

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

‘Cosmetics, Fashions, and the Exploitation of Women’
—PAGES 6–8

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 75/NO. 7 FEBRUARY 21, 2011

Economic recovery is little help for workers

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Recent data points to a U.S. economic recovery. But rising corporate profits, increased consumer spending, and higher manufacturing output have had little impact on reversing the declining standard of living of working people. Millions continue to confront long-term unemployment and growing assaults by the bosses and their government on wages and social benefits.

U.S. government officials announced that the deepest recession since World War II ended in June 2009—20 months ago. But the large number of jobs the bosses eliminated have not been replaced. In 2008–2009, 8.5 million workers were fired from their jobs, some 6 percent of the workforce. Yet in 2010 only 1.1 million jobs were added, according to the U.S. Department of Labor. This is less than the number of workers who entered the labor force for the first time.

In a speech at the National Press Club February 3, Federal Reserve

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U.S. gov’t abets states in cutting health care

BY SETH GALINSKY

As part of winning support for President Barack Obama’s health-care “reform,” his supporters said that 14 million more working people would receive government-run health insurance through Medicaid.

Well before those projections are supposed to kick in, state governments, with White House help, are looking to cut Medicaid services, leaving many working people with little more than emergency care. Budgets are being balanced on the back of working people. Medicaid funding is shared by state and federal governments.

A February 3 letter from U.S. health secretary Kathleen Sebelius advises state governors on how to save money by restricting services for those covered under Medicaid. Services and eligibility vary state by state. Arizona governor Janice Brewer is asking for federal authorization to cut 280,000 adults from the programs.

“Enrollment in Medicaid climbed by 7 percent due to the recession,”

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Protests grow against dictatorship in Egypt

Strikes by workers, farmers expand fight



Associated Press

Suez Canal Company workers in Ismailia City protest February 9 as part of open-ended strike demanding pay raise and resignation of hated boss.

BY SETH GALINSKY

Strikes and demonstrations by textile, pharmaceutical, telephone, canal, rail, oil, and government workers and by farmers are spreading throughout Egypt as working people put their stamp on the fight to overthrow the dictatorship of Hosni Mubarak.

Attempts by the Mubarak regime, backed by Washington and other imperialist powers, to use cosmetic changes combined with threats of greater repression to convince dem-

onstrators to stop their protests have backfired. Working people and others demanding an end to the dictatorial government and the lifting of state of emergency laws that restrict the right to free speech, assembly, and organization refuse to back down. On February 8 more than 1 million people filled Cairo’s Tahrir Square in one of the largest actions since the movement began.

Thousands of Suez Canal Compa-

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Iowa unionists say, ‘We’re more united since lockout’



Militant/Maggie Trowe

Pickets at entrance to Roquette America, February 4, in Keokuk, Iowa.

BY HELEN MEYERS
AND MAGGIE TROWE

KEOKUK, Iowa—Unionists in this small Mississippi River town, members of Local 48G of the Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers International Union (BCTGM), are now in the fifth month of a fight against a lockout by corn processing company Roquette America.

The local continues to maintain

round-the-clock picket lines at the plant, with lively, vocal, reinforced teams at the 6:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. shift changes. Last week, even on a day when Keokuk received 17 inches of snow and winds reached 50 miles per hour, the picket line stayed up.

Loretta Winters, a maintenance electrician at Roquette, explained that while not every union member has a regular picket shift, all members now

Continued on page 3

‘Militant’ supporters map out daily plans for renewal drive

BY ANGEL LARISCY

With one week to go in the campaign to sign up 400 long-term subscribers to the *Militant*, supporters of the paper are mapping out day-to-day plans in order to make and surpass their quotas.

To date 252 readers have extended their subscriptions or have bought a sub for six months or longer. The total is short of where the drive should be, and still shy of quotas totaling 400.

Area reports indicate when supporters of the paper reach out to workers, students, and others who have been reading the *Militant*, many want to renew and are also interested in purchasing books by Pathfinder Press. The reports below give a good feel for the possibilities.

A number of first-time readers have sent in renewals on their own, and interest among prisoners, who read and share the paper, has picked up as well.

It’s not too late to join the effort! Renew your subscription today and help win other new readers. All long-

term subscriptions received by the end of the day Tuesday, February 15 will be counted. For more information, contact a distributor near you, listed on page 5.



Socialists who are members of Teamsters Local 210 and work at a large pharmaceutical plant in the Bronx adopted a goal of five renew-

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Charges against clinic target abortion rights

BY JANET POST
AND JOHN STUDER

PHILADELPHIA—After a year-long investigation, Philadelphia district attorney Seth Williams brought charges January 19 against the staff of the Women’s Medical Society, an abortion practice in a predominantly Black, working-class area here.

Dr. Kermit Gosnell, director of the clinic, has been indicted on eight counts of murder, which includes one woman who the district attorney says died from a sedative overdose, and seven charges of “infanticide,” alleging that fetuses were delivered alive and then had their spinal cords severed. Nine clinic staff workers have been charged, three for “murder of a viable baby.”

A report by the grand jury convened by Williams alleged the clinic has been grossly substandard and dangerous in its practices.

The clinic has been sued at least 15 times for malpractice by women patients, and former patients are now speaking out about the conditions they experienced.

According to *Time* magazine, “Clearly, the Women’s Medical Society was a health-care provider of last resort. Many of the women who came were too young, or too far along in their pregnancies to be treated by the mainstream medical establishment.”

The media has been filled with lurid descriptions of the practices at Gosnell’s clinic, excerpted from the grand jury report. The clinic was ordered closed a year ago and Gosnell’s medical license revoked.

The 261-page grand jury report often reads more like an assault on a woman’s right to choose abortion than a criminal indictment. It urges sweeping changes that would make it more difficult for women in Pennsylvania to obtain an abortion. The report charges that the Pennsylvania Department of Health “abruptly decided, for political reasons, to stop inspecting abortion clinics at all.”

The report urges relaxing the statute of limitations “for illegal abortions beyond 24 weeks,” and amending the Abortion Control Act to add criminal penalties for what it calls “mutilation of any fetal remains, whether or not viable or born alive.”

The grand jury recommends pathology reports after 20 weeks where the doctor “must certify that the fetus is not viable and send the fetus to a pathologist for confirmation,” and that the Department of Health “give itself the power” to permanently close a facility providing abortions if it fails to report a second- or third-trimester abortion.

The report calls Gosnell’s clinic a “baby charnel house.” The *Philadelphia Inquirer* calls Gosnell a “back alley abortionist” and the *Daily News* calls his clinic an “abortion mill.”

The political content of the grand jury report has been seized by opponents of abortion rights—from Michael McMonagle, public affairs director for the Pro-Life Union of Southeastern Pennsylvania, to the national *Weekly Standard* magazine.

“Once you dehumanize the unborn child,” McMonagle told the *Inquirer*, “what Gosnell is, is just a logi-



Militant/Lea Sherman

Picket in San Francisco January 22 by supporters of abortion rights. Opponents are using charges of dangerous and unsanitary conditions at Philadelphia clinic to press for further restrictions on women’s right to choose abortion.

cal extension of the so-called right to choose.” An article in the *Weekly Standard* said, “The abortion business is the gutter of American medicine.”

