



# The workers' struggle has no borders

In the midst of the many important workers' struggles we are waging, it is critical that May Day participants raise the banner of "U.S. Hands Off Venezuela" and demand an end to Washington's war on the Venezuelan people.



## MAKE MAY DAY U.S. HANDS OFF Venezuela Day

See pages 4-5

The danger of war is greater than ever! U.S. Vice President Mike Pence has told the United Nations Security Council that "all options are on the table," which means not only sanctions, which are a form of war, but invasion, proxy or otherwise.

A defeat for Venezuela would be a serious blow for workers' struggles inside the U.S. and around the world. Make no mistake, if the imperialists succeed at dismembering the gains of the Bolivarian revolution, it will strengthen the billionaires who are robbing us right here at home. It will have a negative impact on the Cuban revolution and on all progressive people around the world.

We cannot forget the example that Venezuela has set for workers everywhere. (See the centerfold on the facts about Venezuela.) What is the real crime of the Bolivarian revolution? First and foremost, it is using their oil wealth to benefit the poor and, equally important, they are fighting for "workers' power."

Workers' power! Is that not what workers need and deserve, from the courageous striking teachers across the country who shattered any illusion of teachers being treated with respect, to the striking Stop & Shop supermarket workers, to the brave prisoners who went on strike show-

ing that prisoners are workers too, to the Somali Amazon workers in Minneapolis and the community activists in New York City who pushed back billionaire Jeff Bezos.

### End capitalism, fight for socialism

It is no secret to millions of workers around the globe — including right here in the U.S., particularly young people and especially those who have been subjected to imperialist wars and destruction, from Palestine to the Philippines — that capitalism is a dead-end system. Youth globally are protesting the fact that this profit-driven system is on the brink of literally destroying the planet, while migrants at the border are enduring the worst possible repression.

Trump is capitalism's ugly face. While white supremacy, hatred for migrants and immigrants, bigotry against LGBTQ2S people, sexism and misogyny are not new, it is un-

deniable that the division and violence being whipped up are a greater threat than ever.

Capitalism won't deliver decent paying jobs, health care or education. It won't limit its profits so the vast majority of the world's people have dignity and a decent life.

As the world economy becomes more complex, it becomes ever clearer that humanity must plan production to preserve jobs, food and housing, and to put an end to the ravages of climate change.

But overall planning is impossible under capitalism. Production is geared to making profits, and every other consideration is sacrificed to this underlying motive. Also, capitalist rivalries and the need for markets inevitably lead to war, which is the greatest destroyer and threatens the very foundations of life on this planet.

Socialism is an economic system that puts human needs and cooperation before profits, a system where workers can build genuine solidarity and work together to solve the problems we face daily.

Trump declared a war on socialism with his remarks that "the United States will never become a socialist country" during his State of the Union speech. This will likely be a theme in the upcoming 2020 elections. It is a challenge that we should not shy away from: capitalism and imperialism is the system of the bosses, bankers and ruling elite. Socialism is the system of the workers, the poor, the youth and all who are oppressed. Let's fight for socialism!

## LATIN AMERICA 'Pompeo - lost his mind'

The Chinese ambassador to Chile, Xu Bu, blasted U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo over recent accusations that Chinese investments are "corrosive, giving life to corruption, and eroding good governance."

Xu said that "Pompeo has lost his mind and gone too far."

"The United States has not made substantial contributions to the economic development of Latin American countries but accuses China of its economic and trade cooperation with Latin America and its investment in Latin America," he said.

Xu then referenced U.S. history, its military interventions and sanctions in Latin America.

"Historically, the United States has treated Latin America as its 'backyard,' imposing frequent military interventions or sanctions," he said, adding that "there are numerous examples, including the relentless blockade imposed by the U.S. against Cuba for more than half a century, President Trump's construction of a separation wall along the border between the U.S. and Mexico, and the very little assistance provided by the U.S. to Haiti and Central American countries."

More at [tinyurl.com/y6jh865k](https://tinyurl.com/y6jh865k)

## GERMANY Amazon strike



Workers at four Amazon centers in Germany went on strike April 15, the latest action in a campaign for better pay and conditions.

Labor union Verdi said workers at warehouses in Rheinberg, Werne, Bad Hersfeld and Koblenz had stopped work, with others potentially joining over the Easter holiday period.

Verdi has organized frequent strikes at Amazon in Germany since 2013 to press demands for the retailer to raise pay for warehouse workers in accordance with collective bargaining agreements in Germany's mail order and retail industry.

## PALESTINE Prisoners' hunger strike

Hundreds of Palestinian prisoners are taking part in a mass hunger strike in several Israeli prisons.

On 8 April, 400 Palestinians launched an open-ended mass hunger strike with a long list of demands, including improved medical care and conditions, more family visits and access to a public telephone, among others.

Prisoners are also calling for an end to repressive measures imposed by the Israeli public security minister, Gilad Erdan, to worsen conditions for detained Palestinians and reduce their standard of living to "the minimum required," including imposing water rations.

