks away are calling for an end to the entire regime. It is like watching the ghost of someone who has died — but thinks he is still alive.

#### 'Martyrdom or freedom'

The corporate television networks covering the demonstrations describe the mood as celebratory. Yet Al Jazeera cited "martyrdom or freedom" as a widely popular slogan. Effigies of Mubarak hang from poles. The crowd demands his arrest and that the entire regime be booted out.

The day Mubarak appointed his crony Omar Suleiman, the hated head of intelligence and a former general, as his vice president, the people raised the slogan: "Oh Mubarak, oh Suleiman, we have heard that before. Neither Mubarak nor Suleiman — both are stooges of the Americans." (New York Times, Jan. 30)

At the moment this great uprising lacks a central leadership. But this is inevitable under the circumstances. The Mubarak regime's ruthless repression of the left

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Workers World Newspaper  
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# Boston's Chuck Turner

## Community outpouring as City Councilor faces racist sentencing

By Frank Neisser  
Boston

Supporters filled five courtrooms at Chuck Turner's sentencing hearing on Jan. 25. The racist character of the proceedings was immediately apparent by the prosecutor's opening statement that "this case has nothing to do with race" and calling for harsh sentencing. The prosecutor based this on Turner voluntarily taking the stand during his trial to tell the jury and his constituents that he was not guilty, as a matter of principle, and the fact that from the day of his arrest in 2008 right up to his sentencing, Turner has spoken out and exposed the political agenda of the U.S. Attorney's Office in attempting to use the courts to bring down Black elected officials who are known for standing up for justice.

Defense attorney John Pavlos responded eloquently to the prosecutor's racist assertions, laying out how racist prosecutorial misconduct was at the heart of the case from day one. The only two public officials prosecuted were Turner and Diane Wilkerson, both progressive Black politicians. The judge admitted there was no evidence or basis to believe that Turner's office was for sale or that Turner was on the take.

This means there was no basis for the investigation, which involved paying an FBI informant \$30,000 to allegedly give Turner about \$1,000 in exchange for help in obtaining a liquor license. Though Turner does not remember meeting with the informant, his only action concerning the liquor license involved asking for a City Council hearing on why no liquor licenses were being granted to Black entrepreneurs in an area specifically set up to promote community business development.

Pavlos further laid out the extraordinary character of the more than 700 letters the judge received from Turner supporters. He read in court letter after letter from individual constituents describing Turner's selfless and tireless efforts on their behalf on every issue affecting the community — fighting foreclosures, fighting school closings and for access to educational opportunities, and fighting for jobs, among many other concerns. Pavlos read from a letter from the Boston School Bus Union, Steelworkers Local 8751, and one from the International Action Center signed by former U.S. Attorney General and U.N. Human Rights award recipient Ramsey Clark.

Community support for Turner has been evident in the hundreds who have turned out at rally after rally in his support, including to protest the Boston City Council's illegal action in removing Turner from office in



2010. Turner is suing the City Council to reverse this racist and illegal decision. Only the people of District 7 have the right to decide who will represent them, and they have elected Turner in every election since 1999. In 2009 they voted for him by more than 60 percent, even after he had been arrested and smeared in the press.

But none of this made a difference to Judge Douglas P. Woodlock, who sentenced the 70-year-old Turner to three years in federal prison. This same judge has sentenced prominent white state politicians, who were guilty of pocketing far larger sums of money, to probation. No white politicians involved in granting liquor licenses,

including the mayor and City Council president, were subjected to a sting or prosecuted.

In December Woodlock sentenced Diane Wilkerson to three and a half years in a federal penitentiary. Wilkerson had pleaded guilty to accepting \$23,000 from the same FBI informant. She too was the victim of an FBI sting operation.

Speaking to the press immediately after the sentencing, Turner condemned the racism and injustice of the investigation, arraignment, prosecution, verdict and sentencing, calling it prosecutorial and political persecution based on a political agenda. He evoked the long history of such conduct against Black politicians, including the Cointelpro attacks on Martin Luther King Jr. Turner vowed to continue to fight while in jail and to come back and continue the fight upon his return to the community.

He called on all his supporters to continue to organize and to hold those committing prosecutorial crimes, including former U.S. Attorney Michael J. Sullivan, accountable, as well as the Boston City Council members who voted him off the council with no right or power to do so. He is also launching a Justice Project for others framed up by prosecutorial persecution.

Turner is appealing both his conviction and his sentencing. He is scheduled to report to prison on March 25, but a motion to stay execution of the sentence until after the appeal is settled is under consideration by the judge.

Fighting the case has imposed a tremendous financial burden. Turner is owed more than \$180,000 for operating expenses that he paid out of his own pocket for the District 7 City Council office that he ran in the heart of Roxbury, in addition to fines and loss of his salary and benefits as a city councilor. To make a donation, go to SupportChuckTurner.com. □

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Vol. 53, No. 5 • Feb. 10, 2011  
Closing date: Feb. 1, 2011

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Workers World (ISSN-1070-4205) is published weekly except the first week of January by WW Publishers, 55 W. 17 St., N.Y., N.Y. 10011. Phone: (212) 627-2994. Subscriptions: One year: \$25; institutions: \$35. Letters to the editor may be condensed and edited. Articles can be freely reprinted, with credit to Workers World, 55 W. 17 St., New York, NY 10011. Back issues and individual articles are available on microfilm and/or photocopy from University Microfilms International, 300 Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, Mich. 48106. A searchable archive is available on the Web at www.workers.org.

A headline digest is available via e-mail subscription. Subscription information is at www.workers.org/email.php.

Periodicals postage paid at New York, N.Y.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Workers World, 55 W. 17 St., 5th Floor, New York, N.Y. 10011.

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# California hit hard by foreclosures as Banks get gov't bailouts, demand even more

By Jerry Goldberg  
San Francisco

*Editor's note: The writer, a Detroit-based attorney and leader in the Moratorium NOW! Coalition to Stop Foreclosures, Evictions & Utility Shutoffs, is on a foreclosure-moratorium speaking tour in California from Jan. 30 to Feb. 14. For a list of meetings and other events, see [www.bailoutpeople.org](http://www.bailoutpeople.org).*

The foreclosure epidemic is escalating across the U.S. with no end in sight. At the same time, with virtually every foreclosure, the government continues to bail out the banks through Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac. Yet the banks want even more. They have the audacity to push for direct control of these government-sponsored entities.

Lenders filed a record 3.8 million foreclosures in 2010, up 2 percent from 2009 and an increase of a whopping 23 percent from 2008. These numbers would have been even higher except for the temporary foreclosure moratoria the major banks announced last October, when their massive fraud was exposed. ([housingwire.com](http://housingwire.com), Jan. 12) According to RealtyTrac, banks repossessed 1 million homes in 2010, and 1.2 million more are slated for repossession in 2011. Five million borrowers are currently at least two months behind on their mortgages. (Associated Press, Jan. 13)

The state of California has been hit especially hard by the foreclosure epidemic. That state alone saw 532,200 foreclosures in 2010. It is projected that between 2009

and 2012, some 1.88 million foreclosures will take place and that this will bring about a decline of \$627 billion in the value of nearby homes. Altogether, 12.25 million homes — almost all the homes in this state of 37 million people — will experience foreclosure-related declines in market value. (Center for Responsible Lending, August 2010)

A study by the Center for Responsible Lending analyzed the causes and impact of the foreclosure crisis in California. It noted that the vast majority of recent foreclosures there were on loans that originated between 2004 and 2007, just prior to the bursting of the bubble in housing prices.

The study pointed out that between 2000 and 2005 wages were flat, but home prices took off. For example, in Modesto, Merced, Stockton and Riverside-San Bernardino — all working-class communities devastated by foreclosures — average median wages during those years increased by roughly 15 percent. By contrast, median home prices rose by about 300 percent. As a result, homeowners were compelled to take out exotic loan packages with low introductory payments that they could initially afford, but which escalated out of range when the interest rates adjusted upward.

The report notes that many Alt-A loans are scheduled to adjust in 2012. These loans were provided to borrowers with good credit, but they include features characteristic of subprime loans, such as limited income documentation and interest-only periods. Therefore, the crisis will only escalate.

**California: Nearly half of those losing homes are Latino/a**

The study, titled “Dreams Deferred: Impact and Characteristics of the California Loan Crisis,” noted that people of color have been far disproportionately impacted by the foreclosure epidemic in the state. Foreclosure rates for Latino/a and African-American borrowers, respectively, are 2.3 and 1.9 times that of non-Latinos/as white borrowers. Latinos/as accounted for 48 percent of all foreclosures filed between September 2006 and October 2009.

The modification programs announced by the Obama administration continue to be dismal failures. According to the November “Making Home Affordable Program Servicer Performance Report,” only 549,620 homeowners have received permanent loan modifications, out of the 3 million to 4 million who had been projected to benefit from the program when it was first announced in March 2008.

The federal Helping Hardest Hit Homeowner program is being sabotaged as the major banks refuse to sign on. Recently, 23 California congressional representatives sent letters to Ally Financial (set up by General Motors), Bank of America, Citigroup, JPMorgan Chase and Wells Fargo asking them to participate in the California Housing Finance Agency so that \$2 billion in federal funds geared to temporarily aiding primarily unemployed homeowners in California could be put to use.

As detailed in the Nov. 4 Workers World article, at the root of the banks' refusal to work with homeowners in any way is that government agencies such as

Fannie Mae, Freddie Mac and the Department of Housing and Urban Development have been paying the banks, at foreclosure, full value for the fraudulent loans they issued. What this means is that taxpayers are making up the difference between the loan amount and the price the home actually sells for post-eviction.

The major banks are so greedy that they are now attempting to take control of the Obama administration's announced review of Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac. They have proposed that they directly administer these agencies while the silent bailout continues. In this way any obligations by the banks to negotiate with borrowers would effectively be removed. (New York Times, Jan. 20)

It's time to demand that the government bail out the people, not the banks.

The government, which now either owns or guarantees the loans, should immediately

- 1) implement a two-year moratorium on all foreclosures and evictions;
- 2) lower the mortgage principal on all homes to their true value; and
- 3) set payments of what people can afford based on their incomes.

The millions of homes that have already been seized by the government should be rehabilitated as low-cost housing for the homeless — not sold back to the same financial institutions and investors who caused the crisis.

And the government should begin a criminal investigation to jail the bankers who precipitated this crisis with their massive fraud against the people. □

## NORTH CAROLINA

# Day of action demands end to attacks on education

By Ben Carroll  
Raleigh, N.C.

Young people from across the state confronted the North Carolina General Assembly when they convened their opening session on Jan. 26. The youth demanded, “Education is a right, not a privilege!”

The “Day of Action to Defend Education” was organized by a coalition of youth-led groups who are involved in education struggles around the state, from fighting back against budget cuts and tuition hikes to winning full and meaningful access to higher education for undocumented students and pushing back the growing tide of resegregation in the state's public school systems.

Despite the cold and rainy weather, nearly 100 young people, including many high school students and immigrant youth, came out for the day, which began with a press conference and lobbying in the morning, followed by a march and rally in the afternoon.

The spirited march through downtown Raleigh filled the air with chants of “No cuts, no fees, education should be free!” and “Education, not deportation!” as it hit three targets: the governor's mansion, the Department of Public Instruction and the NC Community Colleges offices. At each stop, speakers raised the connections between these education struggles and the need for young people in the state to fight back to stop the slew of cuts and reactionary bills being proposed by the



WWW PHOTO: DANTE STROBINO

new, Republican-led legislature.

Monse Alvarez, of NC HEAT (Heroes Emerging Among Teens), stressed: “This day of action was important because we can't just let this new legislature come in without making some noise about it. ... They want to take us back to a time of Jim Crow segregation where immigrants and people of color are treated like less than human. They want to push through their anti-immigrant, anti-worker, anti-education, anti-everything-that-people-need agenda, unless we do something about it.”

### Education on the chopping block

Like many state governments across the country facing budget shortfalls, politicians have placed every public service on

the chopping block to deal with the state's nearly \$4 billion hole. The Republican majority, which recently took over both houses in the legislature for the first time in 112 years, has promised to manage this with spending cuts alone. Thousands of state workers could be laid off. The university system is facing a 15 percent cut as public school systems around the state are facing cuts of nearly \$100 million. Entire health programs face elimination, and every social good is under attack.

The GOP wasted no time in proposing reactionary pieces of legislation. On their session's second day, they introduced an anti-immigrant bill modeled after Arizona's SB 1070, a bill that would ban undocumented students from community

colleges and the university system (HB 11), a bill requiring voters to show IDs, and more.

“We made our voices heard that day, and it was important to be there and speak out about issues in our community like education. They were afraid of us being there. They sent out cops to try to stop us. Unfortunately, they introduced HB 11 the next day, but this was only the beginning, and we are going to keep fighting around this,” said Raul Arce of Raleigh FIST (Fight Imperialism, Stand Together).

Groups across the state are mobilizing to fight back against the legislature's proposed, massive cuts and to stop the growing racist attacks on the immigrant community. Activists plan many different actions and demonstrations for the coming weeks.

Workers and students all over the world — from Egypt to Tunisia, from Yemen to Jordan, from Britain to Puerto Rico — are showing the only way forward out of this crisis, which is to take their destiny into their own hands and fight back. Continued, determined action is exactly what is necessary to stop the attacks on education and the public sector and to push back the reactionary forces that have risen in this period.

With a national Month of Actions to Defend Public Education set for March, youth and students can only expect to see more of these types of actions throughout the country.

*The writer is an activist in Raleigh FIST.*

## Arizona outlaws Ethnic Studies programs

# Activists, community prepare to fight back

By Paul Teitelbaum  
Tucson, Ariz.

Arizona Superintendent of Schools Tom Horne announced Jan. 3 that the Tucson Unified School District was in violation of state law HB 2281. This recently passed law bans all Arizona public schools from offering ethnic studies courses.

Horne released his findings in a 10-page document as his last act as superintendent. Hours later, he was sworn in as the state's attorney general.

John Huppenthal, Horne's successor as superintendent, immediately threw his support behind Horne's findings. He gave the district 60 days to comply by eliminating the ethnic studies program or face a 10 percent districtwide budget cut. Such a cut would devastate the already suffering public school district.

This attack on the right of oppressed people to learn their own history is a continuation of the racist, right-wing offensive unleashed in Arizona, which is accelerating as the capitalist economic crisis deepens. Banning ethnic studies and passing the infamous anti-immigrant law SB 1070 are attempts to whip up a racist frenzy against Indigenous and Latino/a peoples and blame them for the misery and suffering imposed by the capitalist system itself.

### Students, teachers, community respond

The TUSD Board responded to Horne's

findings by issuing a public statement of support for the ethnic studies program. The board said that the program would continue, but that they would guarantee that the program complies with the new law's dictates. The board insists that the program can be saved through dialogue with Superintendent Huppenthal.

As a state senator, Huppenthal sponsored or supported every racist, anti-immigrant, anti-public-education bill raised in the legislature. He even ran his campaign for superintendent on a promise to "Stop La Raza." Given its response, the TUSD Board is caving in to the right-wing pressure while trying to save face with the community. It is clear that it cannot be relied upon to defend the ethnic studies program.

High school students across the city have created an organization that encompasses multiple high schools and will coordinate student resistance districtwide. Teachers and community activists have organized Community Action for Education, which will hold its first community meeting on Feb. 5.

Last October, 11 teachers in the TUSD Ethnic Studies Department filed suit in federal court against Horne, Gov. Jan Brewer and the State Board of Education in an attempt to have HB 2281 declared unconstitutional. This litigation may take years, and unless an immediate injunction is granted, the 10 percent budget sanction will bankrupt the school district by the time the case is settled.

Since 2007, when Horne first publicly announced in an open letter his intention to destroy the ethnic studies program, it has been the struggle of students, teachers and community activists in the streets of Tucson that has kept the program alive. This battle is not over. Students, teachers and activists are making it clear they will again mobilize to defend their right to quality education.

### A brief history

A series of protests and high school walkouts in 1968, known as the Chicano Blowouts, opened the struggle for equality in education that brought the ethnic studies program into existence. This struggle by oppressed Latino/a youth forced many educational institutions to include Mexican-American studies in their curriculum. The University of Arizona in Tucson created a Mexican-American studies program in 1969.

Despite the university's Mexican-American studies program, conditions for Latino/a youth in Tucson's elementary and high schools bordered on segregation. A five-year court battle between the TUSD and the federal Department of Health, Education and Welfare ended with a June 1978 desegregation order demanding that TUSD eliminate all vestiges of discrimination. This 1978 order was not fully lifted until December 2009.

During the mid-1990s community activists pressured TUSD to create a pro-

gram similar to the university's Mexican-American studies program. In 1998 TUSD instituted the Mexican-American studies program, and by 2004 there was a full-fledged ethnic studies program encompassing African-American, Pan-Asian, Native-American and Raza studies.

Following the uprising of immigrant workers in 2006, which was a response to the racist anti-immigrant Sensenbrenner Bill, Horne began his attacks on Tucson's ethnic studies program. In the spring of 2006, United Farm Workers leader Dolores Huerta addressed students at Tucson High School and remarked during her talk that "Republicans hate Latinos." (Tucson Citizen, April 13, 2006)

Republican Horne responded by dispatching his Deputy Superintendent Margaret Dugan to lecture the same high school students about how to "think for themselves." During Dugan's speech some 200 students walked out of the auditorium.

In June 2007 Horne published an open letter stating that the ethnic studies program should be terminated. In 2008 he worked with legislators to introduce SB 1108, the first anti-ethnic studies bill. Led by angry students, a mobilization was launched that stopped the bill's passage. In 2009 Horne and his cohorts tried again with SB 1069, which was again pushed back. In 2010, SB 2281 was introduced and was signed by the governor shortly after SB 1070 was signed. □

## Stop FBI repression

# Protesters say: 'Solidarity is not a crime!'



San Francisco



Monadel Herzallah, San Francisco



Richard Brown, San Francisco



Cleveland

WW PHOTOS: JUDY GREENSPAN

WW PHOTO: SUSAN SCHNUR

By Betsey Piette

When the FBI delivered subpoenas for nine Palestine solidarity activists in Chicago to appear before a grand jury on Jan. 25, the response was loud and clear: Protests, press conferences and forums were held in more than 45 cities in the U.S. and around the world on that date to stand in solidarity and say no to FBI repression.

This same grand jury was impaneled by U.S. Attorney Patrick Fitzgerald to indict 14 individuals in Illinois, Minnesota and Michigan, some of whose homes and offices were raided in September. Many feel it's a fishing expedition targeting activists in solidarity with Palestine and the Colombian people. Six of those subpoenaed to appear in Chicago were Arab Americans.

Many of the protests denounced this attempt by the U.S. government to criminalize solidarity with the Palestinian people. Protesters, including those summoned to appear before the grand jury in Chicago, vowed to continue to work to end U.S. aid to Israel.

Organized by the Committee to Stop FBI Repression, one of the largest demonstrations took place outside the Dir-

sen Federal Building in **Chicago**, where more than 250 people crowded the sidewalk during rush hour. A number of the activists who were subpoenaed but refused to appear before the grand jury addressed the rally.

In **New York City** people rallied in front of the FBI offices chanting, "Stop the subpoenas, Stop the raids! We are here and not afraid!" Groups supporting the protest included the May 1st Coalition for Worker and Immigrant Rights, Al-Awdan-NY, the Freedom Road Socialist Organization, the International Action Center, Veterans for Peace-NY, the Pakistan-USA Freedom Forum, Workers World Party, The World Can't Wait, the Free Mumia Coalition and others. Ralph Poynter, spouse of jailed lawyer Lynne Stewart, read her statement. Stewart is serving 10 years in federal prison after being framed up by the government for her steadfast defense of politically targeted defendants.

At a picket line and street meeting in **Cleveland**, speakers stressed the long history of FBI spying and grand jury harassment against Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., civil rights activists and the anti-war movement.

In **Los Angeles**, protesters gathered outside the Westwood Federal Building, which houses the FBI offices. A tribunal was held where members of Students for a Democratic Society, the Freedom Road Socialist Organization, the International Action Center, the South-Asian Network, the Labor Strategy Center, the Freedom Socialist Party, the Answer Coalition and the National Lawyers Guild testified as witnesses to crimes committed by the FBI against solidarity activists. Participants pledged to intensify resistance.

In **Atlanta** a dozen people withstood cold wind and rain to stand downtown with banners against FBI repression and in solidarity with imprisoned soldier Bradley Manning. Flyers were distributed and a press conference was held.

Subfreezing temperatures failed to dampen the spirits of participants in a strong, diverse picket line in **Detroit** comprised of members of labor unions, youth groups, anti-war and other progressive organizations. Chants included "From Iraq to Palestine, solidarity is not a crime!" and "FBI off our backs! Enough attacks!"

A speakout after the picket included solidarity statements from youth/stu-

dent organizations at two universities in Arizona. Debbie Johnson of the Michigan Emergency Committee Against War & Injustice, sponsor of the rally, demanded an immediate halt to grand jury proceedings; that those targeted receive justice and have returned to them all of the items that were stolen by the FBI; and that all government attacks against progressive and revolutionary activists cease.

### 'Free, free Palestine!'

In **Philadelphia** a press conference brought a number of activists together to denounce the FBI harassment campaign. It was followed by a forum on FBI entrapment of innocent Muslims featuring attorney Steve Downs, a founding member of Project SALAM; Dominick Calsolaro, member of the Albany, N.Y., City Council, which passed a resolution in support of justice for Muslims targeted by preemptive prosecution; and Burim Duka and Leila Duka, brother and daughter of members of the Fort Dix 5. Endorsers included the ACLU-PA, the CAIR-PA; the Brandywine Peace Community; the International Action Center; and Philadelphia Against War.

Continued on page 10

## On the Picket Line

By Sue Davis

### D.C. workers crash bankers' mtg.

"Where is the money? Where are the jobs?" demanded residential construction workers who disrupted the Mortgage Bankers Association Summit in Washington, D.C., on Jan. 19. Those questions were specifically addressed to Pulte Mortgage CEO Debra Still who chaired the meeting. Led by the Sheet Metal Workers and the Painters and Allied Trades unions, the protesters targeted PulteGroup, the country's largest homebuilder, which has received nearly \$900 million from the federal government to create jobs and extend benefits to the unemployed. However, after spending \$8 million on employee severance packages, Pulte told investors it plans to cut 350 more jobs and close a plant in Tolleson, Ariz. The demonstration was part of the national Building Justice Campaign (see poorlybuilt-byputle.info). Let's hope the confrontation scared the you-know-what out of all MBA members. (Union City!, online newsletter of the Metro D.C. AFL-CIO, Jan 20)

### Victory for tomato pickers

After 15 years of a bold, relentless campaign, Florida's tomato pickers are set to earn roughly a penny more for every pound of the fruit they harvest. That means the 33,000 mostly Latino/a immigrant workers, who currently make between \$10,000 and \$12,000 a year, could make upwards of \$17,000. The campaign, driven by the Coalition of Immokalee Workers, finally wore down the Florida Tomato Growers Exchange. The trade association agreed not only to higher wages but increased workplace protections like minimum-wage guarantees and zero-tolerance policy on forced and child labor. That's already had an impact, reported Leonel Perez, a 25-year-old from Guatemala who's been picking tomatoes since 2005: "Even though it's a small increase, we see that they're treating us fairly. Now we're working comfortably, and contractors can't abuse their power or reprimand us unfairly." (New York Times, Jan. 19) "Some labor experts," reports the Times, "said the agreement could set a precedent for improving working conditions and pay in other parts of the agriculture and food industries, nationally and internationally."

### Nonfiction TV writers join Guild

The Writers Guild of America, East has forged new territory by signing up three groups of workers from nonfiction television studios. Writers, producers, associate producers and researchers at Lion Television joined WGAE the week of Jan. 24 after those at Atlas Media and ITV Studios led the way in early January. Despite a long, aggressive anti-union campaign by those companies, the workers "wanted to become union members to gain benefits like health care, pension, improved compensation and reasonable working hours." (blog.aflcio.org)

### Mobilize to defend D.C. jobs

On Jan. 20, the Metropolitan Washington Alliance for Progressive Solutions held a briefing by leaders of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees Local 67. They reported that a major AFSCME rally is planned for March 14 in Annapolis, Md., as part of a statewide coalition to fight budget cuts. (Union City!, Jan. 21) On Jan. 21 leaders in Food and Commercial Workers Local 1994 met to discuss the latest bargaining negotiations with Montgomery County, Md. "The County wants to take away your right to bargain, to destroy your rights, but we're going to fight back," said UFCW President Joe Hansen. "We have a proven formula for success. It's called solidarity, and we will stand together, we will fight together, and we will win together." (Union City!, Jan. 24)

### Amendments attacking workers' rights nixed

Last November four states — Utah, South Dakota, South Carolina and Arizona — passed amendments requiring a secret ballot vote for union recognition. The amendments have already gone into effect in the first two states, and other states are considering passing them. However, on Jan. 13 the National Labor Relations Board, though not a bona fide friend of organized labor, threatened to sue the states if they do not acknowledge the amendments violate federally protected worker rights and the U.S. Constitution, which stipulates that federal law pre-empts conflicting state laws. The amendments were placed on the ballots by right-wing Republicans intent on killing the Employee Free Choice Act. (In These Times, Jan. 14) □

## Woodlawn workers on the front lines

The New York City branch of Workers World Party held a special forum Jan. 28 in solidarity with the Woodlawn cemetery workers, the Band of Brothers, based in the Bronx. For several years, these workers have been fighting the oppressive, racist owners of the Woodlawn cemetery, who are threatening to eliminate union jobs and slash wages. Teamsters Local 808 now represents them and is strongly fighting for their rights. This struggle has engendered tremendous community, labor, student and political support. A Feb. 21 mobilization is being organized for the Brothers.

Three members of the Band of Brothers — Enrique Cross, Todd Brown and Angel Correa — thanked the audience for their ongoing support and vowed not to give up the struggle until victory. A number of speakers addressed the need to



build unity for this struggle, including Dinae Anderson, a student activist; Chris Silvera, a Teamster 808 official; and Ramon Jimenez, the Freedom Party New York state attorney general candidate in 2010.

The revolutionary spirit of the Egyptian people was imbued throughout the meeting due in part to a report given on the anti-

Mubarak uprising by LeiLani Dowell, a managing editor of WW newspaper. The meeting was chaired by Band of Brothers organizer and WWP member, Gavrielle Gemma. A song in solidarity with the Band of Brothers was performed by people's artist, Heather Cottin, and others.

— Report and photo  
by Monica Moorehead

## Labor, capital and the Korea-U.S. 'free trade' agreement

By Martha Grevatt

Sometime in the first half of this year Congress will be voting on KORUS, the south Korea-U.S. "free trade" agreement. With the support of not only the Obama administration but also two major unions — the United Auto Workers and the Food and Commercial Workers — passage of this NAFTA-like agreement seems likely.

The ruling class could not be more ecstatic.

"Manufacturers congratulate President Obama," stated John Engler, a former Michigan governor who is now president of the National Association of Manufacturers.

"Now it's time for the new Congress to make passage of KORUS a top priority in January," stated U.S. Chamber of Commerce president and CEO Thomas Donahue. "We will do everything in our power to round up the votes."

More statements of corporate solidarity came from AT&T, Caterpillar, Chevron, Microsoft, Wal-Mart, UPS, Citigroup, JPMorgan Chase, Honeywell, Boeing, Intel, Amway and the Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America.

The American Meat Institute and the National Pork Producers Council have come out in favor of the latest version of KORUS, modified to eventually allow U.S. food monopolies to flood the south Korean market. Beef exports could increase tenfold from their current value of around \$200 million if the agreement becomes law. Support from the Food and Commercial Workers is tied to industry claims — which no union should ever treat as fact — that 26,700 jobs will be generated.

However, it is not creating jobs but maximizing profits sweated out of both Korean and U.S. workers that is behind the enthusiasm of big business.

General Motors, Chrysler and Ford issued a joint statement of support. Changes to the 2007 KORUS — which Ford and Chrysler opposed — could make it easier for the Detroit Three to sell vehicles in south Korea. GM, the parent company of Korean car

manufacturer Daewoo, was neutral at that time. Ford CEO Alan Mulally reportedly wrote the actual language, with input from UAW President Bob King. King's support for this FTA contrasts sharply to the UAW's staunch opposition to NAFTA and other trade agreements. The argument is that exports to south Korea will create jobs for UAW members. But how many and for how long? Sales of 100,000 vehicles might translate into 3,500 union jobs. The union's membership has fallen from 766,000 to 355,000 since NAFTA went into effect.

The tariffs on Korean-made vehicles will be phased out eventually, eliminating Detroit's trade advantage. Even in its current version KORUS has the strong support of Hyundai Kia Motor Corp. The militant Korean Metal Workers Union remains steadfastly opposed.

Those in labor favoring this FTA have advanced another argument: If labor doesn't support this version, the new Republican-dominated Congress will pass a worse version. Yet voices on both sides of the congressional aisle have joined the chorus for KORUS. Republican Sen. Mitch McConnell of Kentucky, who attacked the UAW during the 2008 bailout hearings, proclaimed that "with a more balanced Congress we will see renewed support for this and other trade agreements that have languished for the past two years." McConnell's spouse, Elaine Chao, who was Bush's labor secretary and is a staunch opponent of the Employee Free Choice Act, concurs.

NAM, the Chamber of Commerce and many of the above-mentioned companies are major Republican donors. The ultraright Heritage Foundation put out a statement backing KORUS.

#### 'This agreement must be stopped'

The unions that have gotten behind President Obama on this issue argue that it is good for their membership. But what about the rest of the working class? The Economic Policy Institute estimates that 159,000 jobs will be lost in the U.S. if KORUS goes through; south Korean farmers fear the loss of 200,000

livelihoods when the barriers to U.S. agricultural products fall.

The AFL-CIO and some of its member unions — notably the Steelworkers, Machinists and Communication Workers — have let Washington know that they still oppose this FTA. The strongest statements, underscoring the need for class-wide solidarity, have come from the independent International Longshore Workers Union and the United Electrical Workers.

In a December letter to then-House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, ILWU President Robert McElrath stated, "By all accounts, the Korea-United States Free Trade Agreement (KORUS FTA) will increase trade between South Korea and the United States, which will result in an increase in cargo movement between the two countries. An increase in cargo movement is good for dockworkers. However, this fact alone is insufficient to overcome the vast deficiencies of the KORUS FTA. The KORUS FTA will cost jobs, lower environmental, labor, food and product quality standards, and empower corporations from the United States and South Korea to challenge public interests in both countries."

In its own statement the UE pointed out that, "while the Administration has touted KORUS FTA as promoting jobs, our experience with NAFTA has convinced us that these agreements do far more to increase corporate profits than to create jobs or put food on the tables of working families. ... This agreement must also be viewed in light of the increased tensions between North and South Korea, as an attempt to shore up South Korea's president and broaden the national security relationship with South Korea. The need to declare a victory by political leaders cannot come at the expense of increased militarization and the wellbeing of working people in the U.S. and Korea.

"Not only is it seriously deficient, but it will likely grease the wheels for similar agreements with Colombia and Panama — both countries with egregious records on labor rights.

"This NAFTA-like bill must be stopped." □

# Meetings target racism, injustice

By Workers World Cleveland bureau

The level of passionate determination expressed by the speakers at two meetings in Cleveland on Jan. 29, and the enthusiasm of the crowds in attendance show that the movement is growing to fight back against injustice.

A speakout at an East Side church heard riveting testimony on various miscarriages of justice, which were addressed to Stanley Miller, executive director of the Cleveland NAACP. Speakers asked for the NAACP's involvement in supporting their cases.

Presenters included Denise Taylor, an aunt of Joaquin Hicks who was sentenced to 61 years to life in prison on a false conviction. Tina Bronaugh also spoke. She is the mother of two high school students who were brutalized by Cleveland police during a peaceful protest against school closings. One of these students is still facing charges.

Another speaker was Rebecca Whitby, who is the mother of a young woman who was beaten without provocation by Cleveland police. Whitby faces charges along with her daughter for reporting this brutality. Kevin Mitchell, who is a union activist

wrongfully fired by Cuyahoga Metropolitan Housing Authority, also spoke. Sharon Dannann addressed the group on behalf of the wrongfully convicted Lucasville uprising prisoners, and John Hunter spoke as the brother and cousin of two of several women murdered on nearby Imperial Avenue.

In a key moment, Miller revealed that the police testimony regarding the Whitbys, which was presented to the grand jury — of which he had been the foreperson — was at odds with the reality presented by the family about the night of horrors in April 2009 and with the sworn statements that form the basis for the current indictments. This revelation of false statements by the police is extremely helpful since the Whitbys' trial begins on Jan. 31.

A church on the West Side was standing-room-only for a program in support of wrongfully convicted Arthur Tyler, who has been on death row for 27 years. One of the speakers, Joe D'Ambrosio, was released last year after spending 20 years on death row on a false conviction.

The crowd cheered the announcement that some public figures have recently made statements opposing the death penalty. Retired director of the Ohio Depart-



Rebecca Whitby's daughter and granddaughter.

ment of Rehabilitation and Correction, Terry Collins, and Ohio Supreme Court Justice Paul Pfeiffer urged Gov. John Kasich to commute all death sentences to life in prison without parole.

Also celebrated was the victory of the Lucasville uprising hunger strikers in achieving more humane conditions of confinement. The spirit of unity in calling for overturning all convictions that are based solely on "snitch" testimony was electric.

This dynamic movement to challenge injustice will come together again on Feb. 26 for a Prison Emergency Summit at Cleveland State University's Black Studies Department. The event is being co-sponsored by many of the coalitions whose activists filled the churches on both sides of Cleveland, along with prisoner advocacy organizations and several fired-up student groups. For more information, call 216-925-9108 or e-mail lucasvillefreedom@gmail.com. □

# Parallels between Patrice Lumumba

By Abayomi Azikiwe  
Editor, Pan-African News Wire

*This year marks the 50th anniversary of the political assassination of Congo's first prime minister under independence, Patrice Lumumba.*

February is celebrated in the United States and around the world as African-American History Month, where people of all backgrounds and nationalities pay tribute to the monumental contributions of the African-American people and people of African descent to the development of cultures and civilizations throughout the world.

Founded in 1926 by Dr. Carter G. Woodson as Negro History Week, some 50 years later the commemoration was extended to African-American History Month as a further recognition of the transformative social movements that grew out of the 1960s and 1970s.

Although Africans have built civilizations in ancient times through the modern period, over the last six centuries the continent and its people have struggled consistently against slavery, colonialism and neocolonialism. Even those Africans who were taken away from their homeland and enslaved by European colonialists in the Western Hemisphere have maintained a campaign of resistance aimed at full self-determination and liberation.

The movements against slavery, segregation, lynching and superexploitation in the West have always coincided historically with the resistance movements on the African continent. All during the period of colonialism in Africa, there were rebellions and movements to win freedom and independence.

These efforts to throw off the shackles of slavery and national oppression intensified during the period following World War II. By the early 1950s, both inside the U.S. and on the African continent, civil rights, human rights and national independence movements had mobilized and organized millions.

In Egypt, anti-imperialist leader Gamal Abdel Nasser had come to power in 1952 and nationalized the Suez Canal in 1956, prompting an invasion from Britain, France and Israel. The Egyptian people triumphed in the conflict and provided an inspiration to other peoples within the region, where popular revolts occurred in Iraq and Lebanon during 1958, triggering the U.S. intervention in the region that same year.

In 1955-56, African Americans in Montgomery, Ala., staged a successful boycott of the bus system and defeated legalized segregation on local public transport. In 1957, the first civil rights bill since the period of Reconstruction in 1875 was passed by the U.S. Congress.

Also in 1957, Ghana gained its national independence under the leadership of the Convention People's Party founded by Kwame Nkrumah, a Pan-Africanist and socialist who studied at Lincoln University, a historically Black university, during the Great Depression.

Nkrumah, who was influenced while in the U.S. by other Pan-Africanists and Marxists such as W.E.B. DuBois, William A. Hunton, C.L.R. James, Paul Robeson and George Padmore, invited many African Americans to Ghana after it gained independence and became the center of activity for broadening the liberation struggles in other colonized territories in Africa.

It was in Ghana during December 1958 that revolutionaries such as Patrice Lu-

## Quantrill's raiders, Texas Rangers

# Hollywood turns racists into 'heroes'

By Gene Clancy

On Jan. 25 the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences announced that "True Grit" had been nominated for 10 Oscar awards including best picture for 2010. The main characters in this movie are members of the notorious Quantrill Raiders and Texas Rangers. It is noteworthy that not one person of color was nominated in any of the major acting categories for any film, proving once again the institutionalized bias that dominates the U.S. film industry.

**"Culture serves the class organization of society. An exploiting society gives birth to an exploitative culture."**

— Leon Trotsky,  
"Culture and Socialism"

Popular culture in the United States is big business. Movies, books, TV shows, not to mention YouTube and iTunes, generate billions of dollars in profits for the capitalists who invest in them. They also help to reinforce and propagate the key underlying ideas and values of the ruling class.

Whenever and wherever racists and exploiters gain ascendancy, they push their ideas into the popular culture. With little regard for historical truth, they spin heroic tales of daring do, often using marginal figures who in reality were little more than racist thugs, building them into heroes to be admired and emulated.

Quantrill's Raiders were formed during the pro- and anti-slavery fighting that was a prelude to the Civil War in the region of Kansas and western Missouri. They were among the most fanatic pro-slavery, racist elements of the Confederacy, comparable to the later Ku Klux Klan. By any reasonable account they were guilty of war crimes and worse.

On Aug. 21, 1863, William Quantrill, with 450 zealous irregular cavalry, approached the town of Lawrence, Kan. Lawrence was well-known as a center of anti-slavery sentiment, led by the late John Brown.

On Quantrill's orders, the raiders killed 183 men and boys, all civilians "old enough to carry a rifle," dragging many from their

homes to execute them before their families. (Charles Mills, "Treasure Legends of the Civil War") The ages of those killed ranged from as young as 14 all the way up to 90. When Quantrill's men rode out at 9 a.m. most of Lawrence was burning. His raiders looted indiscriminately.

The following October, now in Oklahoma, Quantrill wrote his only official report of the war, claiming he had "killed 150 Negroes and Union Indians in the Cherokee Nation." (Oklahoma Historical Society, digital.library.okstate.edu)

One of Quantrill's commanders, "Bloody Bill" Anderson tried to outdo him with a raid on Centralia, Mo., where the "bushwackers," as they proudly called themselves, displayed from their saddles the scalps of the 22 people they killed after they had first stripped and mutilated the bodies.

Both Quantrill and Anderson were killed near the end of the Civil War. Yet popular culture has idealized many of those who rode with them, such as Frank and Jesse James, as romantic outlaws.

A host of Western genre movies and novels have produced fictional characters who supposedly rode with Quantrill and given them sympathetic if not heroic treatment. Among those who have had starring roles in such films are Audie Murphy, John Wayne, Clint Eastwood, and, more recently, Jeff Bridges in the new movie version of "True Grit."

### Texas Rangers & theft of Mexico

The role of the Texas Rangers was not unlike that of Quantrill's Raiders. They have been heroes in countless movies and novels, including "Bonnie and Clyde" and "True Grit." Even the Lone Ranger of radio and TV fame was supposed to have been a Texas Ranger. The Texas Rangers are so iconic that the State of Texas actually has a law on the books which forbids their disbandment. (Texas Government code Sec. 411.024, [texasranger.org/today/statutes.htm](http://texasranger.org/today/statutes.htm))

The Texas Rangers were a mercenary army set up by Steve Austin to steal territory from Mexico. After the "Texas revolution" the Rangers were deployed to

wipe out the Cherokee and Comanche Nations, which had supported the Mexicans. They were part of the 1846 U.S. invasion launched by President James Polk in the U.S.-Mexican War that followed the U.S. annexation of Texas in 1845.

During the Civil War, Texas was a Confederate state, and the Texas Rangers served as part of the Confederate Army. After the war, the Texas Rangers played a big role in the war for western territory that decimated the Native peoples, including the Kiowa and the Apache Nations.

Their true character was shown in the El Paso Salt War when they were sent by the governor of Texas to back up an Anglo Texas businessman who was attempting to privatize the great salt flats that lay at the base of the Guadalupe Mountains of West Texas. The Mexican inhabitants had launched an armed struggle to preserve their traditional communal use of the area.

Contrary to their reputation that "they always get their man," the Rangers were forced to surrender to the popular committee leading the resistance. Unlike the Rangers' or Quantrill's Raiders' victims, the captured Rangers were merely stripped of their weapons and permitted to leave.

The U.S. Cavalry was then sent in, along with a sheriff's posse of New Mexico mercenaries, to establish by force of arms the right of individual capitalists to own the salt lakes previously held as a community asset. Hundreds of Tejanos/as were forced to flee to Mexico, many in permanent exile.

During the Mexican Revolution from 1910 to 1918, the Texas Rangers took it upon themselves, even though it was not their country, to oppose the revolution. A 1919 investigation by the Texas Legislature found that from 300 to 5,000 people, mostly of Mexican descent, had been killed by Rangers from 1910 to 1919. (Charles Hill & Louis Sadler, "Border and Revolution: Clandestine Activities of the Mexican Revolution")

It is important to put these sources of popular culture into their historical context. They are not "just movies" or "a good story." They are conscious, often devious, means of influencing people's consciousness in a reactionary manner. □

## BLACK HISTORY MEANS HEROIC FIGHTBACK

# Between struggles for national liberation Lumumba, Congo and African-American history



Lumumba, Shirley Graham DuBois, George Padmore and Kwame Nkrumah came together at the All-African Peoples Conference to plan a strategy for the total liberation of Africans and peoples of African descent worldwide. It was at the AAPC in Ghana that Lumumba became a known figure within liberation movement circles in Africa and the U.S.

### Africa, the heightening African-American movement

In 1960 two significant developments occurred, respectively, in Africa and in the U.S. On the African continent 17 countries gained their independence from European colonialism. Inside the U.S., African-American students began to engage in nonviolent direct action at lunch counters and other segregated private and public institutions demanding an end to legalized racial segregation.

In April 1960, the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee was formed. The founding conference of SNCC was held in Raleigh, N.C., where Ella Baker, the executive director of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference — the organization founded by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. — encouraged the college students to form their own independent organization to better fight against national discrimination.

In 1960 thousands of students staged sit-ins and other demonstrations throughout the U.S. South. SNCC proceeded to enter areas in the South to extend the leadership of the burgeoning Civil Rights movement to the Black farmers and youth who were tied to the exploitative conditions in the agricultural industry prevalent during the period.

### The assassination of Lumumba

Patrice Lumumba returned to the Belgian Congo in early 1959 to lead the national independence struggle. By June 30, 1960, Congo was a sovereign country with Lumumba serving in a coalition government with moderate forces as prime minister and leader of the most populous party, the Congolese National Movement (MNC-Lumumba).

However, after a short period Lumumba's government came under attack by the former colonialists in Belgium and the other imperialist countries, led by the U.S. After three months Lumumba's government was overthrown. Lumumba was held under house arrest by United Nations so-called peacekeeping forces, who were objectively siding with imperialism against him and the progressive forces in Congo.

After Lumumba escaped from the capital of Leopoldville to join his supporters in the east of the country, he was kidnapped with the assistance of the Central Intelligence

Agency, which had been involved in plots to assassinate him for several months. Lumumba was turned over to the agents of Belgian and world imperialism and executed on Jan. 17, 1961.

Immediately, demonstrations erupted all over Africa and throughout the world. In Africa, the murder of Lumumba was denounced by Ghana President Kwame Nkrumah and other progressive and anti-imperialist forces throughout the continent.

Demonstrations against Belgium and the U.S. occurred in many other countries around the world, including Moscow, London, Chicago and at the U.N. headquarters in New York City.

During a speech where the U.S. ambassador to the U.N., Adlai Stevenson, was speaking to a special session where the Soviet Union was seeking the termination of the U.N. Secretary-General, Dag Hammarskjöld, African Americans and other progressive forces disrupted the proceedings.

The incident forced U.S. Ambassador Stevenson to acknowledge the demonstration and later that evening President John F. Kennedy was forced to go on national television to defend the U.S. position in support of the imperialist-puppet Joseph Kasavubu, whose treacherous role was to undermine the Lumumba government.

Lumumba became a martyr to freedom fighters in Africa and around the globe. Malcolm X, who was the national spokesperson for the Nation of Islam when Lumumba was killed, spoke out later in denunciation of his politically motivated assassination. In his last speech as a representative of the Nation of Islam, on Dec. 1, 1963, in New York, he made mention of U.S. complicity in the murder of Lumumba in response to a question about the recent assassination of John F. Kennedy.

Malcolm X, aka El Hajj Malik El-Shabazz, after he departed from the NOI, would later go on to form the Organization of Afro-American Unity in June 1964, which was patterned on the Organization of African Unity, the continental grouping of African states during that period. After two trips to Africa in 1964, Malcolm X became the strongest and most outspoken critic of U.S. imperialist policy toward Congo.

Under President Lyndon Johnson, the liberated areas of Congo were bombed by U.S. military war planes in late 1964. Malcolm X denounced these acts of militarism against the Congolese people.

In late 1964, Malcolm X sought to collaborate with Cuban-Argentine revolutionary Che Guevara in his upcoming secret campaign to assist the Lumumbists in Congo, where Antoine Gizenga had established a rival government to the other centers of



Patrice Lumumba.

WWP chairperson, Sam Marcy, holds 'Congo workers' sign at U.N. protest, 1960.

imperialist power in Leopoldville, the capital, and in the Katanga region in the south, which was headed by Moise Tshombe. Malcolm X was attempting to recruit African-American veterans into an "Afro-American Brigade" that would have fought alongside the Cubans and the Congolese in 1965.

However, Malcolm X was assassinated in New York on Feb. 21, 1965. Just a few days prior to his death, he was denied entry into France. It was later revealed that he was scheduled to meet with African-American expatriates interested in direct participation in the Congo struggle.

Although the Congo campaign led by Guevara to assist the Lumumbists in 1965 was not victorious, the experience taught valuable lessons to both the Cubans and African revolutionaries that were later utilized in the successful struggles that won the independence of Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, Angola, Zimbabwe, Namibia and South Africa during the 1970s and 1980s.

These historical developments were documented in a BBC film released in 2008 that contained firsthand accounts from both the revolutionary fighters from Africa and Cuba as well as spokespersons for the imperialist states that sought to defeat the struggle for the total liberation of the continent.

### Congo and African America today

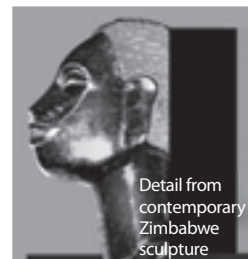
The government of Mobutu Sese Seko, the successor U.S.-backed Congolese regime after 1965, was overthrown by a national coalition of forces supported by various African states in 1997. Nonetheless, war erupted again in 1998 with the U.S.-

backed invasion by Rwanda and Uganda attempting to occupy the Democratic Republic of Congo then under the leadership of Laurent Kabila, a former comrade of Lumumba's and a veteran of the Congo campaign with the Cubans in 1965.

In August 1998 the Southern African Development Community states of Zimbabwe, Angola and Namibia, all of which were led by parties and liberation movements that had fought against imperialist forces to win their national liberation, intervened in the DRC and halted the Western-backed invasion and occupation. However, since 1998 millions of Congolese have died and suffered assault due to the machinations of imperialism, which still utilizes the Central African country for the extraction of billions of dollars in mineral resources every year.

African Americans won significant gains during the 1960s and 1970s which broke down legalized segregation and disenfranchisement. Nevertheless, the social conditions of African Americans have not fundamentally changed over the last two generations. The current economic crisis impacts the African-American people disproportionately with significantly higher rates of unemployment, poverty, imprisonment and victimization by state-sanctioned racist violence.

Both the African-American and Congolese people must continue to wage their struggle for genuine independence and social justice. As their efforts have intersected in the past, there are tremendous battles and victories to be won in the future. □



Detail from contemporary Zimbabwe sculpture

## Community groups protest racist attack



Baltimore

WW PHOTO

At noon on Jan. 24, Baltimore activists representing different community organizations came out in freezing weather to protest outside the Clarence M. Mitchell Jr. Courthouse against an action taken by State's Attorney Greg Bernstein. Protesters opposed Bernstein's reducing of all felony charges to misdemeanors against a member of a Zionist vigilante group that brutally attacked an African-American student.

On Nov. 19, a group of men from Shomrim, a Zionist vigilante group, targeted the 15-year-old student from Northwestern Senior High School as he was walking home from school. Eliyahu Werdesheim of Shomrim, a veteran of the Israeli Special Forces and CEO of the Baltimore-based security firm, Sayeret Operational Solutions, harassed the teenager.

The youth reported that Werdesheim told him, "You don't belong in this neighborhood," and then hit him over the head with a radio. Immediately other Shomrim members joined Werdesheim in the racist attack by kneeling the student in the back, throwing him to the ground and breaking his wrist.

Members of the All Peoples Congress, representatives of the Baltimore chapter of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, the Baltimore Black Think Tank and community activist Leo Burroughs demanded that the vigilante group be disbanded and members of the group be charged with hate crimes. The activists at the protest announced that they would be demonstrating at Werdesheim's Feb. 15 hearing.

— Steven Ceci

## Eyewitness Gaza

# Palestinians struggle to rebuild

By Sara Flounders

*This is part two of a report on a solidarity visit to besieged Gaza. The entire report can be viewed at workers.org.*

The maintenance of educational levels is the most impressive accomplishment in Gaza and is a reflection of sacrifice. There are almost half a million students in 640 schools in Gaza. More than a third of the schools were damaged in the 2008-2009 Israeli bombardment. Although students attended in split shifts, and textbooks and supplies were missing, schools reopened within five days of the end of the Israeli onslaught. Schools in Gaza are a source of national pride.

A visit to the Islamic University, which has 30,000 students, gave us an example of Israel's targeted destruction. The most important facility, containing all the scientific labs and expensive equipment and years of research, was totally ruined by Israeli missiles. The destroyed building has been cleared of rubble, but the laboratories are denied equipment to rebuild. However, a new Al-Aqsa television station has opened, showing programs that can be seen all over the Arab world. All technical materials, computers and cameras were brought in via the survival tunnels.

It is significant that Gaza today has more

than 80,000 students enrolled in university. Many thousands of other students attend the Open University, where courses can be taken by those who are working, raising families and only able to attend school part time. Eighty to 90 percent of all students receive financial aid and scholarships. Sixty-two percent of university students in Gaza today are women.

But what the people cannot accomplish is reconstruction of buildings. Thousands of homes were destroyed, along with almost every industry and food processing or supply building in Gaza. Clearly the people have the skills and determination to stay and rebuild. But cement, steel rods, iron bars, along with piping, wiring, glass, framing and all that is required to rebuilding modern buildings are prohibited.

### Medical care

The medical system functions, with many skilled and dedicated doctors, under incredibly difficult conditions, such as an endless struggle for needed pharmaceuticals, spare parts and fuel for backup generators. Six hospitals were damaged in the 22-day Israeli onslaught.

Accompanied by the minister of health, we visited a dialysis unit of Gaza Hospital along with other units. While equipment is pieced together, care is at a high level and free.

But complex care cannot be provided in Gaza, and Israel determines who can leave, even for emergency life-saving care. Families of political prisoners or political activists, and anyone on Israeli lists are denied exit visas. Exit permission for 21 percent of patients was denied or delayed due to extensive security screening in December 2009. (Gaza Health Fact Sheet, World Health Organization, Jan. 20, 2010)

The greatest health concern is that there are no extra resources, considering the very real threat of a new Israeli attack. Doctors explained that on Dec. 27, 2008, when the Israeli bombardment began, they were overwhelmed with more than 3,000 wounded people needing emergency care within the first day. They had almost no emergency supplies available — not even the most basic supplies, such as antibiotics, pain medications and dressings for wounds.

This endless supply shortage impedes normal medical care under "peaceful" conditions, but in the face of any attack the Palestinians in Gaza are medically defenseless. The U.N.'s World Health Organization says that 15 to 30 percent of essential drugs were out of stock in 2009.

The Israeli/Egyptian blockade dominates all choices and supplies. Restricted items include the most basic household necessities, such as light bulbs, matches,

soap, paper supplies, mattresses, blankets, clothing, shoes, generators, phones and computers.

Yet Palestinian organizations have found incredible and creative ways to get basic supplies and to continue communication with the outside world. All of these goods come in, at great effort, through a whole complex of tunnels built between Gaza and the Egyptian side of the border. These tunnels are not called smuggling tunnels. They are called survival tunnels. They are the lifelines of Gaza.

Fuel for vehicles and gas for cooking must be brought in through the tunnels. Donkey carts are a common sight in Gaza.

### Solidarity meetings and exchanges

A visit to the Ministry of Detainees made a powerful impact. Only in Gaza is there a special ministry for the detainees' families, who need many kinds of support and help. There are more than 7,000 Palestinian political prisoners and almost daily targeted assassinations by Israeli forces in both the West Bank and in Gaza.

We met with about 100 family members. The women, who came to the meeting with pictures of their family members, were so clearly pained as they described years without their loved ones. One young woman introduced her beautiful 5-year-old boy and described how she gave birth in chains in an Israeli prison.

We met with Dr. Ahmed M. Bahar, first deputy speaker of the Palestinian Legislative Council, and six other members of Parliament regarding 40 kidnapped members of Parliament being held in Israeli prisons.

A meeting with Judge Daa al-Din al-Madhoun of the Palestinian National Authority's Central Commission for Documentation and Pursuit of Israeli War Criminals exposed a vast array of documented war crimes in the 2008-2009 Israeli attack. The commission has prepared many hundreds of graphic slides of deaths, injuries and destruction, along with PowerPoint presentations and books all cataloging Israeli war crimes. These materials can be used around the world in years to come to continue to charge Israeli officials with war crimes wherever they travel.

An important highlight of the solidarity visit was a meeting of former U.S. Attorney General Ramsey Clark with Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh, a senior political leader of Hamas, to discuss the impact of the continuing criminal blockade, the danger of a new Israeli attack and the importance of national unity in the Palestinian movement.

At a press conference after the meeting, Haniyeh thanked Clark for his visit and asked him to encourage other international dignitaries and heads of state to travel to blockaded Gaza. Clark called for an end to the violation of human rights of Palestinians and said that the people of Gaza are being punished for their democratic choice. He criticized the international community for not doing enough to lift the siege, and he urged support for the establishment of an independent Palestinian state.

We also visited with a large convoy of solidarity activists from Asia. Consisting of 120 participants from 17 Asian countries, the Asian Caravan for Breaking the Siege of Gaza began in India and brought substantial material aid to the people of Gaza.

Most of the supplies that convoys bring are held up at Israeli and Egyptian border closures. But the aid that these convoys bring is largely symbolic — a dramatic way of showing that the people of the world stand with Gaza. □

## Solidarity with Palestine

# NYC meeting highlights Gaza trip, new book

Supporters of Palestine jammed the Solidarity Center's meeting hall in New York City on Jan. 19 to hear human rights leader Ramsey Clark and International Action Center Co-Director Sara Flounders report on their recent trip to the embattled and blockaded city of Gaza. Their reports increased the audience's enthusiasm and solidarity with the heroic people of Gaza and helped build support for the new book, "Gaza: Symbol of Resistance."

Joyce Chediak, editor of the new book, also spoke at the meeting. In addition to editing the selections, Chediak wrote material to weave together the contributions from activists, most of which were first published as articles in Workers World newspaper.



Sara Flounders, Ramsey Clark, Monica Moorehead and Joyce Chediak

Many in the audience committed to help publish the new book and develop an audience for it in the U.S. and other

countries. For more information on the book, see [gaza-resistance-book.com](http://gaza-resistance-book.com).

— Report & photo by John Catalinotto

# Filipino-Americans stand with Egyptian people

*Following is the BAYAN USA Statement of Solidarity with the Egyptian People's Struggle issued on Jan. 31.*

Filipino-Americans under the banner of BAYAN USA are joining rallies across the United States in support of the Egyptian people's courageous resistance and calling for an end to the U.S.-backed dictatorship of Hosni Mubarak. BAYAN USA is equally inspired by the national protest movements unfolding across North Africa and the Middle East, beginning with Tunisia, Yemen, Algeria and now Egypt.

Despite mainstream media's attempts to distort the protesters as Islamic extremists, the protests in Egypt clearly represent a broad, united front of various classes and sectors of Egyptian society that have grown sick and tired over deep, longstanding socioeconomic problems including rising unemployment, food prices, widespread poverty and government corruption. These are all exacerbated under the current global economic crisis coupled with over 30 years of Mubarak's

allegiance to U.S. foreign policy — which stresses economic liberalization and privatization in the region — over the Egyptian people's national interests.

The Filipino people are all too familiar with how the U.S. hegemonic hand at the root of the Egyptian people's misery is able to be sustained through puppet leaders such as Mubarak treating government as a private business rather than as a public service, otherwise known as bureaucrat capitalism. This was the case with the former U.S.-backed dictatorship of Ferdinand Marcos, whose Iron Fist regime was no match for the popular people's uprising known as People Power that ousted him from office in 1986. Unfortunately, this has also been the case with all the succeeding regimes in the Philippines.

The valuable lesson the Filipino people have learned from ousting two U.S. puppet presidents through popular upsurge is that a change in leadership does not eradicate bureaucrat capitalism, domestic feudalism nor foreign dictates. This must come from continuous struggle for struc-

tural change by way of a revolutionary mass movement.

We are endlessly inspired by the Egyptian people's fighting spirit and self-determination, and we demand the U.S. government withdraw all forms of support for Hosni Mubarak, who is now heavily isolated. This especially includes all forms of U.S. economic and military aid to Egypt. Considered one of the closest allies to the U.S. government in the Middle East, Mubarak's Egypt has enjoyed being the second largest beneficiary of U.S. military aid in the world, receiving \$1.3 billion in U.S. tax dollars annually. We also call on the U.S. government to respect and recognize Egyptian sovereignty by not interfering with Egyptian domestic affairs.

Lastly, we call on the people in the U.S. to show their solidarity with the Egyptian people's struggle by holding the Obama government and U.S. ruling elite accountable for the burdensome economic crisis they have passed on to our backs, in forms such as skyrocketing unemployment and

*Continued on page 10*



# Mass protests demand end to Mubarak regime

By LeiLani Dowell

Massive protests continue throughout Egypt to demand an end to the regime of President Hosni Mubarak, a 30-year dictatorship that has served as an anchor for U.S. imperialism in the Middle East. In the streets protesters have fraternized with members of the military, while police forces have largely retreated. Meanwhile, youth direct traffic, as self-defense committees have been organized to defend neighborhoods from violence at the hands of “thugs,” who many suspect to be plainclothes police and members of the ruling National Democratic Party.

After three days of demonstrations in which tens of thousands of people faced brutal repression at the hands of the Egyptian state apparatus, hundreds of thousands came out on Jan. 28 to protest the police brutality, poverty, unemployment and corruption they have endured under the Mubarak regime. Defying a curfew imposed by Mubarak the day before, protesters hit the streets not only in the capital city, Cairo, but in cities throughout the country.

In battle after battle with the police, protesters endured rubber bullets, live ammunition, police batons and tear gas released from canisters stamped “Made in the U.S.” In many of these battles the

protesters emerged victorious, chasing riot police out of the main square in downtown Cairo and torching armored police cars, police stations and several NDP offices throughout the country, including the headquarters in Cairo. According to reports, in some places police officers took off their uniforms and joined the demonstrators.

On the evening of Jan. 28 Mubarak made an appearance for the first time since the protests began, holding a press conference to announce that he was ordering the rest of the government to step down and naming a new cabinet the next day. Displaying just how meaningless this development was to the people’s demands, on Jan. 29 Mubarak’s first appointment was Omar Suleiman as vice president.

According to investigative journalist Jane Mayer, Suleiman “has served for years as the main conduit between the United States and Mubarak. ... Since 1993 Suleiman has headed the feared Egyptian intelligence service [and] was the CIA’s point man in Egypt for renditions — the covert program in which the CIA snatched terror suspects from around the world and returned them to Egypt and elsewhere for interrogation, often under brutal circumstances.” (New Yorker, Jan. 29)

Unimpressed by the cabinet turnover, protesters have vowed to continue dem-

onstrating until Mubarak resigns. Participating in the protests, from most accounts, are all sectors of working-class Egyptian society, including students and youth, women, socialists, secularist and Islamist forces, and members of other classes. Even those who abstained from protest showed support for the demonstrators, throwing water and lemons from balconies so demonstrators could clear tear gas from their eyes.

On Jan. 28 the military was called into the streets of Egypt to help quell protests. Yet soldiers have allowed protests to continue unimpeded. In some cases soldiers had their pictures taken with demonstrators on their tanks. One soldier told protesters through a bullhorn, “I don’t care what happens. You are the ones who are going to make the change.” (New York Times, Jan. 29) Another said, “We are with the people.” (Washington Post, Jan. 30)

Nonetheless, brutal repression has continued, with reports from hospitals and morgues suggesting more than 100 deaths and thousands of injuries. There have been reports of snipers firing live ammunition at protesters.

The Egyptian state has attempted to limit efforts at communication between protesters and the larger world, shutting down cell phone service and social networking sites like Twitter and Facebook.

On Jan. 30, the state closed the Cairo office of Al Jazeera television and suspended accreditation of its reporters. Some reports state that journalists were also singled out for arrest and repression in earlier marches.

Egypt holds particular significance as a major prop of U.S. imperialism in the region. Until the recent protests the U.S. was happy to ignore the repression of the Egyptian people while providing the Mubarak regime with high-tech weaponry.

Egypt is one of the largest recipients of U.S. military aid in the world, receiving \$1.3 billion annually in fighter planes, tanks, warships and missiles. In addition, since the 1978 Camp David accords, Egypt has been a bulwark to the neighboring Israeli settler state. In bordering Gaza, Palestinians have had to dig tunnels into Egypt just to procure the basics of life, since Egypt has consistently enforced an inhumane blockade of Gaza.

The U.S. has raised only the most tepid objections to state repression in Egypt in the past week. As the situation has escalated, President Barack Obama has mildly expressed support for an “orderly transition.” (Reuters, Jan. 30) Egyptians on the streets this week have denounced the U.S. for supporting Mubarak.

*Excerpted from a Jan. 30 report posted on [www.workers.org](http://www.workers.org).*

## U.S. protests in solidarity with Egypt uprising

By Monica Moorehead  
Jersey City, N.J.

*The heroic, inspiring uprising throughout Egypt demanding the complete ouster of the U.S.-backed, pro-Zionist Hosni Mubarak regime, continues to occupy the world center stage as it enters its second week. As hundreds of thousands of Egyptians continue to occupy the streets in defiance of the military curfew, especially in Cairo and Alexandria, and now calling for a million-strong strike Feb. 1, global demonstrations in solidarity with the Egyptian people are also taking place and growing. The following roundup is a brief summary of some of these demonstrations — many called on very short notice — that have taken place so far in the U.S. Additional demonstrations occurred in Washington, D.C.; Los Angeles; Minneapolis; Houston; Dearborn, Mich.; and elsewhere. More solidarity actions are yet to come.*

A crowd of Egyptians who live in or around **New York City** demonstrated at Dag Hammarskjöld Plaza near the U.N., perhaps 1,500 strong. Whole families came out to call for an end to the Hosni Mubarak regime and especially for Mubarak himself to leave office. As one homemade placard put it, “Game over, Mubarak.” Many U.S.-based leftist parties and immigrant groups showed their support for the Egyptian uprising.

Two emergency demonstrations were held on Jan. 26 and Jan. 29 in **San Francisco** to support the Egyptian freedom struggle. Called by an ad-hoc grouping of Egyptian, Palestinian and anti-war activists, the actions attracted hundreds of angry protesters.

On Jan. 29, nearly 1,000 people marched through downtown chanting, “Hey, hey, ho, ho, Hosni Mubarak’s got to go!” Speaker after speaker applauded the young people of Egypt for leading the struggle. Abdel Malik Ali, a representative of the Malcolm X Center for Human Rights, commented that the Egyptian youth are showing us how to use “the social media for social change.” Ali added that the struggle in

Egypt is for self-determination and freedom. Plans are underway for more protests throughout the Bay Area.

A few hundred people demonstrated for more than three hours at the CNN headquarters in **Atlanta** on Jan. 25. The protest brought out Egyptian nationals studying at area universities, entire families from elders to babies from many Arab and North African communities, as well as members of progressive student, political and anti-war groups. Young women played a key role in sustaining the impassioned chanting of “Down with Mubarak!” that rang through the downtown area. The action received extensive local media coverage. CNN and CNN Español conducted studio interviews with some of the organizers of the demonstration.

On Jan. 29 an Egypt solidarity demo that brought out 1,500 people on 48 hours’ notice assembled in **Chicago** at the Egyptian Consulate.

Egyptian nationals — women and men, young and old — held an impromptu protest in front of the Journal Square transportation center in **Jersey City, N.J.**, chanting and holding signs demanding that Mubarak leave office. Supporters representing BAYAN USA, Veterans for Peace-N.J., the Jersey City Peace Movement and Workers World Party also attended.

The streets of **Cambridge, Mass.**, and **Boston** resounded with chants of “Down with Mubarak!” and “Barack Obama you should know, Mubarak has got to go!” on Jan. 29 as more than 700 protesters, many Egyptian and Arab, expressed their solidarity with the people of Egypt.

The demonstration was organized in two days’ time on Facebook by Egyptian students. It marched from Harvard University to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and then over the Massachusetts Avenue bridge and all through downtown Boston, ending at Faneuil Hall. International Action Center signs were enthusiastically received and carried by the marchers.

Slogans included “Mubarak Regime — Made in U.S.A.!” “Long Live the Egyptian Intifada!” and “No More U.S. \$ for

the Bloody Mubarak Dictatorship!” An IAC statement in solidarity with the Egyptian uprising was also well received.

A delegation from the Egyptian community protested outside of Sen. Carl Levin’s office in **Warren, Mich.**, along with members of the Michigan Emergency Committee Against War & Injustice, Workers World Party, the Socialist Party USA and the Organization for a Free Society.

On Jan. 29, spirited demonstrators in **Miami** showed support for the Egyptian people’s struggle to topple the U.S.-backed Mubarak regime. The protest began at the Federal Building. Protesters gathered there and marched amid Saturday shoppers and some applause to the “Torch of Friendship” on Biscayne Blvd. Most of the people attending the rally were Egyptians and Palestinians who came with their young children. Their enthusiastic chants, cried out in English, Arabic and Spanish, included, “No justice no peace, U.S. out of the Middle East!” and “Egypt, Egypt, don’t you fear, revolution is already here!” Passing drivers honked their car horns in support. Local TV covered the protest.

About 70 Egyptian, Arab and anti-war protesters demonstrated their support for the mass rebellion in Egypt Jan. 31 at rush hour in front of the **Philadelphia** Federal Building.

*Contributing to this roundup and photos were John Catalinotto, Judy Greenspan, Martha Grevatt, Cheryl LaBash, Mike Martinez, Dianne Mathiowetz, Frank Neisser, Lou Paulsen and Joe Piette.*



# Long live the Egyptian revolution!

## U.S. hands off North Africa & the Middle East!

Tunisia's people have shaken North Africa. Yemen's people have shaken the Arabian Peninsula. Egypt's people are shaking the world. This is the broadest and most condensed revolutionary uprising in the history of humanity. From Jordan and Palestine to Algeria, the peoples of the Arab world have been the first to rise up during the most severe economic crisis since the 1930s, targeting their governments whose only 'gift' to their people has been repression.

Grievances that may have started with students and unemployed youth have spread to the entire working class and to all of society except those beholden to or part of a corrupt, brutal regime. As if by magic, somewhere during the past weeks the populations crossed a threshold where they lost all fear. The fear was then in the hearts of their rulers — and in the hearts and pocketbooks of these rulers' imperialist overlords in Western Europe and especially in the United States.

This wonderful and unexpected explosion of popular power has its most direct impact on the 360 million people living in the countries known as the Arab world, stretching from Mauritania in Northwest Africa to Oman on the Arabian Peninsula. But it is also an enormous encouragement for all oppressed peoples and all workers worldwide — including those in Europe and the United States — who have seen their rights and their living standards eroded over the past decades and especially since the outbreak of the capitalist economic crisis.

Workers in the U.S. along with all the African-American, Latino/a, and

Native people, immigrants and all progressive people have a special responsibility to the revolutions taking place in North Africa and the Middle East. The U.S. government has been the biggest supporter of the dictatorship of Hosni Mubarak in Egypt and a major if not the biggest supporter of all the repressive regimes in the region. Even on Feb. 1, when the administration of Barack Obama talks "democracy" and desperately searches for an orderly, pro-imperialist successor in Egypt, the U.S. refuses to openly drop the Egyptian dictator and his cronies.

Washington for decades has supplied the guns, the ammunition, the tear gas and the military vehicles that Mubarak tried to use against the people. It plays the dominant military, diplomatic and economic role in the region, both directly and with its client, the Israeli settler state. The U.S. government has made hypocritical statements verbally supporting the rights of the Egyptian people to protest, but it is more terrified by the Egyptian uprising than by any other "enemies" in the region.

Thus it is the responsibility of people in the U.S. to be ready to march, demonstrate, protest in whatever way they can in solidarity with the people of Egypt, Tunisia, Yemen, Jordan and other countries of the region where they are rising up to struggle for an end to dictatorship, for freedom from domination by the imperialists, for jobs and for rights. Workers World Party and Workers World newspaper will build this solidarity and will demand that U.S. imperialism keep its hands off Egypt and the Arab world. □

# World in solidarity with Egyptian uprising

By Gene Clancy

Jan. 30 — Activists and progressives around the world took to the streets in many cities to show their support for the protests currently underway in Egypt and to join the call for President Hosni Mubarak to step down.

Outside the Egyptian embassy in London, people rallied, chanted, hoisted banners and demanded change. One banner read, "Arab puppet rulers must go!" A sign, written in red ink, read, "From the Nile, to the Sea — Egypt soon will be free! Freedom for Egypt!" Demonstrators chanted: "One, two, three, four, we don't want Mubarak any more!"

"People were clearly voicing their anger at President Mubarak's regime, but similarly they were also very passionate about their demands for democracy and political reforms," said Amedeo d'Amore at the London protest. (CNN, Jan 29)

Rafik Bedair, a doctor from Manchester, Great Britain, said, "Our point is to show some solidarity with the people demonstrating in Egypt. We're calling for Mubarak to go, for people to get their freedom. The speech [he made] yesterday was just an extension of the promises we have been hearing for the past 30 years." (Reuters, Jan. 29)

Protesters took to the streets in other cities throughout Europe. In Geneva they shouted slogans in Arabic, French and English. They chanted, "Get out, Mubarak!" according to Courtney Radsch, who participated in the demonstration. A video showed a crowd of people carrying signs that read, "Freedom. Social Justice. Democracy" and "Free Egypt."

In The Hague, Netherlands, demonstrators held signs reading "Out Mubarak" and "Freedom for Egypt" in front of the International Court of Justice.

In Berlin demonstrators gathered around the Egyptian embassy. One sign they held up read, "Say no to torture in Egypt — stop police violence." A demonstrator said, "Of course we want to help our brothers in Egypt; that's why we're here. All of us Muslims and Egyptians in Germany are behind you. We demand that Hosni Mubarak steps down and leaves after 30 years. He's brought down the coun-

try and we support our brothers in Egypt." (euronews, Jan. 28)

Demonstrations also took place in cities throughout Canada. Ahmed Khalifa, who helped organize the Toronto protest, said he was encouraged by the protests in Egypt and stressed their significance. "We are witnessing a great change in history," he told CTV. "We are watching Egyptian people and Middle Eastern people telling us that 'we want freedom.'" (Jan. 29)

In Auckland, New Zealand, protesters demonstrated in front of the U.S. consulate demanding that the U.S. pressure Mubarak, its "ally," to step down.

### Solidarity in Middle East

In Turkey hundreds of protesters demonstrated outside the Fatih Mosque in central Istanbul after Friday prayers to make their voices heard in support of the Egyptian cause.

Anita McNaught, Al Jazeera correspondent in Turkey, said the mosque had become a focal point for activism since Israeli commandos raided a Turkish ship in the Freedom Flotilla headed to Gaza last May. "It is very much the organizations that we saw rise to prominence following the Israeli attack on the Mavi Marmara that have taken to the streets today to lend their voices in solidarity with the Egyptians." (Jan. 28) A simultaneous rally was held in Ankara, Turkey's capital city.

Tunisians demonstrated outside the Egyptian embassy in Tunis, brandishing placards with slogans reading "Mubarak Out!" and "Freedom."

"We are here to say that the Tunisian people are behind the Egyptian people. They have suffered in the way that we suffered. It's time for change," Monia Mechri, one of the protesters, told AFP news service. (reported by AJ, Jan. 28).

The Progressive Democratic Party, a former opposition group that has now joined Tunisia's interim government, said Egypt had "called in the hour of change for an end to injustice and dictatorship." Their Jan. 28 statement as reported in Al Jazeera, said, "The Egyptian people supported the Tunisian people's revolution. Our heart is with you and our voices never cease to pray for victory."

Ahmed, a blogger and activist at the rally, told Al Jazeera that what has happened in Egypt is "very great" and that "now democracy will be ... one effect in the Arabic world." (Jan. 28)

Even in Doha, the capital of Qatar, where demonstrations are rare, protests have been held in front of the Egyptian embassy. □

## Filipino-Americans stand with Egyptians

Continued from page 8

homelessness, critical cuts to education and health care, overbearing privatization of social services, the prison-industrial complex and the rising costs of consumer goods. We call on the people in the U.S. to strengthen and expand our unity against the U.S. war machine waging costly imperialist wars of aggression abroad in the bogus name of democracy and freedom. This is among our best acts of solidarity with the Egyptian people and all other oppressed peoples of the world.

**Long Live the Egyptian People!**

**Mubarak, Step Down Now!**

**U.S. Out of the Middle East!**

**U.S. Out of the Philippines!**

**Long Live International Solidarity!**

— Bernadette Ellorin,  
Chairperson, BAYAN USA

## Stop FBI repression

# Protesters say: 'Solidarity is not a crime!'

Continued from page 4

Speakers and audience members commented on and linked the FBI repression of activists; the targeting of Muslims; Immigration and Customs Enforcement and police collaboration; police brutality, including Philadelphia's stop-and-frisk policies; and the Pennsylvania Department of Homeland Security spying on more than 300 groups and individuals in 2010 for potential "terrorist" activities. Abdus Sabur, father of a young Black man brutally beaten by police in September, spoke movingly about his son's experience and urged Philadelphia's City Council to pass a resolution supporting the Muslim community.

In **Raleigh, N.C.**, activists gathered outside the Federal Building with signs reading "Federal Bureau of Intimidation" and "Hands off Activists." Participants included the Triangle Committee to Stop FBI Repression, the Durham Bill of Rights Defense Committee, FIST (Fight Imperialism, Stand Together) and the National Lawyers Guild. Khalilah Sabra of MAS (the Muslim-American

Society) Freedom read a statement by a ninth-grade student on the injustice of repression.

At a noontime rally and an early evening demonstration in **Boston** hundreds of flyers were distributed to passersby and rush-hour commuters, many of whom applauded the demonstrations. A man whom activists suspected was an undercover agent, likely FBI, filmed participants and appeared to be trying to provoke a response.

More than 200 people chanting, "Free, free Palestine! Solidarity is not a crime!" protested in front of the Federal Building in downtown **San Francisco**. Coordinated by the newly formed Bay Area Coalition to Stop Political Repression, participants staged a dramatic enactment of 23 duct-taped grand jury resisters marching into the Federal Building to return their subpoenas.

Speakers included Richard Brown of the San Francisco 8, who served time for refusing to cooperate with a grand jury witch hunt targeting the Black Liberation movement of the 1960s and 1970s. Brown stated, "The FBI and police are

the real terrorists." Monadel Herzallah, a key organizer and member of the Arab American Union Members Council, announced that the subpoenaed brothers and sisters did not come to court as ordered.

Another case of FBI intimidation was reported from **Memphis, Tenn.**, where solidarity activists planning a public event at the Mid-South Peace and Justice Center were visited by the FBI and a Memphis police SWAT team who claimed they were there to "keep peace" at the demonstration. Two activists' homes were also visited by the sheriff's department with bench warrants.

For reports on actions and events in other cities, including St. Louis; Salt Lake City; Tuscaloosa, Ala.; Dallas; Tucson, Ariz.; Kalamazoo, Mich.; Seattle; Providence, R.I.; Asheville, N.C.; Louisville, Ky.; Albany, N.Y.; and Kyiv, Ukraine, visit the Committee to Stop FBI Repression at [www.stopfbi.net](http://www.stopfbi.net).

John Catalinotto, Judy Greenspan, Dianne Mathiowetz, John Parker, Bryan G. Pfeifer and Susan Schnur contributed to this roundup.

# Uprisings pose dilemma for U.S. imperialism

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

The revolutionary upheaval in Egypt has brought millions of workers, youth and professionals into the streets to demand the removal of the U.S.-backed regime of Hosni Mubarak. The potential looms for a total collapse of Washington's foreign policy in the region.

Egypt's mass outpouring was inspired by the earlier mass demonstrations, strikes and rebellions in Tunisia that drove longtime neocolonial puppet Zine El Abidine Ben Ali to seek refuge in Saudi Arabia, another imperialist outpost in the Arabian Peninsula.

In addition to the uprisings in Tunisia and Egypt, significant mass actions have protested the governments in Yemen and Jordan, where U.S. imperialism has dominated the regimes as a key component of their so-called "war on terrorism" against political Islam and against the masses of the region. Obama administration officials have been scrambling to formulate and articulate a coherent position on the rapidly developing situation where the people have lost all fear of repression and retaliation from the client states of the region and their U.S. benefactors.

President Barack Obama during his Jan. 25 "State of the Union" address stated that the U.S. supported the democratic aspirations of the people in Tunisia. Washington, however, has been a solid supporter of the ruling Constitutional Democratic Rally (RCD) in Tunisia. The Obama administration maintained its backing of Ben Ali until after he fled the country on Jan. 14.

Regarding Egypt, the U.S. administration has refused to publicly call for Mubarak's removal as of Jan. 31. The April 6 Movement and other opposition forces have called a general strike for Feb. 1. These groups said that 1 million people will enter the streets around the country to demand the immediate removal of Mubarak and his ruling National Democratic Party.

U.S. imperialist policy in North Africa and the Arabian Peninsula has been based on the shoring up of a number of neocolonial and autocratic regimes, as well as giving full backing to the Israeli settler state. Now, with the failure of this

strategy, the ruling class inside the U.S. is debating what course of action to take in order to maintain its economic and strategic interests in the region.

## Economic impact of the uprisings

There is much at stake for the U.S., the European Union and Israel regarding the political outcomes of the current crisis. Tunisia has been a source of cheap agricultural products that are marketed in Europe and around the world. Egypt, with its population of 80 million, borders the state of Israel and on its territory is the Suez Canal, a gateway to the most important waterways where vessels transport oil and other resources that are essential to the world capitalist market.

Already, as reported in the Jan. 31 MarketWatch, "European markets fell on Jan. 31 as investors remained nervous about the growing unrest in Egypt, with financial firms, travel companies and car makers posting some of the biggest losses."

MarketWatch's Simon Kennedy also notes, "[The Jan. 31] retreat came after worries about the situation in Egypt also had pulled Asian markets lower. The main concern for markets is over what would happen if unrest spreads to other countries, said Andy Lynch, European equity fund manager at Schroders."

This same article continues: "Fears about the potential impact on oil supplies pushed crude-oil prices sharply higher. Lynch said the protests could also lead to policy changes in other countries. 'The trigger point seems to have been the rise in food prices.'"

These developments have placed additional pressure on the European currency, the euro, which was artificially shored up in a bailout package in 2010 that was prompted by the grave economic crises in Greece, Spain, Portugal and Ireland. Also the lower-than-expected U.S. gross domestic product growth rate of only 3.2 percent resulted in a decline in the stock market on Jan. 28 by 166 points.

Even the New York Times (Jan. 31) admitted that the situation in Egypt could further destabilize capitalist economies around the world. It quoted Nomura Holdings Inc. as saying it "would expect regional markets to remain unsettled because we don't look any closer to a political resolution than we did on Friday [Jan.

28]. Instability in the Middle East makes global markets uncomfortable. We've entered a new and unpredictable phase of transitioning governments in the Middle East."

## Imperialism seeks alternate strategy

Early on in Obama's term, the president visited Egypt, where he delivered a speech calling for a new approach to relations with the predominately Muslim states in the region.

Nonetheless, the U.S. has continued its unconditional support of the state of Israel and its upholding of the dictatorial regimes headed by puppets of the U.S. and other imperialist countries. Conditions for the Palestinians in Gaza have worsened, and the documents released by WikiLeaks on the role of the Palestinian Authority have further confirmed the historic U.S. interference in the internal affairs of the colonized peoples.

Even NATO member Turkey, a staunch U.S. military and political ally that maintains diplomatic relations with Israel, has begun to criticize both the Zionist state and Washington's foreign policy in the region. In May 2010, the Israeli Navy attacked an aid flotilla heading towards Gaza to provide humanitarian assistance, resulting in the deaths of nine Turkish nationals, one of whom was also a citizen of the U.S.

The Israeli government spoke out on Jan. 31 in support of the Mubarak regime, which as a successor to the government of President Anwar Sadat (who was assassinated in 1981 following his conciliation with Israel), negotiated a separate peace deal with Tel Aviv that the masses throughout the region and the world condemned. Israel fears that the coming to power of a new coalition government in Egypt could result in the abrogation of the 1979 peace treaty and the possible reopening of the border between the North African state and Gaza.

In a recent commentary published in the Israeli daily Haaretz, Aluf Benn stated, "Jimmy Carter will go down in American history as 'the president who lost Iran,' which during his term went from being a major strategic ally of the United States to being the revolutionary Islamic Republic. Barack Obama will be remembered as the president who 'lost' Turkey, Lebanon and

Egypt, and during whose tenure America's alliances in the Middle East crumbled." (Associated Press, Jan. 31)

Demonstrators on the streets of Egypt have openly voiced anti-U.S. and anti-Zionist sentiments that if put into practice in a new government of national unity could result in a profound shift in the political and military balance of forces in North Africa and throughout the Middle East.

## U.S. workers and the oppressed

Such a shift could set the stage for an escalation of solidarity efforts in support of the Palestinian people and other oppressed Arab populations within the region. Public opinion within the U.S. has been largely shaped by the U.S. corporate media and political culture, which has distorted the understanding of the character of national and class oppression in the region as well as in other majority Muslim states such as Afghanistan, Pakistan, Somalia, Yemen, Iraq and Saudi Arabia.

Despite this lack of debate, more people within the U.S. have supported the legitimate struggles for national independence and self-determination for the Palestinians as well as the people of Lebanon and other neighboring states. A majority of people in the U.S. oppose the ongoing wars in Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan and see no possibility for peace outside a total withdrawal of military forces by the Pentagon and NATO.

Numerous demonstrations inside the U.S. and around the world have shown solidarity with the people of Egypt and Tunisia. The upcoming anti-war demonstrations on April 9-10 will inevitably be bolstered by the developing revolutionary movements throughout North Africa and the Middle East.

Anti-imperialists and anti-war activists must incorporate slogans and programs that support fundamental social change throughout North Africa and the Middle East as well as in Central Asia and the Horn of Africa, especially those that demand that the U.S. and the EU keep out. Moreover, the struggles waged by the workers and youth in Egypt and Tunisia have direct relevance for the people of the U.S., who are also facing high levels of unemployment, growing poverty, cutbacks on public and social services and escalating state repression. □

# Egypt rocks world Millions in streets try to oust U.S.-backed regime

*Continued from page 1*

and all progressive forces has weakened the movement. Furthermore, the meteoric rise in the demonstrations, from tens of thousands to millions within a week, would leave even the most developed revolutionary party running to catch up. There is still much time for the Egyptian people to develop the leadership they need.

## 'Hug a soldier'

The masses have adopted a classical revolutionary strategy of fraternization towards the rank-and-file soldiers. The movement calls it "hug a soldier." Numerous shots were shown on television early on of soldiers posing with demonstrators; troops riding in tanks waving Egyptian flags; one officer declaring, "We will not fire on you."

A military spokesperson the night before the "million person march" told the masses, "We will not fire on the people." Actually, after six days of fraternization, the high command had no idea of whether the troops would, in fact, fire on the people. The order to fire could cause a huge

split among the troops and drive sections of the ranks actively over to the side of the people and into combat against the police and the regime.

Former Egypt analyst for the CIA, Bruce Riedel, gave a blunt assessment: "They could shoot the crowd, they win tomorrow, and then there will be a revolt that will sweep them away." (New York Times, Jan. 30)

Two notes of caution regarding the military's pledge not to shoot: This pledge was made in the face of an anticipated demonstration of a million or more people; also this pledge was made in the context of the masses acting peacefully. There is no telling what the military high command, who are complete servants of imperialism and reaction, would do should the masses become more aggressive in their attempts to oust an intransigent dictatorship.

## The state and the revolution

Either way, the question of the military and the state in the present struggle is contradictory. In every revolutionary struggle the question of the state becomes paramount. The Egyptian state is first and

foremost the instrument for the suppression of the working class and the peasants. In Egypt the police have traditionally carried out this repressive role.

But with the police off the streets for the moment, the army is the weapon of the state with its face to the demonstrations. As the situation stands, then, the state exists but the high command is constrained from using it to suppress the demonstrations. Yet as long as the troops follow the orders of the high command, the army is the instrument that prevents the people from sweeping away the regime and establishing new organs of popular government.

## Washington's illusory 'orderly transition'

The U.S. imperialists in Washington have been trying to find some "orderly transition" that will allow the Pentagon and Wall Street to maintain their grip on Egypt, while placating the masses at the same time.

But the uprising left Washington without any control over the situation and without an effective plan to regain control. The U.S. has contemplated dealing with Mohamed ElBaradei and various

small liberal parties of the opposition. They would like them to negotiate with the military for a transition that would set up elections but leave the fundamental policies in place.

But in face of the titanic uprising of the Egyptian masses, it will be an almost impossible task for the U.S. to maintain its domination of the Egyptian government and its policies, including the peace treaty with Israel, the blockade of Gaza, the use of the Egyptian foreign office to frustrate the Palestinian national movement, and using Egypt as a base for the Pentagon in the region.

The anger at the old regime is reminiscent of the people's anger at the French monarchy in 1789, the Czar in 1917 and the Shah in 1979. The old order, the order carefully armed and financed by U.S. imperialism, will eventually be swept away by the Egyptian masses. No "orderly transition" can hold. Things can never be the same. For the Egyptian people, the road to liberation is a complete break with imperialism. This glorious, world-historic uprising is an enormous first leap along that road. □

## Editorial de WW/MO

# Obama evade la crisis

Los 25 millones a 30 millones de desempleados/as o subempleados/as en EEUU que quizás escucharon el discurso del Presidente Barack Obama sobre “El estado de la Unión” no pudieron encontrar ni siquiera una sola palabra de alivio. Lo mismo se puede decir sobre las millones de personas que enfrentan ejecuciones hipotecarias al igual que las 47 millones que viven oficialmente en la pobreza.

Lo que sí escucharon fue un llamado a bajar la tasa de impuestos corporativos por primera vez en 25 años. Obama también propuso una suspensión de cinco años en gastos domésticos para poder hacer “recortes dolorosos”. Sugirió recortes en Medicaid y Medicare para solucionar el problema del déficit. Glorificó el programa “Race to the Top” (Carrera hacia la cumbre), el cual es un plan para privatizar el sistema de educación y destruir los sindicatos de maestros/as.

Obama insinuó la posibilidad de empleos futuros basados en planes futuros de desarrollar ferrocarriles de alta velocidad, internet de alta velocidad, tecnología biomédica, y más investigación y desarrollo, pero no dijo ni una sola palabra sobre un programa concreto de empleos ni cualquier otra forma de alivio para las masas cuyo sufrimiento aumenta.

El presidente evocó el período después de 1957, cuando la Unión Soviética lanzó el Sputnik, el primer satélite espacial del mundo. La administración de Eisenhower, el Pentágono y la clase dominante estuvieron en un estado de pánico total sobre la posibilidad de quedarse detrás de la Unión Soviética socialista respecto a la tecnología. Lo que siguió fue una inversión masiva en la educación estadounidense, especialmente en las ciencias y matemáticas. Fue subvencionado por el gobierno y resultó en el comienzo de la revolución científico-tecnológica.

Obama mencionó la situación presente, refiriéndose a China, que tiene en la actualidad la red de ferrocarriles de alta velocidad más larga en el mundo y la computadora más poderosa del mundo, y a otros países que también se han adaptado al nuevo período tecnológico, en perjuicio de los Estados Unidos. Básicamente la echó la culpa a China, a India y a otros países por la crisis de empleos aquí. Llamó éste “nuestro momento de Sputnik” y visualizó una nueva revolución científico-tecnológica para enfrentarse con el desafío a los negocios estadounidenses y crear empleos. Quiere “hacer de América el mejor lugar en la tierra para hacer negocios”.

Pero temprano en su discurso él inadvertidamente contradujo su argumento fundamental. Recordó a la audiencia que hubo una vez cuando los/as trabajadores/as aquí podían conseguir buenos empleos con buenos beneficios de por vida. Luego, brutalmente les recordó que “las reglas han cambiado”. La tecnología ha transformado la situación. “Las plantas siderúrgicas que en aquel tiempo necesitaban 1.000 trabajadores ahora pueden hacer el mismo trabajo con 100”.

En otras palabras, la revolución científico-tecnológica del pasado ha resultado en un enorme aumento en el proceso de producción y en una reducción semejante en la necesidad de mano de obra por el capital. Esto es lo que está detrás de la actual recuperación sin empleos, del desempleo masivo y de la crisis económica del capitalismo.

Los planes de Obama de invertir en ferrocarriles de alta velocidad, internet de alta velocidad, energía verde, etc., son en industrias todas de alta tecnología que no pueden proveer empleos para las decenas de millones de desempleados/as. El avance de la tecnología es lo que está impulsando al capitalismo hacia un callejón sin salida y hacia más crisis.

Los dueños están todavía guardando \$2 billones (millones de millones) en efectivo a causa de la sobreproducción capitalista, dinero que rechazan invertir en producción porque no pueden sacar ganancias al no tener un mercado para sus productos. Ni Obama ni la clase dominante tienen una respuesta a esta contradicción fundamental. Solamente la lucha de la clase trabajadora para eliminar el sistema capitalista puede superar esta crisis de largo plazo para los/as trabajadores/as. □

# Protestas en Egipto se intensifican, desafiando 30 años de dictadura pro-estadounidense

Por John Catalinotto

Decenas de miles de personas han salido a las calles en las ciudades de Egipto exigiendo la destitución del aliado de EEUU, el presidente Hosni Mubarak. Éstas son las protestas más grandes contra el régimen de Mubarak quien durante 30 años ha gobernado este país norteafricano de 85 millones de habitantes. Aunque la Casa Blanca ha calificado al régimen de Mubarak como “estable”, se esperaban protestas aún más extensas el 28 de enero luego de los servicios del viernes en las mezquitas a través de todo el país.

Las fuerzas de oposición egipcias se inspiraron en el levantamiento popular en Túnez, que el 14 de enero obligó al dictador de ese país, Zine El Abadine Ben Ali, a huir hacia Arabia Saudita. El levantamiento en Túnez sorprendió no sólo a sus propios gobernantes, sino también a sus amos imperialistas en París y Washington.

Siendo el más pequeño de los países del norte de África, el papel de Túnez en el mundo ha sido limitado. En cambio, el régimen egipcio es el eje de la política exterior estadounidense en el mundo árabe.

La diplomacia de EEUU en la región y su apoyo para el estado colono israelí también depende del cumplimiento y la cooperación de Egipto. Así, un colapso de la dictadura de Mubarak en Egipto provocado por un levantamiento popular podría tener un enorme impacto en la política imperialista e israelí para toda la región.

En Egipto, una coalición de grupos de la oposición — incluyendo el Karama, el Movimiento 06 de abril, la Asociación Nacional para el Cambio, el Movimiento Popular Democrático para el Cambio, el Movimiento por Justicia y Libertad de los Jóvenes y los Socialistas Revolucionarios — había convocado manifestaciones nacionales contra el régimen de Mubarak para el 25 de enero. El régimen celebra ese día como “Día de la Ley”, pero la oposición lo rebautizó como el “Día de la Ira”.

Por lo general, las protestas con-

tra el gobierno de Egipto consisten de unos cientos de personas desafiando valientemente el doble número de policías brutales. El 25 de enero, decenas de miles se manifestaron en las calles en Cairo y otras miles en Alejandría, Suez y muchas otras ciudades egipcias.

## Policía reprime, pero el pueblo lucha

Al día siguiente, decenas de miles de personas más salieron para continuar las protestas. Sus demandas incluían la retirada de Mubarak, que su hijo Gamal Mubarak — quien se esperaba que fuera nombrado su sucesor — se retire de la política, y libertad, justicia y un régimen democrático. Egipto tiene entre 5.000 y 10.000 presos políticos. El régimen arrestó a otros 1.200 manifestantes en la tarde del 26 de enero, según abogados independientes.

La mayoría de los informes describen que esa tarde los/as manifestantes esquivaban cañones de agua, gases lacrimógenos y bastones de la policía. Jack Shenker, el corresponsal en el Cairo del periódico británico Guardian, y quien fue apresado con un grupo de manifestantes, trajo al mundo lo que los/as manifestantes egipcios ya conocían. Él describió gráficamente cómo las personas fueron golpeadas y maltratadas, y casi asesinadas, mientras les llevaban en camiones hacia el desierto.

Luego, el 27 de enero, la policía abrió fuego con balas de goma y munición real. En la localidad de Sheik Suwajed en la península del Sinaí, un beduino fue asesinado. Superando el miedo hacia un sistema que depende de la fuerza bruta para mantenerse en el poder, el pueblo volvió aún más fuerte.

En la ciudad de Suez esa mañana, los manifestantes incendiaron la sede de la policía local. Además de las exigencias políticas, las familias provenientes de todas partes se reunieron para exigir que sus familiares que han estado encarcelados hasta por tres días, fueran puestos en libertad.

Informes oficiales reportaron que seis personas murieron durante los primeros tres días de manifestacio-

nes, dos de ellas policías. Cientos de manifestantes resultaron heridos.

## El papel de EEUU

Washington suministra \$2 mil millones en ayuda anual a Egipto, la mayor parte para el ejército. Washington contó con el apoyo de Egipto en 1991 para el primer asalto y la invasión de Irak. Israel cuenta con Egipto para que patrulle la frontera sur de Gaza, bajo bloqueo durante los últimos cuatro años.

Washington ha apoyado a Mubarak durante décadas. Ahora se enfrenta a la alternativa de respaldar a su régimen hasta el final o tratar de organizar una transición hacia un nuevo gobierno que dependa también del apoyo del imperialismo y que, básicamente, siga las mismas políticas. Esto significa tener un gobierno pro-imperialista y partidario de la política exterior de EEUU y que mantenga políticas económicas neoliberales dentro de Egipto.

En situaciones semejantes en el pasado — por ejemplo en las Filipinas y Haití en 1986, Zaire e Indonesia en los 90s — el imperialismo estadounidense pudo realizar los dos objetivos. Ha respaldado dictaduras hasta que su gobierno se hizo insostenible y luego cambió su apoyo a la oposición, ayudando a organizar la transición. Si el cambio [en Egipto] fuera instalar al líder de la oposición Mohamed ElBaradei y su grupo reemplazando a Mubarak, probablemente sería un cambio que Washington pudiera aceptar.

Las declaraciones del Presidente de los Estados Unidos Barack Obama y de la Secretaria de Estado Hillary Rodham Clinton han expresado la necesidad de reformas políticas en Egipto pero también han pedido al gobierno y a los/as manifestantes que contengan la violencia. Sin embargo, es el gobierno quien tiene un monopolio virtual en la violencia. Todos sus tanques, gases lacrimógenos y municiones vienen de los Estados Unidos. Pero si las decenas de millones de egipcios/as que sobreviven con menos de \$2 al día se unen a las protestas de la oposición política, estas armas no serán suficientes para salvar al régimen. □

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