Democratic and Republican political figures immediately went on record to support the grand jury report and the charges. Outgoing governor Edward Rendell released a statement saying he was “flabbergasted” that the health department did not supervise the clinic.

Two weeks into his term, Pennsylvania governor Thomas Corbett, who campaigned against abortion rights, called the findings “horrific.”

Dayle Steinberg, president of Planned Parenthood Southeastern Pennsylvania, responded to the call for more restrictions in the aftermath of the indictments. “The fact is abortion is already a highly restricted procedure, especially in Pennsylvania, where regulations include mandatory waiting periods and traveling two or three times to separate appointments.

“These restrictions have caused some women to delay abortion procedures, often into the second trimester,

where it becomes both a higher medical risk and more expensive,” he said.

“Restrictions that would further hinder access to safe abortion are not the answer, and will only increase the number of poor women who are forced by circumstances to turn to unsafe options for care.”

Supporters of women’s right to choose also point out that for 26 years Pennsylvania has banned Medicaid funding for the procedure.

“These charges are being used to attack a woman’s right to abortion,” said Osborne Hart, who ran as the Socialist Workers Party candidate for district attorney in 2009. “Assaults against abortion rights, efforts to stigmatize Planned Parenthood and other providers, and increased restrictions on access have resulted in abortion being unavailable in 87 percent of the counties across the country. This combined with most hospitals banning abortions is responsible for a situation where some women are driven to go to facilities that operate the way the Women’s Medical Society is being described.”

THE MILITANT

Solidarity with working people in Egypt

While the U.S. government is working overtime to maintain a pro-imperialist regime in Egypt, working people there refuse to back down, demanding freedom of speech and assembly and an end to police brutality and laws that restrict their rights. Don’t miss a single issue.



Militant/Laura Anderson

Chicago picket in solidarity with struggle against U.S.-backed dictatorship in Egypt.

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

California governor aims to slash social programs

BY LEA SHERMAN

SAN FRANCISCO—Newly elected Democratic Party governor of California Edmund Brown recently projected a “vast and historic” budget that would slash \$12.5 billion in state programs and extend \$12 billion in tax hikes.

Citing a \$25.4 billion budget deficit, Brown warned that measures would be “painful” and would require sacrifices “from every sector of the state.” But the brunt of the cuts will be felt most by working people. The proposed budget includes:

Cutting \$1.7 billion from Medi-Cal, the state’s Medicaid program, including limiting the number of prescriptions and doctor visits;

Cutting \$1.5 billion from CalWorks, which provides some modicum of food,

shelter, child care, and job training to families in need;

Cutting \$750 million from the Department of Developmental Services, which assists those with disabilities, including the mentally retarded and autistic; and

Cutting \$1 billion from California universities and \$400 million from community colleges.

Governor Brown’s proposals extend the massive cuts made to state programs under former Republican governor Arnold Schwarzenegger.

Continuing to scapegoat public workers and their unions for the crisis, Brown is also cutting up to 10 percent in take-home pay for some state employees.

These assaults come at a time when state unemployment is at 12.5 percent, with well over 2 million unemployed.

Iowa unionists fight lockout

Continued from front page

come to the line to pick up vouchers for additional union assistance. “It gives us all a chance to talk with each other, see how people are doing, find out if they need help,” Winters said. “We have become closer, more united, since the lockout.”

Tom Buckert, the local’s vice president who heads up the hardship committee, said support and donations continue coming in from workers and unions in the region. The International Painters and Allied Trades local in Fort Madison, Iowa, organized a raffle and food collection. A group of local ministers maintain a food pantry for use by the locked-out workers. The United Council Staff Union of Illinois donated \$5,000. While this reporting team was at the picket line, a man drove up to donate a truckload of wood for the “Club48G” picket shack stove.

In addition to the picket line and ongoing outreach activities, Local 48G is campaigning to halt funds the city and state provide to Roquette. The local collected 3,000 signatures on petitions that were presented to the Iowa Department of Economic Development in the state capitol. United Steelworkers Local 310 at Bridgestone/Firestone in Des Moines, Iowa, organized more than 500 of the signers. The petitions were also filed with the Keokuk City Council.

Roquette is demanding a two-tier wage scale, increases in health premiums, and use of “temporary workers.” The company is also now asking for

“unlimited right to contract out any and all work at any time,” Steve Underwood, the local union’s president, told the *Militant*. This demand was added after the lockout began.

One of Roquette’s representatives, Aliza Golan, recently told the *Hawkeye* newspaper, “We are willing to negotiate. . . . There is no intention to break the union. The union has the option of dissolution.” Her statement enraged the unionists the *Militant* spoke to.

Buddy Howard, a locked-out worker recently elected president of the Lee County Labor Council, said that among recent underhanded moves Roquette was paying workers holiday and vacation pay in a lump sum. By doing so, even though nobody was working at the time because of the company lockout, workers were denied part of and in some cases all of their unemployment benefits.

While some locked-out workers have begun to take other jobs to make ends meet, only three of some 240 union members have crossed the picket line.

Jerry Brotherton, who has worked at the plant for 31 years, told the *Militant*, “People are starting to see that what happens to one union will happen to all. Things are slowly starting to change.”



Sonoma County Library workers picket Central Library in downtown Santa Rosa, July 2010, to protest contract concessions sought by the Library Commission.

At the same time, California State officials are reassuring the billionaire bondholders that they will be paid in full and on time, no matter what misery workers have to suffer.

“Under the California Constitution, making sure bond investors get their money is a higher priority than providing healthcare to kids, protecting the environment,” California treasurer William Lockyer wrote in the *Los Angeles Times*.

Because Brown is a Democrat, whose run for governor was widely supported by the union officialdom, there have

only been scattered protests so far.

“My tuition and fees have increased almost \$200,” said Bryce Riegel, a San Francisco State University student who recently transferred from Fullerton Community College. “I protested last year against the cuts and the furloughs,” adding he would join protests again.

Prisoners near San Luis Obispo went on a 72-hour hunger strike January 24. They were protesting rolling lockdowns every other day for eight hours because of cutbacks. During these times prisoners cannot leave their cells and are denied family visits.

—MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles

Malcolm X: Revolutionary Leader of the Working Class. Video excerpts of Malcolm X, introduced by Wendy Lyons, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Feb. 18, 7:30 p.m. Suggested donation: \$5. 4025 S. Western Ave. Tel.: (323) 295-2600.

San Francisco

‘Soldier of the Cuban Revolution’—A Look at Cuban Revolutionary History and New Challenges Being Confronted Today. Speaker: Betsey Stone, Socialist Workers Party. Sat., Feb. 19. Dinner, 6:30 p.m.; program, 7:30 p.m. 5482 Mission St. Tel.: (415) 584-2135.

IOWA

Des Moines

Malcolm X: Revolutionary Leader of the Working Class. Speaker: David Rosenfeld, Socialist Workers Party. Sat., Feb. 19, 7:30 p.m. 3707 Douglas Ave. Tel. (515) 225-1707.

MINNESOTA

Minneapolis

Defend Women’s Right to Choose Abortion!

Speaker: Becky Ellis, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Feb. 18, 8 p.m. 1311 1/2 E. Lake St. Tel.: (612) 729-1205.

NEW YORK

Manhattan

Malcolm X: Revolutionary Leader of the Working Class. Speaker: Paul Mailhot, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Feb. 18, 7:30 p.m. Suggested donation: \$5. 307 W. 36th St., 10th floor Tel. (212) 736-2540.

WASHINGTON

Seattle

Malcolm X—Revolutionary Internationalist. Fri., Feb. 18, 7:30 p.m. Suggested donation: \$5. 5418 Rainer Ave. S. Tel.: (206) 323-1755.

CANADA

Montreal

Soldier of the Cuban Revolution. Speaker: John Steele, Communist League. Fri., Feb. 18, 8 p.m. Donation: \$5. 7107 St-Denis, Room 204. Tel.: (514) 272-5840.

— 25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO —



February 21, 1986

When Haiti’s President-for Life Jean-Claude Duvalier boarded the U.S. Air Force C-141 that took him into exile February 7, the downfall of his government marked a tremendous victory for the nearly 6 million inhabitants of the Caribbean country.

While the U.S. government engineered Duvalier’s flight from Haiti, his regime was toppled by the mass protests of Haitian youths, workers, and farmers.

The fall of the Duvalier dynasty was greeted with outpourings of joy.

But there was also anger that the dictator had not been brought to justice for his crimes against the Haitian people.

The Duvalier family plundered between \$300 million and \$500 million from Haiti, the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere.



February 20, 1961

More than a hundred students were in Southern jails on Lincoln’s birthday as they pressed a bold new drive against restaurant Jim Crow. Continuing the “jail, no bail” movement in Georgia, North Carolina and Virginia, they chose prison cells and rock piles to posting bond or paying fines after being arrested for requesting service at lunch counters.

Militant students at Friendship Junior College in Rock Hill, S.C., continued mass picketing at local drug and variety stores.

On Sunday, a motorcade of more than 300 Rock Hill students defied a warning from police officials and drove to the county jail for a mass visit to 13 young rights fighters who elected to serve 30 days at hard labor to paying \$100 “trespass” fines.



February 22, 1936

TOLEDO, Feb. 18—In an attempt to forestall state wide strike action of the W.P.A. workers of Ohio, Carl Watson, W.P.A. head, today announced a 10 percent pay boost for all categories of W.P.A. workers in the state. The increase is retroactive through February 16.

Announcement of the pay rise came within three days following the issuance of a twenty-four county conference call to W.P.A. workers and the Unemployed League in Northwest Ohio to organize a widespread move to gain the increase and other concessions.

Pressure from all over the state forced through the increase. A conference of the Ohio Workers Alliance in Columbus agreed to take a strike poll if the pay boost was not immediately offered.

Labor’s Giant Step

The First Twenty Years of the CIO: 1936–55

by Art Preis

The story of the explosive labor struggles and political battles in the 1930s that built the industrial unions. And how those unions became the vanguard of a mass social movement that began transforming U.S. society.



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Speeches by Malcolm X are published in Greek

BY NATASHA TERLEXIS

ATHENS, Greece—Forty-five people, half of them immigrants from Ghana, Burkina Faso, Palestine, Bangladesh, Egypt, and Lebanon, attended the launching of the Greek-language translation of *Malcolm X Talks to Young People* at the Ghanaian Social Center here January 30. The book, which is based on the title published in English by Pathfinder Press, was just released by Diethnes Vima. It is the first full book of material by Malcolm X in the Greek language.

Samsideen Iddrisu of the Ghanaian community and African Vision opened the event. Focusing on the life of the revolutionary leader, he said, “Malcolm represented the greatest leadership potential coming out of the Black proletariat.”

“The Cuban people—and particularly our leaders—have followed closely

the history of struggle of black people against racism and all forms of discrimination all over the world, where Malcolm X played a significant role,” said Eliselia Díaz Suárez, First Secretary of the Cuban Embassy in Athens.

Only in 1959 did the people of Cuba establish “a legitimate government representing the rights of workers, farmers, women and blacks and swept away all forms of discrimination,” she said. Also present at the event was Luis Prado, Cuba’s ambassador to Greece.

Kostas Athanasiou, one of the organizers of the volunteer effort to translate and promote the new book, reviewed the history of the fight for Black rights. He described Malcolm X as being formed by this long history of struggle, going over names and dates of a record little known to working people in Greece.



Militant/Maceo Dixon

Pathfinder literature table at Association for the Study of African American Life and History, held in North Carolina, October 2008. Meeting in Athens, Greece, January 30 celebrated Greek translation of *Malcolm X Talks to Young People*, first full book of talks by him in Greek.

Georges Mehrabian on behalf of the publishing house Diethnes Vima reviewed the perspective Malcolm X presents through the speeches and interviews contained in the book.

In the discussion, Yvette Jarvis, an

African American and former member of the Athens City Council took exception with the portrayal of Malcolm X as the only major Black figure who consistently opposed U.S. policies around the world. She pointed in particular to Martin Luther King’s opposition to the U.S. war in Vietnam.

While agreeing that King did so, Mehrabian said, “Malcolm X early on saw U.S. imperialist aggression in the Congo, Vietnam, and elsewhere as cut from the same cloth as racist oppression within U.S. borders. The oppressed the world over faced the same enemy and their struggles are part of the same fight to overthrow that enemy.”

Mehrabian also announced that Diethnes Vima will soon publish in Greek *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power* by Jack Barnes. Twelve books were sold at the event, including seven of the new title, with five more ordered.

The next presentation of *Malcolm X Talks to Young People* is scheduled for February 12 by the Immigrants’ Club in Hania, on the island of Crete.

An initial round of visits to bookstores in Athens, Thessaloniki, and Katerini netted orders for 70 copies of the new book.

‘Militant’ supporters map renewal drive plans

Continued from front page

als to the *Militant*. Three coworkers have renewed, including one who first purchased her subscription when she went with us on the union bus to the October 2 demonstration in Washington, D.C., for jobs. “I like the *Militant*,” said another coworker, Rolando Santos. “It has very interesting articles on topics not covered by other papers.”

—Dan Fein
New York

courages fellow workers to read the *Militant*, had signed up a couple of coworkers for introductory subscriptions during the week. Two more workers on the picket line decided to subscribe for the first time. One subscriber we had called brought \$20 to picket duty and gave it to Howard to keep the paper coming for another six months.

—Maggie Trowe
Des Moines, Iowa

In San Francisco we have tried to meet with as many previous and current subscribers as possible to get long-term renewals. We have also been encouraging protesters at rallies in solidarity with the people of Egypt to get long-term subs. At two recent protests we sold 60 copies of the *Militant*, a new six-month subscription, and two introductory subs.

Two of us met for more than an hour

with a *Militant* reader in Oakland who had originally subscribed at a rally in solidarity with Oscar Grant, a Black youth killed by BART cops in January 2009. She renewed for six months, bought three Pathfinder books, and was eager to discuss international and local political events, including cuts facing teachers and other workers.

—Eric Simpson
San Francisco

One of the highlights this week was a six-month renewal sold to a former coworker from a meat plant that is now closed down. He is a young Kurdish Australian who said he recently bought a copy of *Fidel Castro: My Life*. It inspired him to get back in touch with supporters of the *Militant* to talk politics.

—Bob Aiken
Sydney, Australia

This weekend Helen Meyers and I drove to Keokuk, Iowa, to walk the picket line with members of Local 48G of the Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers union, locked out by Roquette America since last September.

We made phone calls a few days before the trip to unionists and others in the area who had bought *Militant* subscriptions in recent months.

Unionist Buddy Howard, who en-

U.S. gov’t abets states in cutting Medicaid

Continued from front page

Obama’s health secretary writes, while state Medicaid spending dropped by 10 percent. More than 50 million people, including 25 percent of children, are enrolled in Medicaid programs.

Instead of immediately forcing large numbers of people off the Medicaid rolls—which Sebelius does not rule out—she encourages the governors to look first at exercising “flexibility” in how the program is implemented.

Sebelius emphasizes that state governments don’t need federal permission to cut back or entirely eliminate many basic services, such as prescription drugs, dental services, and speech therapy. Among the other “optional” health services are physical therapy, respiratory care, kidney dialysis, artificial limbs, wheelchairs, optometry, and eyeglasses.

She also reminds the governors that they can unilaterally raise patient fees for doctor visits and prescriptions, which she calls “cost sharing.” Many states have already implemented these cuts.

Sebelius encourages the governors to look for ways to reduce payments for the sickest patients. “Just 1 percent of all Medicaid beneficiaries account for 25 percent of all expenditures,” Sebelius writes. She promises to “expedite review of state proposals” for

cuts that require federal approval.

While more working people—battered by layoffs, long-term unemployment, and stagnant or declining wages—are turning to Medicaid for medical care, they are also signing up for food stamps to make ends meet.

Just-released figures show that in November 43.6 million people—more than 14 percent of the U.S. population—used food stamps to purchase groceries, a 14.2 percent increase from last year. The percentage was highest in Mississippi, and Washington, D.C., where one in five people are in the program.

Many of those receiving food stamps are full-time workers. Like Medicaid, eligibility and amounts disbursed vary state by state. In North Carolina, couples get the equivalent of \$12 a day; families get \$18 to \$26, based on the number of children.

More working people are also turning to food banks to supplement what they can buy. In Arizona food distributed by the banks, run by charities, increased 27 percent from 2009 to 2010.

Global food costs jumped 25 percent last year, while in the United States retail food costs rose 1.5 percent.

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New Zealand	15	10	67%
Australia	17	9	53%
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Should be	400	300	75%

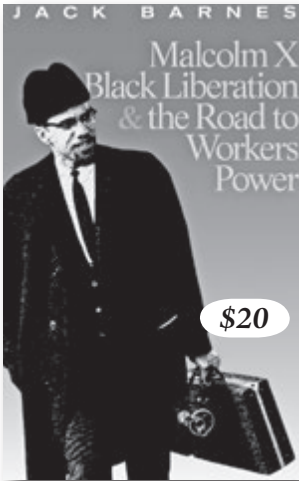
Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power

by Jack Barnes

“This is a book about the dictatorship of capital and the road to the dictatorship of the proletariat. A book about the last century and a half of class struggle in the United States—from the Civil War and Radical Reconstruction to today—and the unimpeachable evidence it offers that workers who are Black will comprise a disproportionately weighty part of the ranks and leadership of the mass social movement that will make a proletarian revolution. . . .”

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Roots of political crisis shaking Egypt's rulers

BY CINDY JAQUITH

For more than half a century Egypt has been governed by a caste of army officers who maintained capitalist rule by outlawing almost all forms of opposition. Successive regimes have denied freedom of the press, free elections, the right to form political parties, and the right to organize independent trade unions.

Whatever the outcome of the current protests demanding the ouster of President Hosni Mubarak, working people of Egypt have set the country on a different course.

Up through World War II, while formally no longer a colony of the United Kingdom, Egypt was still ruled by a monarch appointed by the British, King Fuad and then his son Farouk. Responding to the failure of the monarchy

to lead a fight to prevent the U.S. and British governments from establishing the state of Israel on Palestinian land in 1948, young officers in the Egyptian army formed the Free Officers Movement, and staged a coup against Farouk on July 23, 1952.

The Free Officers all came from the middle class. Gamal Abdul Nasser eventually rose to be their main leader. In 1953 the officers abolished the monarchy and banned all political parties.

The army took power at a time of rising class tensions in Egypt. A strike broke out in August 1952 of 10,000 textile workers. The new government sent in the army to crush it.

The military regime at the same time instituted measures in response to pressure from workers and farmers.



Egyptian prime minister Gamal Abdul Nasser (in suit) after 1956 nationalization of Suez Canal. Nasser said he was for "Arab socialism" and carried out some anti-imperialist measures. But his regime promoted a new capitalist class that included sections of the army officer corps.

The minimum wage was raised, hours of work reduced, and laws passed to create more jobs, especially in the government bureaucracy. Banks, industries, and transportation were nationalized,

breaking the power of the aristocratic bourgeoisie and handing control over to the officer layers. Agrarian reform was declared.

Nasser said he was implementing "Arab socialism," a claim promoted by many left forces around the world. The Egyptian CP promptly dissolved itself.

The CP had been trained in the counterrevolutionary policies of Soviet misleader Joseph Stalin, and followed the Stalinist line for communists in the colonial and semicolonial world to bloc with the "progressive national bourgeoisie" in the fight for liberation.

In an article written in 1965, Joseph
Continued on page 9

Workers, farmers in Egypt expand protests

Continued from front page

ny workers began sit-down strikes in Suez, Port Said, and Ismailia February 8. According to Egypt's *Al Ahram* newspaper, they are protesting poor wages and working conditions and will continue their protest "in front of the company's headquarters until their demands are met."

That same day 10,000 telephone workers from Telecom Egypt, staged sit-ins at six telephone exchange centers. They are demanding "an adequate minimum wage" for workers and a "maximum wage" for bosses.

In Mahalla, where a strike by 27,000 textile workers was attacked by police in April 2008, more than 1,500 workers at the Abu-El Subaa company blocked a road and are demanding overdue wages and bonuses.

Some 4,000 workers at the Coke Coal and Basic Chemicals company in Helwan, an industrial city south of Cairo, also went on strike demanding higher wages, permanent jobs for temporary workers, and an end to corruption.

Violent attacks by plainclothes security agents and other supporters of the regime failed to dislodge the protesters at Tahrir Square February 2 and 3. Army tanks had abandoned many of the entrances to the square, allowing thugs to enter. The anti-Mubarak forces stood their ground against the hired thugs—some of whom rode horses and camels, attacked demonstrators with poles and rocks, and at times fired live ammunition.

On February 5 the army brought out tanks to bulldoze away burned out vehicles and remove other barricades set up to protect the demonstrators in the square. Protesters climbed on the tanks and lay down in front. The barricades remained.

Press reports have commented on the transformations taking place as working people gain confidence in the fight, noting that Muslims and Christians, young and old, men and women have joined together in opposition to the U.S.-backed regime.

Al Jazeera points to "the absence of sexual harassment, a common problem elsewhere in the country. Thousands of women visited the square each day, and there was none of the catcalling and grabbing that they are often forced to endure in public."

Mubarak has attempted to split the opposition groups by offering to negotiate minor reforms. Several bourgeois parties that at best weakly resisted the dictatorship in the past, as well as the Muslim Brotherhood, which reluctantly joined the protests, are working with the April 6 Youth Movement, which called the first actions.

Over the last two weeks Mubarak, with support from Washington and other imperialist powers, took measures he hoped would end the protests. He named a new cabinet; promised not to run in the September presidential elections; named Gen. Omar Suleiman, head of the hated secret police, as vice president to organize a transition; announced a small wage increase for government workers beginning in April; and began prosecution of some of the most despised corrupt businessmen.

Al Jazeera reported February 8 that 34 political prisoners were released. But thousands more are still in prison, some since 1981 when Mubarak's predecessor, Anwar Sadat, was assassinated.

While the regime was offering to negotiate, its police forces were still torturing and brutalizing those who oppose it. On February 8 police used tear gas, live ammunition, and rubber bullets against protesters in Kharga, 370 miles south of Cairo, who were protesting the rein-

statement of a particularly hated cop.

An estimated 300 people have been killed around the country by the regime since the protests began.

"I don't care what people say about me," Mubarak said February 3. "If I resign today, there will be chaos." As tens of thousands poured into Tahrir Square February 8, Suleiman threatened that the regime will not "tolerate" the protest movement.

Worried about the impact of the overthrow of the Ben Ali dictatorship in Tunisia and the growing protest movement in Egypt, U.S. secretary of state Hillary Clinton complained that "the region is being battered by a perfect storm of powerful trends."

Clinton has openly said that the U.S. government backs Suleiman's efforts to defuse street protests. According to the *New York Times*, "Clinton suggested that the United States was not insisting on the immediate departure" of Mubarak. "There are certain things that have to be done in order to prepare," she said.

But the "orderly transition" that Washington and the capitalist class in Egypt are organizing keeps crashing into the determination of working people there.

"Hosni Mubarak is illegitimate," "The parliament is illegitimate, Omar Suleiman is illegitimate," protesters chanted February 8.

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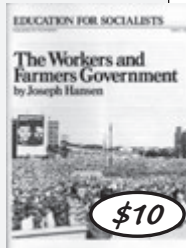
Education for Socialists Bulletin
The Workers and Farmers Government
by Joseph Hansen

Includes

"Nasser's Egypt—On the way to a workers state?"

Writing in 1965 Hansen explains the class character of the Gamal Abdul Nasser regime, which ruled Egypt from 1954 to 1970. The state bureaucracy used nationalizations to advance a new capitalist class that included parts of the army officer corps. Even though some called the regime socialist, Hansen explains, there was no working-class mobilization in the factory takeovers. "Land reform" left 80 percent of peasants with no land. Also includes chapters on Algeria, China, and Cuba.

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Preface to Cuban edition of ‘Cosmetics, Fashions, and the Exploitation of Women’

‘The fight to eradicate women’s subordinate status is an integral part of the struggle for socialism.’

At the Havana International Book Fair in February 2011, the Cuban publishing house Ciencias Sociales will present a Spanish-language edition of *Cosmetics, Fashions, and the Exploitation of Women* by Evelyn Reed, Joseph Hansen, and Mary-Alice Waters. Published in English by Pathfinder Press in 1986, and in Farsi by Golâzin in 2002, *Los cosméticos, las modas y la explotación de la mujer* makes this Marxist classic on women’s liberation available for the first time in Spanish. The Cuban edition includes the new preface by Mary-Alice Waters published below, a dozen pages of photos and illustrations, and a glossary of terms related to the origins of women’s oppression used in the book.

In 2011 Pathfinder will publish a new edition of *Cosmetics, Fashions, and the Exploitation of Women*—in English, Spanish, and French—that includes the new features in the Cuban edition plus an expanded photo section.

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Beauty has no identity with fashion. But it has an identity with labor. Apart from the realm of nature, all that is beautiful has been produced in labor and by laborers.

EVELYN REED

BY MARY-ALICE WATERS

Half a century ago, a New York-based socialist weekly that proudly proclaims it is “published in the interests of working people” ran a humorous, if at the same time serious, exposé of plans by the cosmetics arm of the “fashion industry” to once again bolster sales and increase profit margins. It was capitalist business as usual, the *Militant* reported in 1954. The merchants of “beauty” were ramping up another advertising campaign, aimed at convincing working women they simply *had to have* a new line of



The Canadian Press/Dave Chidley

Auto workers on assembly line at Chrysler in Windsor, Ontario, November 2008. “A woman who works on an assembly line has a different relationship to the men around her than a woman who works as a secretary,” says Mary-Alice Waters. “And both are in a qualitatively different economic and social situation vis-à-vis men than a woman who remains outside the labor market altogether.”

products in order to be happy, secure, employable, and sexually desirable to men.

A few readers of the paper responded with angry letters to *Militant* editor Joseph Hansen, attacking the author of the exposé, Jack Bustelo. They accused Bustelo of ridiculing working-class women and attacking their “right” to strive for “some loveliness and beauty in their lives.” It turned out that “Bustelo,” the brand name of a dark-roast coffee popular in New York City among Puerto Ricans and Cubans, and much liked by the paper’s editor, was the pen name under which Joseph Hansen himself had drafted the article.

The lively polemic that ensued, first in the pages of the *Militant* and then continued in a discussion bulletin of the Socialist Workers Party, became a

textbook in the fundamentals of Marxism. Articles originally published in the bulletin, such as Hansen’s “The Fetish of Cosmetics,” provided a popular introduction to the most comprehensive critique of political economy that exists, Karl Marx’s *Capital*. It rendered

gle, women were reduced to a form of property. They became “the second sex.”

Today the fight to eradicate women’s subordinate status is not reducible to simply a “woman question,” Reed explained. It is an integral part of the

“The expansion of women in the workforce points toward women taking on greater leadership responsibilities than ever before in coming revolutionary struggles. . .”

the seeming mystery of “commodity fetishism” understandable.

In clear and pedagogical responses to Bustelo’s critics, Evelyn Reed joined the debate. She explained how norms of beauty and fashion are above all *class* questions that cannot be separated from the history of the class struggle. She explained how and why ever-changing standards of “beauty” and “fashion” imposed on women—and men—are integral to the perpetuation of women’s oppression. How millennia ago, as private property and class society emerged through bloody strug-

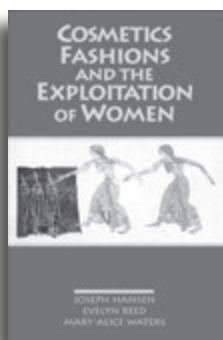
working-class struggle for power, the battle for socialism.

The “Bustelo controversy,” as the polemic became known, found fertile ground in the relative prosperity of the post-World War II years in the United States. This was a period of working-class retreat as well as an emboldened offensive by the capitalist rulers to housebreak militant sections of the trade union movement that emerged from the labor battles of the 1930s and mid-1940s.

Within a few short years of the Bustelo affair, however, the political land-

Cosmetics, Fashions, and the Exploitation of Women

by Joseph Hansen, Evelyn Reed, Mary-Alice Waters

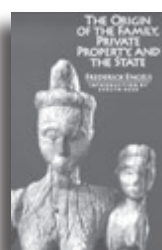


Why do ever-changing standards of beauty, as well as moral values, always reflect those of the ruling class? How do the wealthy owners of the cosmetics and fashions “industries” play on women’s insecurities to sell products and rake in profits? How have the foundations of women’s oppression weakened as a result of the accelerated integration of women into the workforce? When did women become the “second sex” and what social forces have the power to end this second-class status? \$15

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Textile workers, organized by the new Textile Workers Union of America, on strike in Greensboro, Georgia, May 1941. During World War II millions of women entered the workforce for the first time, many in industries where they had previously been excluded.

, Fashions, and Exploitation of Women'

rt of the working-class struggle for power, the battle for socialism'



"Human beings see their relations not as relations but as *things* which they endow with remarkable powers," says Joseph Hansen. "Marx called it fetishism." Above: Lipstick ad from 1954. Left: Ad from 2010 directed to adolescents, pressuring them to covet expensive torn clothes and see them as "*homeless chic*."



scape had changed dramatically. The 1959 victory of the Cuban Revolution brought renewed proof of the capacity of ordinary working people to take power and begin transforming the world they inherited. It provided unimpeachable evidence, moreover, of the vulnerability of the U.S. rulers. In the United States, the broad radicalization of the 1960s—manifested in the mass working-class-led fight to bring down the system of Jim Crow racial segregation in the U.S. South, and in demonstrations by millions opposing Washington's war to prevent the unification of the Vietnamese people and deny them their sovereignty—gave rise to a strong and growing women's liberation movement as well. It was a movement that took to the streets, fighting for access to abortion as a woman's right, expanded public child-care facilities, and greater equality on the job and in employment opportunities.

At the end of the 1960s, with this explosion of the "second wave" of the modern fight by women to cast off the shackles of their second-class status, the "cosmetics debate" became a powerful educational tool, one that was often in demand. Dog-eared copies of the mimeographed bulletin containing the articles and letters published here as *Cosmetics, Fashions, and the Exploitation of Women* passed from hand to hand among hundreds, even thousands, of young women—and men—who were searching for explanations of women's oppression and how to fight to end it. The uncompromisingly historical approach and working-class perspective they found in these pages helped many to become communists—or better communists. It helped them understand that the

fight to end women's oppression is inseparable from the fight to replace the dictatorship of capital and its consequent universal fetishism of commodities, with the political power of the working class and its transformed property relations.

The "cosmetics debate" entered its third life when it was published as a book in 1986, some twenty-five years ago. By then the capitalist expansion born out of the brutal U.S. victory in World War II had slowed, and the relative prosperity of the postwar years was threatened. The roots of the long, grinding crisis that has now exploded internationally had begun to manifest themselves. With profit rates declining, many of the gains for women won by battles in the 1960s and '70s came under assault by the employers and their government.

market in historically unprecedented numbers in the previous three decades, especially those who had led the way into occupations previously considered male preserves. The purpose was not to permanently drive them out of the workforce, but to make them more vulnerable, more exploitable, more expendable—to *lower the price of their labor power*. The mass media that serves the interests of capital was full of articles seeking to convince readers that affirmative action is unfair to men, especially Black men, that job exclusions and wage differentials between men and women are justified and to be expected. After all, biology *is* woman's destiny, and her primary social responsibility, and source of "fulfillment," is hearth and home.

In face of this concerted counteroffensive, the diverse class forces that

"Has the bourgeoisie ever gone about cultivating the fetish of commodities more cold-bloodedly than American big business? . . ."

Access to medically safe abortion services, and the *right* of a woman alone to decide whether and/or when to bear a child—the most fundamental precondition of women's emancipation—was being curtailed. Affirmative-action programs that reduced divisions within the working class were beginning to be rolled back and transformed into a source of executive, professional, and academic perks.

An ideological campaign—a "culture war"—was being mounted against working women, who had entered the labor

had comprised the rising women's liberation movement were fractured and demobilized. It was a rout, one that mirrored what was happening in the organized labor movement.

The introduction to the first edition of *Cosmetics, Fashions, and the Exploitation of Women*, which is included here, put these mounting pressures in a broader class and historical framework. Looking back at a similar economic, political, and ideological offensive during the post-World War II years—and the promotion of the "feminine mystique," as it was called—helped clarify what was bearing down on even the most politically conscious women and men in the closing decades of the twentieth century. Included in these vanguard ranks were many women who had been in the forefront of efforts to break into industrial jobs in the coal mines, steel mills, factories, railroads, and building trades—jobs traditionally closed to women.

Since its first appearance, the book has sold widely in the English-speaking world, with cumulative sales topping ten thousand copies. A Farsi edition published in Tehran in 2002, today in its second printing, has sold more than four thousand. Now, for the first time, publication of a Spanish edition in Cuba by Ciencias Sociales and in the United States by Pathfinder Press will make the book available to an even broader audience. The excellent translation is by Esther Pérez, the editor of *Caminos* magazine published by the Martin Luther King Center in Havana.

As each day's news accounts bring

Continued on page 8



Cover of new Cuban edition

Cosmetics, fashions

Continued from page 7

home to us ever more sharply, we are now in the opening years of what will be decades of economic, financial, and social convulsions and class battles worldwide. The qualitative expansion of women’s participation in the workforce virtually around the globe points toward working women taking on greater leadership responsibilities than ever before in history in the revolutionary, working-class-based battles to come.

Cosmetics, Fashions, and the Exploitation of Women has begun its fourth life—and not a moment too soon.



Two questions asked by thoughtful readers since the initial publication of *Cosmetics, Fashions, and the Exploitation of Women* are useful to consider.

First, are questions addressed in a debate over cosmetics and fashions more than fifty years ago still relevant? Aren’t they long bypassed?

Second, isn’t Reed’s article on “Anthropology: Marxist or Bourgeois?” outdated? Hasn’t knowledge of the earliest human societies moved far beyond what was known in the mid-1950s?

The response to the first question is underscored by Hansen’s rhetorical question in “The Fetish of Cosmetics.” In the whole history of capitalism, he asks, “has the bourgeoisie ever gone about cultivating the fetish of commodities more cold-bloodedly than American big business?”

The resources devoted by capitalist enterprises to advertising and the creation of markets, far from being a thing of the past, have expanded astronomically in the last half century as the working class has been pushed into “needing” everything from must-have cell phones, to the latest model automobiles, \$500 torn blue jeans, an exploding array of “cosmetic” surgeries, designer handbags, and cosmetics-designed-to-make-you-look-like-you’re-not-using-cosmetics. All these and more are pushed on hapless “consumers” without truce. The pressure to be “fashionable”—that is, to be “employable,” and attractive to a potential spouse—has penetrated even more deeply into the working class. Television and the internet greatly intensify the all-pervasive intrusions.



“Norms of beauty and fashion are above all class questions that cannot be separated from the history of the class struggle,” says Waters. In primitive society body ornamentation signified, among other things, social equality. But in class society, Evelyn Reed explains in the book, “they became fashions and decorations that signified social inequality.” Above: French aristocrat during feudal era receives payment in kind from peasant.

The manufactured compulsion to “shop,” playing on the emotional insecurities of women and adolescents above all, has only deepened and spread. The “marketing” Hansen pokes such fun at in the 1950s seems amateur by comparison to the sales techniques employed today. “Shop until you drop” has gone from being a humorous exaggeration to a description of an actual social condition pushing increasing numbers of working-class families into more and more debt at usurious rates.

The impact of the twenty-first century capitalist advertising “industry” is, if anything, even more insidious as it spreads into areas of the globe previously buffered to some extent from the imperialist world market. In large areas of Africa, Asia, and Latin America, marked by imperialist-enforced agricultural and industrial underdevelopment, as well as in countries previously part of the now-defunct economic and trading bloc once dominated by the Soviet Union, the siren song of the commodity fetish is an imperialist weapon like none other.

In the eloquent words of the Communist Manifesto, “the cheap prices of its commodities are the heavy artillery

“Capitalism is no more permanent than the property and social relations that preceded it. . .”

with which [the bourgeoisie] batters down all Chinese walls. . . . It compels all nations, on pain of extinction, to adopt the bourgeois mode of production; it compels them to introduce what it calls civilization into their midst, i.e., to become bourgeois themselves. In one word, it creates a world after its own image.”

As the not-so-outdated polemic of the 1950s makes clear, in periods of working-class retreat such as we have lived through the last quarter century—a period of retreat far longer and more devastating than the relatively brief post-World War II interlude—the “heavy artillery” of capitalism takes its greatest toll, including among the most politically conscious layers.

The answer to the second question is equally important.

The articles by Evelyn Reed—“The Woman Question and the Marxist Method” and “Anthropology: Marxist or Bourgeois?”—are two of the earliest she wrote on these subjects. They were, in effect, “first drafts” of work that she continued to edit, expand, write about, and lecture on for another quarter century. This



The counteroffensive against the gains women won during the struggles of the 1960s and ‘70s included the defeat of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) and restrictions on rights and access to abortion. Above: union contingent in 1978 Chicago demonstration demanding ratification of the ERA, a proposed constitutional amendment that stipulates “equality of rights under the law.”

second edition of *Cosmetics, Fashions, and the Exploitation of Women*, in fact, incorporates Reed’s editing on “The Woman Question and the Marxist Method” when she prepared portions of it in 1969 for inclusion in *Problems of Women’s Liberation*. That title, along with *Sexism and Science, Is Biology Woman’s Destiny?* and Reed’s widely acclaimed book *Woman’s Evolution* have been published in editions around the world in more than a dozen languages.

The focus of the sharp polemic in *Cosmetics, Fashions, and the Exploi-*

tation of Women is what Reed often referred to as the “Hundred-Year War in Anthropology.” Here, as elsewhere, Reed defends the historical materialism of nineteenth-century anthropologist Lewis Morgan, whose work Karl Marx and Frederick Engels’s drew on extensively in their writings on the subject, and Morgan’s twentieth-century continuator Robert Briffault.

As Reed points out, one of the major battle lines in this century-plus war over historical materialism has been the question, does something akin to the modern bourgeois “patriarchal system of marriage and family relations [go] all the way back to the animal kingdom”? Or did what is often referred to as “patriarchy,” and the second-class status of women, arise in relatively recent times, on the scale of evolution, as a cornerstone of class-divided societies? As private rather than communal property came to dominate all social relations, including those between men and women, didn’t a small handful of men emerge for the first time as a ruling class, subjugating other men—and, in the process, women as well?

“Concealed behind the debate,” Reed explains, is “a question of class struggle and class ideology.”

If class society and the accompanying subordinate status of women is only a stage of human history, one that arose at a certain historical juncture for specific reasons, then it can be eliminated at another historical juncture for other specific reasons.

If there has been an evolution of so-

cial relations through distinct stages of the prehistory and history of human society, determined by increasing levels of labor productivity and changing property relations—and accompanied by enormous, and extended, conflict and violence—then capitalism is no more permanent than the property and social relations that preceded it.

Those studying and writing today about the development of social labor and the earliest stages of social organization are able to draw on a larger and richer body of research than the earliest anthropologists, or even those of Reed’s generation. Of that there is no doubt. Light will continue to be shed on the complexities and variety of human social evolution. But as Reed points out, recognition of diversity “is no substitute for probing into social history and explaining the evolution of human society as it advanced through the ages.”

To argue that different marriage forms are found in the relics of primitive groups the world over, thus “all you have to do is pay your money and take your choice,” Reed explains, is like saying “that because there are still relics today of feudalistic and even slave class relations, there was no historical sequence of chattel slavery, feudalism, and capitalism; that all we have is merely a ‘diversity of forms.’”

The hundred-years war in anthropology is far from over. If anything, the dominance today of “politically correct” ideologues, comfortable in their middle-class academic and professional sanctuaries, who dissolve difficult questions of history and the forms of class struggle into the soothing balm of “cultural diversity,” only sharpens the debate.



“The class struggle is a movement of *opposition*, not *adaptation*,” Reed underscores. And that “holds true not only for workers in the plants, but for women as well, both working women and housewives.” This new edition of *Cosmetics, Fashions, and the Exploitation of Women* is offered as a contribution to that movement and that struggle.

As Reed expressed it in her dedication of *Woman’s Evolution*, “To women, on the way to liberation.”

Mary-Alice Waters
June 2010

Back workers' struggles in Egypt

Working people in Egypt have lived for decades under brutal regimes backed by a powerful military and supported by Washington.

Since coming to power nearly 30 years ago, President Hosni Mubarak has extended the dictatorial rule that preceded him. Masses of Egyptian people have no ownership rights. They have been denied freedom of speech, press, and assembly. Police brutality and torture are widespread. Workers have not been allowed to form independent unions or organize political parties. Even capitalist parties with slight differences from the regime have not had much room to function.

Pushed to the wall by the regime and forced to bear the devastating effects of the worldwide economic and social crisis of capitalism—including high unemployment and rising prices—working people of Egypt are rebelling against these conditions. Their struggle is an inspiration to toilers worldwide.

For now Washington is sticking with the Mubarak regime, with or without Mubarak himself. If that fails, the U.S. rulers and their junior partners in Egypt will try to cobble together an alternative government from

among the military hierarchy, bourgeois opposition, and whatever they can salvage from the Mubarak regime to continue ruling for the benefit of the capitalist exploiters in Egypt and abroad.

What is opening up for the toiling masses of Egypt is a working-class alternative to this, the opportunity to begin organizing for a government in their own interests. There is space now to call meetings in factories, neighborhoods, and farming villages and elect spokespeople; to defend working people against the bosses and their repressive forces; and to establish communication with others who are fighting.

Working people need councils—popular committees of the toiling population—starting from the local level on up. This would be the beginning of a working-class alternative government, in opposition to all the options promoted by imperialism and capitalist forces in Egypt under the guise of “reform.” The experiences Egyptian working people and youth are going through today are paving the way for rebuilding unions, forging a revolutionary proletarian party, and fighting along the working-class line of march toward political power.

Roots of political crisis shaking Egypt

Continued from page 5

Hansen, a longtime leader of the Socialist Workers Party, offered a more sober look at what Nasser was doing. The land reform, he pointed out, left 80 percent of Egyptian farmers without any land. The farm cooperatives were headed by the landed aristocracy, which retained its hold over the peasantry.

By 1963 virtually all Egyptian industry was nationalized. But as Hansen pointed out, this did not make Egypt a workers state. “A workers state is based not only on nationalizations but, among other things, on the revolutionary consciousness of the masses, a reciprocal of the revolutionary consciousness of the leadership,” he wrote. “The great school for the masses in achieving this level is a popular revolution—a profound collective experience in mobilizing against the ruling class and its system in order to put an end to it and to consciously open up new historic possibilities.”

Unlike what would happen in 1959 in Cuba or in 1962 in nearby Algeria, there was no such popular revolution in Egypt.

In foreign relations Nasser played Moscow off against Washington, in a bid to see who would give him the most aid. In 1956 he nationalized the Suez Canal, then in the hands of French and British interests. At the same time, he sought to keep the Palestinian struggle within bounds.

As Egyptian businesses were nationalized, the officers and their families took over the management and over time became part of the bourgeoisie. A vast state bureaucracy was erected.

When Nasser died in 1970, Anwar el-Sadat, also of the Free Officers Movement, took his place. In 1979, under the close tutelage of the U.S. govern-

ment, he signed the first peace treaty ever by an Arab state with the state of Israel. That opened up significant U.S. aid to Cairo for the first time.

Sadat also started removing some regulations hampering the free development of capitalist business and began to open up private investment. Some capitalist parties were granted legality.

Two years later Sadat was assassinated by officers with Islamist sympathies who opposed the peace treaty with Israel. This brought Mubarak, another veteran military officer who was then the vice president, to power.

Invoking a security threat from Islamist forces, Mubarak in 1981 imposed an emergency law severely restricting the right to form political parties and publish newspapers and giving the police sweeping powers to spy on and imprison people indefinitely.

When the George H. Bush administration launched its 1991 war against Iraqi president Saddam Hussein, Mubarak sent the third largest contingent of troops, further marking the acquiescence of Arab bourgeois regimes to U.S. might.

In the succeeding years, Mubarak, in collaboration with the International Monetary Fund, began denationalizing extensive parts of the Egyptian economy and opening it up to foreign investment.

The military-backed regimes have up to now thwarted any serious political challenges. None of the capitalist politicians in the opposition today can imagine governing Egypt without a strong military.

Through their mass mobilizations and organization the working people of Egypt are now fighting to end the military and dictatorial rule that has marked the past six decades,

U.S. recovery

Continued from front page

chairman Benjamin Bernanke asserted that “a self-sustaining recovery in consumer and business spending may be taking hold.” He pointed to data showing that households increased their spending by 4.4 percent in the fourth quarter last year.

In January service industries grew at the fastest pace since August 2005, and auto sales at GM and Chrysler increased by more than 20 percent over the previous month. At the beginning of February the Dow Jones Industrial Average closed above 12,000 for the first time since June 2008.

U.S. factory orders have risen for five of the past six months, increasing by 0.2 percent in December. But they remain far below the December 2007 level.

This increase in production occurs with most companies deciding not to hire new workers or rehire many of those who had been laid off. Instead, bosses are driving their current workforce harder through speedup and attacks on workplace safety. Productivity was up 3.6 percent in 2010 and 3.5 percent in 2009. In 2010 labor costs fell 1.5 percent after a similar decline in 2009, boosting company profits. “This is the first time since 1962–63 that unit labor costs fell in two consecutive years,” noted the *Wall Street Journal*.

In manufacturing the productivity rate was even higher, at 6 percent through 2010. At the same time workers’ wages have been stagnant. Over the past year household incomes increased by just 1 percent, according to a Labor Department report. The small wage gains have essentially been wiped out by rising prices, especially for food and energy.

Unable to get full-time job

About one out of every six U.S. workers is unable to get a full-time job. Besides the officially unemployed there’s a high number of “discouraged” workers, who the government does not count as part of the workforce, as well as more than 8 million who can only find part-time work.

Signs of a recovery have not affected long-term unemployment, which remains at a record-high level. Nearly 44 percent of those on the unemployment rolls have been without a job for more than six months.

The bosses are taking advantage of this situation to extract deeper concessions in wages and benefits. “Between 2007 and 2009, around a third of those workers who held full-time jobs for more than three years and then succeeded in finding new full-time jobs did so at wages that were on average 20 percent below the wages they received in previous jobs,” wrote Desmond Lachman of the American Enterprise Institute in *The American*.

The article concluded, “If President Obama is serious about economic change, little time should be lost in addressing the stagnating living standards of the American worker that threaten to undermine social cohesion in the country.”

The government’s official unemployment rate for January is 9 percent, down from 9.4 percent in December, even though a separate report said that employers added only 36,000 jobs last month. The lower jobless rate comes in part from a new estimate of the size of the U.S. population. The report says it declined by 347,000, meaning those with jobs are a higher percentage of the workforce than if the previous population figure was used.

LETTERS

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*A prisoner
California*

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Please accept this as my request and be assured that your time and concern in this matter is greatly appreciated.

*A prisoner
Florida*

Wrong headline

I wanted to draw your attention to the headline “King of Tonga resists democratic reform vote” in issue no. 5, which did not accurately reflect the content of the article.

While, after the election, the nine members of parliament from the country’s nobility were able to win the support of the five independent members and secure the election of a noble as prime minister, therefore blocking the ability of the Democratic Party to form a government, I have seen nothing that suggests the king himself was part of this process.

While his interests as monarch and that of the nobility would be

expected to mostly coincide, that is not always the case.

In recent years, as the article says, the king has officially backed limited democratic reforms, under the pressure of demands to modernize the country.

*Felicity Coggan
Auckland, New Zealand*

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