More at [tinyurl.com/y5lo8uvq](https://tinyurl.com/y5lo8uvq)



# Four die at Pine Ridge reservation U.S. government ignores pleas for flood aid

By M. Tiahui

This spring, extreme weather devastated reservations in several Midwest states. Pine Ridge, Rosebud, Cheyenne River, Ponca, Standing Rock and several more reservations were all impacted by blizzards and flooding.

While farming and other communities in the region have been hard-hit, already strapped reservations — and, in particular, Pine Ridge in South Dakota — are bearing the greatest burden from the record flooding.

On Pine Ridge, home of the Oglala Lakota (Sioux) Nation, families were stranded for weeks as already poor

roads became and stayed impassable. More than 1,500 people were displaced, and it will take millions of dollars to repair the damaged infrastructure. Hundreds of people ran out of food and drinking water while waiting for help.

Four deaths that occurred as a result of the flooding have now been confirmed on Pine Ridge.

Pine Ridge tribal chair Julian Bear Runner as well as the state of South Dakota pleaded for the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to provide help. "Rather than declaring emergencies that don't exist, President Trump needs to pay attention to the ones that do," said Oglala

Tribal Chair Julian Bear Runner, in a statement referencing Trump's declaration of a national emergency on the U.S. border with Mexico. "I call upon him to send us help before lives are further disrupted."

But the U.S. government refused to declare a state of disaster, just as they had failed to help Pine Ridge after a destructive July 2018 hailstorm that brought tornado-like winds and hailstones the size of softballs, damaging about 550 houses there.

The Oglala Lakota of Pine Ridge did not sit idly by awaiting help from an uncaring government. "Rez aid" — sometimes jokingly referred to

Continued on page 3



Steve Pourier and Lacey Pourier standing on the road to their house on the Pine Ridge Reservation. The road is now rubble after they spent thousands to upgrade it.



Pine Ridge

# An Amazon worker tells all

By Sharon Black,  
former Amazon worker

There are few things that illustrate the ethical bankruptcy of capitalism as much as Jeff Bezos' obscene amassed wealth. Bezos is the richest person in the world, raking in \$236 million a minute, a net worth of \$153-plus billion. His world empire is built on the backs of a brutally exploited workforce, wrested from the communities in which Amazon operates.

To put this into context: it would take \$20 billion to end homelessness; \$30 billion to end world hunger. If Jeff Bezos had \$50 billion less, he would still have another \$100 billion. The question is, how many pairs of shoes can one wear, how many yachts can one sail on, how many houses can one person live in? The absurdity is obvious.

If you think that Bezos' wealth trickles down in the form of taxes that provide services, note that this year Amazon paid \$0 on \$11.2 billion in profits and received a \$129 million dollar return.

## How do we fight back?

No one can deny that it has been a difficult period for working-class struggle. Workers are forced to compete with each other globally, which has lowered wages and disempowered workers. If autoworkers complain in Detroit, auto bosses threaten to move to Mexico or to some other place where labor costs are lower. To make matters worse, giants like Walmart, FedEx and Amazon seem to have endless resources to thwart unionization.

We have also seen decades of defeats for unions to the point that union membership has dwindled to 10.7 percent, with the private sector dropping to 6.4 percent, leaving younger workers with little understanding of what being organized means.

As painful as this is, we shouldn't despair, as these same dynamics have opened up incredible opportunities. We should look at the opportunities.

There are now approximately 351,000 Amazon workers worldwide and 280,000 in the U.S. alone. These figures are growing every day and are already out of date.



PART 3

In Poland

## LET'S ORGANIZE!

There are thousands of Amazon warehouse workers laboring under one roof, part of the logistics supply chain, making the power potential enormous. The "just-in-time" and "lean production" methods that now dominate the supply chain can give us the upper hand.

While technology has created a global working class, it has also opened up the means to organize and communicate worker-to-worker on a worldwide basis.

That process is beginning.

Amazon is unionized in many of the European countries, and workers' strikes and struggles crossed borders in this past year. On Nov. 23, 2018, "Black Friday," Amazon warehouse workers went on strike and held protests in Germany, Spain, Italy and the United Kingdom under the slogan of "We are not robots." Amazon workers from Poland have organized with German workers.

Following are modest proposals:

### National Union Coordinating Council for Amazon Workers

There are many unions, which to their credit are looking at unionizing or representing Amazon workers, including the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union, the Teamsters, the International Longshore and Warehouse Union, the Service Employees International Union, the American Postal Workers Union and the Communication Workers of America. (There may be others that I have left off or some on this list who are not currently actively engaged.)

What's needed is a "National Union Coordinating Council" that includes all interested unions and the AFL-CIO leadership. Sectarian interests have to be set aside so that those who are committed can share resources, build adequate funds, engage in public campaigns and work

jointly both nationally and locally.

An organized Amazon could revive the union movement and reverberate in all sectors, and no one union, whatever its size, can do it alone.

It's a big job for those of us who are community members and Amazon workers to convince the unions, but it's an important challenge.

### Organize 'Workers & Community Unions'

While the traditional trade union movement remains an important tool for workers, we should look for every avenue possible to advance workers' power.

The Somali workers demanding justice in Shakopee, Minn., outside of Minneapolis, are an exciting example. Through the Atwood Center, which represents East African workers, and with community support, they staged protests and successfully forced concessions from Amazon. The workers and the Center have led several protests and more recently, on March 10, 2019, a three-hour strike of workers in the stow department.

This was preceded by campaigns in Seattle, which set the stage for public pressure, most notably by Bernie Sanders, that led to Bezos' announcement of raising wages to \$15 an hour. Recently, widespread community protests in New York City against the building of a second Amazon headquarters forced Bezos to cancel the plans. Protests were aimed at making Amazon accountable to the community.

What are some of the concrete challenges in the Baltimore warehouses? Why would a community approach that is aimed at these workers be helpful, maybe more than any other at this point?

First, Amazon is largely a revolving door when it comes to workers; thousands of its workers are precarious, cycled back and forth between the community and seasonal work. You can ask almost any working-class family in Baltimore, and they have a relative or know someone who has worked at Amazon or is working there now.

At one warehouse, high school students worked the all-night shift, so that they could attend school during the day. The work is brutal, and it's also common for people to work several months or even less before being forced to quit. Write-ups for failure to make production rates are done to weed out slower workers.

It makes exploitation at Amazon a community affair. The advantage of communitywide organizing is three fold: one, it serves as general education and organization; two, it provides the necessary rock-solid support that can encourage struggle inside (We've got your back!); and three, it harnesses broader working-class power against Amazon.

Finally, it may just be this kind of experimentation that revives a new chapter in working-class organizing in the U.S. Remember the heroic "Rising of 20,000" young women garment workers in 1909. Before this general strike, it was thought that women were incapable of being organized. And don't forget the sit-down strikes, a new tactic that turned the labor movement upside down and paved the way for industrial worker organizing.

### My appeal to youth

There is a whole new generation of youth who have turned against capitalism as a viable system precisely because it has offered them nothing. Many of them see themselves as socialists and some as revolutionaries.

Think of getting a job at Amazon!

If you can commit to staying and doing the patient work of organizing even better. But at a minimum, an Amazon warehouse job will give you the kind of education and understanding of exploitation that's better than any textbook can do alone. It will increase your ability to empathize with and understand other workers. It will teach patience, humility and respect.

There are lots of mistakes that we will all make, of that I'm sure, but there is no simple road to changing the world and no way to do it without the working class.

The series "Eyewitness Amazon" was written by Sharon Black, a former Amazon worker. The series began while the author was working but the conclusion was written after she was forced to resign as a result of several write-ups for failure to make production quotas in the "picker department."

## AES's coal ash pollutes Puerto Rico



AES stockholders meeting in Arlington, Va.

SLL PHOTO: CHERYL LABASH

On April 18, a delegation of Puerto Rican activists and supporters delivered a strong message to the AES stockholders meeting in Arlington, Va. "Get out of Puerto Rico, clean up the mess you made!" they chanted. AES's toxic coal ash pollutes water and air, sickening and killing

people. Why generate electricity by burning coal, they asked, on an island with plentiful sun and wind? Another important factor noted is Puerto Rico's colonial status, racism and looting by bankruptcy and developers.

Facebook: [tinyurl.com/y53sp9hq](https://tinyurl.com/y53sp9hq)

### Amazon worker tells all

An Amazon worker shows the inside of this new development in capitalism's exploitation of workers. Read her story and suggestions for tackling the giant.

Series to be published in booklet.

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## PRISONERS OF THE EMPIRE

# Free Julian Assange and Chelsea Manning!

By Greg Butterfield

On April 11, British police dragged WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange out of the Ecuadorian Embassy in London, where he had lived and worked for nearly seven years, after the turncoat government of President Lenin Moreno revoked his political asylum.

A “bail jumping” charge used to arrest Assange was merely a pretext for the U.S.-ordered assault.

“The U.K. has no sovereignty! The U.K. must resist this attempt by the Trump administration!” Assange yelled out as he was removed from the embassy. Only one TV camera was present for the arrest — from the Russian RT news service. British and U.S. media stayed conspicuously away.

As soon as Assange was in custody, the U.S. Justice Department unsealed its indictment of Assange and requested his extradition. The Trump administration charged him with helping Army whistleblower Chelsea Manning, who downloaded damning evidence of U.S. war crimes in Iraq, Afghanistan and Guantánamo, and made it public through WikiLeaks.

The charges listed in the extradi-

tion request carry a maximum prison term of five years. But it is widely believed that once Assange is on U.S. soil, he will be charged with additional crimes under the Espionage Act — which carries punishments up to and including the death penalty. Legally, Britain could not extradite Assange if it knew he might face capital punishment.

Meanwhile, