

# Venezuela fights back against sabotage, coup plotters

written by Struggle - La Lucha

April 4, 2019



Anti-imperialist march in Caracas defends President Maduro's government, March 30.

The revolutionary Bolivarian government of Venezuela has fought off a multipronged attack by the U.S. administration and today remains popular among millions of Venezuelans who have been lifted from poverty by Chavista policies.

The U.S.-anointed “interim President,” Juan Guaidó, is weakened: his top aide has been arrested, he has been banned from running for public office, and his parliamentary immunity has been done away with.

Guaidó was [banned from running for public office](#) for 15 years by Venezuela’s Constituent Assembly. The Constituent Assembly — in accordance with Venezuela’s Constitution — was created after U.S.-backed right-wing politicians took over the National Assembly. It represents those in Venezuela who had no access to political representation prior to the election of the late President Hugo Chávez.

Just days after the Constituent Assembly imposed the 15-year ban, Guaidó was also [stripped of parliamentary immunity](#). This move could even presage his arrest and prosecution for his treasonous collaboration with U.S. imperialism.

Russia and China are delivering large shipments of medicine and other aid. In another major blow to the Trump administration, Russia has begun sending troops and military equipment to send a message to Washington that Moscow supports Venezuela’s sovereignty.

Two Russian air force planes, 100 special forces troops and — importantly — cybersecurity experts [arrived in Caracas](#) on March 23. Trump administration figures are fuming over this, and Trump himself told reporters in the Oval Office, “Russia has to get out!”

Just a few days later, on March 26, [Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Geng Shuang](#) said that “Latin American countries are all sovereign states ... nor is Latin America a certain country’s backyard.”

Imperialist economic sabotage has caused hardship, but in addition to aid from Russia, China and other allies, the International Red Cross will now begin delivering supplies as well — initially enough to help 650,000 people survive the effects of the

cruel U.S. economic warfare.

The Red Cross did not support Guaidó's failed attempt to embarrass the Maduro government by trying to force delivery of a paltry amount of aid through neighboring Colombia on Feb. 23, and then burning the trucks in order to blame Chavistas for the damage.

Hundreds of thousands of supporters of Nicolás Maduro [turned out in Caracas](#) on March 10 in an amazing show of defiance against Washington and the would-be coup makers. "I'm here to support President Maduro. ... He is the constitutional president of our Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela," said María Reyes, who was at the rally.



## Trump's gangsters

To be sure, the struggle isn't over. Trump's three henchmen — John Bolton, Elliot Abrams and Mike Pompeo — seem committed to accomplishing a full-blown counterrevolution in Venezuela.

These three war criminals, having failed in the war against the Syrian people, are determined to turn back all of the revolutionary gains of Chavismo and grab the largest known oil reserves in the world for U.S. oil companies and banks.

If you had to pick one contemporary figure that personifies the bloody crimes of U.S. imperialism in Latin America, it would have to be Trump's special envoy to Venezuela, Elliot Abrams. He is responsible for hundreds of thousands of deaths in Nicaragua, El Salvador and Guatemala during the Ronald Reagan administration, and [his bloody history was exposed](#) by U.S. Representative Ilhan Omar in a January congressional hearing.

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo represents a current of imperialist hawks so right-wing and isolationist that they have been kept on the sidelines by the U.S. corporate establishment until recently.

National Security Advisor John Bolton, dredged up from the bloody Reagan-Bush era like Abrams, is the consummate CIA operative, infamous for his leading role in the Iran/Contra scandal — a U.S. intelligence agency plan to bolster their counterrevolutionary “contra” army in Nicaragua.

These three Trump administration criminals and countless others in Washington are frustrated over Russia's commitment to continued military help for the Maduro government and the failures of the Guaidó faction to gain ground against the revolutionary masses of Venezuela. Perhaps they have tabled the idea of direct U.S. intervention or of pushing Brazil and Colombia to invade for now, but they will

continue to plot.

## **Electrical sabotage**

Over the weekend of March 30-31, a new electrical outage hit over half of Venezuela. But by April 1, power had been restored to Caracas and some, but not all, other areas. The massive power outage three weeks earlier caused the deaths of at least 21 people.

Vice President Delcy Rodríguez [pointed to the U.S.-backed opposition](#) being the perpetrators of a criminal campaign of sabotage. U.S. intelligence agencies have the ability to sabotage the power grid of other countries, and it is widely believed that they are responsible.

After the major outage in mid-February, another power station was damaged by what turned out to be gunfire. President Maduro announced a power-rationing plan that includes limited, planned outages in order to conserve power, so that the country will be more prepared in the likely event of further sabotage.

The Chavista government has publicly honored electrical workers and engineers who have battled against the likely sabotage and found ways to quickly restore electricity.

Many corporate media outlets continue to refer to the situation in Venezuela as a “rivalry” between two presidents. But the leader of the Cuban Revolution had it right: “A revolution is a fight to the death between the past and the future.” All progressives must rally to the defense of the Venezuelan people.



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# **San Diego meeting: Filipino workers resist terror**

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San Diego labor unions welcomed Filipino labor leader Ed Cubelo of Kilusang Mayo Uno (the May First Movement) on March 28. Cubelo is on a national tour to report on conditions facing workers in the Philippines under the rule of U.S. ally President Rodrigo Duterte, whom he characterized as a fascist dictator. The meeting was held at the San Diego and Imperial Counties Labor Council.

Cubelo began his presentation and accompanying slide show with a map showing the location of the Philippine archipelago in the Pacific, followed by photos displaying the beauty and richness of the islands. He explained that while the Philippines has trillions of dollars of valuable minerals and other natural resources, none of this natural wealth benefits the people.

Cubelo provided up-to-date statistics: The Philippines has a workforce of 43 million, and workers are paid on average the equivalent of \$2 to \$3 per day — far below the

poverty level. Some 1.3 million workers lost their jobs in 2017, and an estimated 387,000 jobs have been lost so far in 2019.

Filipino workers are fighting for regularization of work, which means full-time employment with benefits for everyone, as opposed to Endo contract work, which is short-term employment that has been deemed illegal under the Philippines labor code. The Pepsi company recently laid off 1,000 workers to avoid regularization.

Cubelo showed a slide of people living in inhumane conditions, unable to afford a place to stay or food to eat. Some of them work many hours with no overtime pay or benefits.

But Filipino workers are fighting back. Huge demonstrations, walkouts and nationwide strikes are taking place all across the Philippines. Workers are organizing campaigns to end contractualization, for a national minimum wage, to abolish regional wage boards and for the right to organize. Workers are saying “Yes to Regularization.”

The workers are also demanding an end to anti-union repression, attacks on workers, harassment and illegal arrests of trade unionists, and to free all political prisoners.

President Duterte publicly declared the KMU “the legal front of a terrorist organization.” In fact, said Cubelo, it is Duterte’s administration that is the terrorist organization, with his goons, who form military death squads, killing people with no charges, trials or convictions.

KMU is the Philippines’ genuine, militant and anti-imperialist labor center that stands with the workers and peoples of the world in defending the right to strike, he said. The KMU supports the International Trade Union Confederation in upholding the right to strike.

When asked what workers here in the U.S. can do to help, Cubelo urged unionists to “support our workers’ school” by making a donation to fund the Paaralang Crispin Beltran (PCB) aka Crispin Beltran Workers’ School.

PCB is a workers’ school honoring the memory of one of the most respected labor leaders in the Philippines, Crispin “Ka Bel” Beltran. It was established to continue his legacy: to help the working class free itself from exploitation and poverty. The school aims to give that capacity to workers through education that will arm them in organizing and mobilizing their own ranks. The school is for contractual and nonunionized workers in Metro Manila. It is free of charge for all nonunionized workers.

The Filipino youth organization AnakBayan encouraged everyone to write to their local congressional representatives urging them to defend human rights in the Philippines by ending U.S. funding for the Philippine military and police. Those tax dollars should be redirected to fund social services, like education, health care and housing.

At the end of the meeting, everyone gathered for a group photo and chanted, “International worker solidarity!”

The meeting was organized and sponsored by the [Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance \(APALA\) San Diego](#), [AnakBayan San Diego](#) and Migrante San Diego.



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# Guatemalan speaker calls for left solidarity with Indigenous communities

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April 4, 2019

On March 28, renowned Guatemalan anthropologist and activist Rigoberto Quemé Chay finished a series of lectures in the Los Angeles area at the Harriet Tubman Center for Social Justice.

Quemé Chay was the first Indigenous mayor of Quetzaltenango, Guatemala, and has dedicated his life to the empowerment of the oppressed communities and groups that have been victimized in many different ways by centuries of colonialist domination and the diseases that come from it, like racism, displacement, land theft and assimilation.

Speaking to a packed room, the researcher for El Centro Universitario del Occidente and the University of San Carlos mentioned the fascist trend that has gained traction

in the Americas. Repudiating it, Quemé Chay emphasized the lack of unity on the left as one of the things that facilitates the counterrevolutionary developments in Latin America. This has also exacerbated the suffering of Indigenous peoples, who continue to be murdered at a high rate.

According to Quemé Chay, many of those who hold leadership positions on the left put their own views and pride ahead of the struggle of Indigenous peoples and other oppressed groups. This lack of support and solidarity results in distrust of the left by oppressed groups.

Further, he added, we must reverse the process of assimilation that was so successfully pushed down people's throats. Many people don't know the history of their ancestors, their culture or their language, which makes the fight of Indigenous peoples in Guatemala and around the planet much harder.

Quemé Chay condemned capitalism, its oligarchies and neoliberalism. His message was: Unite to defeat them all and implement a system that gives priority to the needs of living beings over profits.

The series was convened by El Coletivo Guatemalteco-L.A. and organized by S.O.A Watch-L.A, AIM SoCal, Radio Justice, the Socialist Unity Party and Struggle-La Lucha newspaper.



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# Stop taxing the poor!

written by Struggle - La Lucha

April 4, 2019

New York — “Only the little people pay taxes,” bragged the late hotel boss Leona Helmsley. Capitalist politicians always prove her right.

New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo and New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio wanted to give Amazon a \$3 billion handout in return for building a new headquarters. Last year, this anti-union goliath raked in \$11.2 billion in profits — that’s \$30 million a day — while [paying zilch in federal taxes](#).

Meanwhile, the New York state Legislature, with Cuomo’s and De Blasio’s support, has passed a series of new fees that will fall heaviest on poor and working people.

Karl Marx described the impact of these taxes 150 years ago [in the book “Capital,”](#) where he referred to the Netherlands during the 1600s:

“Overtaxation is not an incident, but rather a principle. In Holland, therefore, where this system was first inaugurated, the great patriot, DeWitt, has in his Maxims extolled it as the best system for making the wage laborer submissive, frugal,

industrious, and overburdened with labor."

Already in effect is a \$2.50 surcharge on yellow taxis picking up or dropping off fares in Manhattan south of 96th Street. (\$2.75 for other taxis.)

This transportation tax will hardly make a dent in traffic, but is guaranteed to make life more miserable for disabled people who need to take a cab. Just one out of five New York subway stations have elevators.

It isn't just rich folk who use taxis. Working people who can't afford to own cars often need cabs in order to go shopping.

If Malaysia Goodson could have afforded a taxi, she wouldn't have [fallen to her death](#) on Jan. 28. The 22-year-old Black mother died protecting her baby daughter at the 7th Avenue/53rd Street stop in Manhattan, another station without an elevator.

There are 100,000 cab drivers in New York City, many of whom work a 12-hour shift. Five out of six New York City cab drivers are immigrants with probably a majority being Muslim.

They're calling the new fee "a suicide surcharge." Last year, eight people in the city's taxi industry committed suicide.

[Bhairavi Desai](#), executive director of the New York Taxi Workers Alliance, said that with this surcharge "taxi drivers would earn less and could have to cut back on food, medical care and other necessities."

## **Taxing paper bags**

The oceans are choking to death with 150 million metric tons of plastic garbage. Another 8 million tons are [being added annually](#).

Everyone should be upset at dolphins, whales and every other creature in the seas

being poisoned. So why can't the capitalists invent a biodegradable packaging material?

Following California's example, New York state has now banned plastic bags, with the ban taking effect next March.

New York's legislation also allow cities to collect a nickel tax on every paper bag used instead.

That's even more unfair than sales taxes, which fall heaviest on the poor and should be abolished.

Paper can be recycled, with [68 million tons of paper](#) being recycled in the U.S. And we can plant millions more trees to combat capitalist climate change.

Forcing shoppers at a bodega or a supermarket to pay a nickel for each paper bag is just another attack on poor people.

### **Paying a toll to enter Manhattan**

Trump wants to close the U.S. border with Mexico. Cuomo and De Blasio want drivers to pay a toll to enter lower Manhattan.

["Congestion pricing"](#) will force drivers coming into Manhattan south of 60th Street to pay \$11.52 for a daily pass. Trucks will pay double. The money is in addition to bridge and tunnel tolls, as well as the outrageous prices charged by private parking lots.

With the closing of the High Line to rail traffic and the closing of all the railroad freight terminals on the waterfront, about [90 percent of freight](#) coming into New York City is by truck. Forcing them to pay more may well jack up food prices all over the city.

The funds raised by congestion pricing are to be used for mass transit, with 80 percent going to New York City subways and buses.

Because of this pledge, both the Transport Workers Union (TWU) Local 100 and the Community Service Society support this legislation. We urge them to reconsider.

Mass transit has been starved since at least the 1940s. The subway fare has gone up 55 times since 1948, when it was a nickel.

[Manhattan real estate](#) is worth an estimated \$1.9 trillion. But all of Gotham's skyscrapers would be worthless without subways and buses and the TWU members who operate them.

It's the landlords, and the banks and insurance companies owning the mortgages, that should pay for mass transit. TWU founder Mike Quill once called for the fare to be free.

That's what we need to fight for.



# Free Renardo Lewis!

written by Struggle - La Lucha

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Watch the April 2 press conference demanding "Free Renardo Lewis," an African American man jailed after he was brutally attacked by police at IHOP restaurant in Marietta, Georgia.



<https://youtu.be/z6n43wJbcjY>



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# **Boycott IHOP! Abolish the racist police!**

written by Struggle - La Lucha  
April 4, 2019





Marietta, Ga. — March 31 started as a wonderful evening out with family, celebrating my mother-in-law's birthday. We saw the Temptations and the Four Tops, and sang and danced into the night. Afterward, we were hungry, so we decided to go to an International House of Pancakes (IHOP) restaurant near the concert venue in Marietta, Ga., next to local landmark the Big Chicken.



The IHOP manager was rude. When my husband complained about the food, the manager responded by saying, "Each cook is different," and threw the plate across the table.



A few minutes later, we heard a man (later identified as Renardo Lewis) loudly asking, "Why didn't you tell me this 30 minutes ago?"



We started moving towards the door since it was time to go. I heard the same manager who was rude to my husband screaming at Mr. Lewis' wife, "I don't have to give you my name or number." She then asked for the phone number of the corporate office, and this too was refused by the IHOP manager.



Then, two police officers, a man and a woman, entered the restaurant and I began to record the incident.



The male officer escalated the situation by yelling at Mr. Lewis to shut up, without any provocation. Mr. Lewis, who is Black, asked the officer not to yell at him and to treat him like a man.



Three more cops then entered the restaurant. Mr. Lewis and his wife were not allowed to leave, although they were not under arrest. One of the cops who had just arrived asked Mr. Lewis for identification. As he was pulling his ID out of his wallet, he was pushed against a window by three officers.



The first racist cop who'd come in screaming joined his fascist pals to restrain Mr. Lewis. This first cop tased Mr. Lewis five times and punched him several times, breaking his tooth and injuring his head.



Three of these officers came in without asking any questions and assaulted this African-American man. They pushed his wife and my sister as they were trying to help.



As can be seen in the video, at no time did Mr. Lewis threaten or touch any of the officers, their tasers or guns!



The Marietta Police Department posted a bunch of lies on their Facebook page to cover their racist response to a call involving a Black man. However, the video says it all.



Renardo Lewis is being held without bond as these racist cops try to come up with charges to justify what they did. It's all on tape, and there is no justification for the gestapo tactics these and other cops use against Black and Brown people.



Abolish the racist police! Boycott IHOP!



You can watch the video here, on [Struggle-La Lucha](#)'s Facebook page, and on the [Black Lives Matter of Greater Atlanta](#) Facebook page.



[https://youtu.be/AFR6f\\_1RYWc](https://youtu.be/AFR6f_1RYWc)



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**Angola 3's Albert Woodfox**

# welcomed in Brooklyn

written by Struggle - La Lucha

April 4, 2019

Brooklyn, N.Y. — Nearly 200 people packed the auditorium of the Brooklyn Public Library at Grand Army Plaza on March 27 to hear Albert Woodfox of the Angola Three speak about his new book, “Solitary: Unbroken by 4 Decades in Solitary Confinement.”

A Black Panther prison organizer in Louisiana’s infamous Angola, a slave plantation turned prison, Woodfox, along with Robert King Wilkerson and Herman Wallace, was framed for the 1972 killing of a prison guard. Woodfox spent the next 44 years in solitary confinement until winning his freedom in 2016.

Woodfox was interviewed by professor and journalist Jelani Cobb. He spoke of the harsh conditions of abuse, poverty and racism that he endured growing up in the Deep South, and how that led him into a life of petty crime. He talked about discovering the Black Panther Party and how this changed his life.

Woodfox expressed the pain of losing Herman Wallace to cancer — he died just two days after being released in 2013 — after he had been denied proper care inside the walls. And he spoke with pride about how he and Robert King Wilkerson, who was released in 2001, travel around the country speaking against mass incarceration and in solidarity with political prisoners.

The event was attended by several Panther veterans and organizers in solidarity with Black liberation political prisoners who remain behind prison walls, including members of the Jericho Movement and the New York Coalition to Free Mumia Abu-Jamal.

*Photo by Anne Pruden*



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# 50 years after Stonewall, the struggle for LGBTQ2S liberation continues

written by Struggle - La Lucha

April 4, 2019

*Talk given by Andre Powell at the "Unity for Socialism and Revolution" conference in Los Angeles on March 16.*

This year marks 50 years since the Stonewall Rebellion. The rebellion was sparked by what would have been another routine raid on a gay bar in New York City. But the night of June 26, 1969, something different happened. The patrons of this bar — young transgenders, gay men and lesbians, Black, Latinx and white, pushed to the edge by endless police raids on their social gathering places — fought back in four nights of street battles.

This began the organizing of a tremendous movement inspired by the Black Liberation and Women's Liberation movements, and taken note of by Black Panther

Party leader Huey Newton in August 1970. The rebellion is marked all over the world with celebrations of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and two-spirit pride.

Our community has made many achievements in beating back the institutional oppression from police and both federal and state governments. There has been a sea change in societal attitudes toward the LGBTQ2S community. Gay men have survived the brutal AIDS health crisis with tremendous support from our lesbian sisters, who themselves were battling their own health crisis with breast cancer.

Our community, however, remains under attack, as the right wing uses us as a rallying point. The attacks against the transgender community by laws and violence have reached alarming proportions.

In New York City, there are two Pride marches scheduled this year. The first is organized by Heritage of Pride, which in the last two decades has become so very commercialized by corporate sponsors and even features an LGBT police contingent. The second is called Reclaiming Pride and is led by more radical elements who opposed the corporate commercialization of the march and remind the community that Stonewall was a rebellion against police brutality.

## **A history of struggle**

Stonewall marked the beginning of the modern LGBTQ2S rights movement. But it wasn't the first act of resistance.

In May 1897, Magnus Hirschfeld founded the Scientific Humanitarian Committee, a German organization specifically dedicated to gay emancipation. The committee's primary focus was the repeal of Paragraph 175, a provision of the German Criminal Code that criminalized homosexual acts between men.

Through its publications, along with public meetings and extensive speaking tours,

the committee sought to educate the general public on the issue of homosexuality while encouraging other gay people to join the struggle.

Hirschfield had amassed a tremendous amount of volumes of work and research on homosexuality over the years. These works were destroyed in the 1930s when Hitler and the Nazis came to power. In the Nazi concentration camps, Hitler exterminated an estimated 250,000 gays. They were forced to wear the pink triangle on their clothing to signify they were gay.

“The Gay Question: A Marxist Appraisal” was written by author Bob McCubbin and published in 1976, during the earliest years of the modern LGBTQ2S movement. (It was later republished under the title “The Roots of Lesbian and Gay Oppression.”) It is the first and decades later remains the definitive historical materialist analysis of the development of LGBTQ2S oppression. This oppression is rooted in the development of class society.

### **The origin of LGBTQ2S oppression**

Pre-class society reaches back many hundreds of thousands of years, when the early human societies were structured on a matrilineal basis and tribal organization centered around mothers and their children. Over time, the development of technology to the level where more material wealth could be produced than was immediately needed for the survival of the tribe brought a fundamental change in human relations.

It was on the basis of this surplus accumulation of material wealth that classes arose. Due to changes in material conditions, men at the top of the new societal hierarchy replaced the egalitarianism of communal society. The struggle against the matrilineal organization of society was over the question of the lineage of children. Private property-oriented men wanted their wealth to go to their own children. This guarantee could only come about by the establishment of patrilineal descent.

With this change, emotions and sexual feelings came under harsh social class scrutiny, with stringent sexual prohibitions. Sexuality in general assumed a negative social significance it never had before. Free expression of sexuality was no longer compatible with the new, rigid limits of the male-dominated family structure. This made homosexuality a social and political issue in class society in a way it had never been before.

But when we take a look at societies built on socialist principles, we see that they lay the basis for honoring and respecting the contributions of every individual. So the elimination of LGBTQ2S oppression, I firmly believe, will come about through the elimination of capitalism and its replacement with socialism, a system meant to value people as they are and to meet people's needs.

*SLL photo by Greg Butterfield*



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**April 18, Arlington, Virginia,**

# **protest      toxic      coal      ash contamination in Puerto Rico**

written by Struggle - La Lucha  
April 4, 2019

## **Protest AES stockholder meeting**

At 950 North Glebe Road, Arlington, VA (just outside Washington, D.C.)

April 18, 2019, at 8:30 a.m.

For more info: ResistenciaRCC@gmail.com

# PEACEFUL PROTEST

AES STOCKHOLDER MEETING

950 NORTH GLEBE RD  
(just outside Washington DC)

**ARLINGTON, VIRGINIA**  
**APRIL 18, 2019 • 8:30AM**



Resistencia RCC (Resistencia contra la quema de  
Carbón y sus Cenizas tóxicas de Puerto Rico)



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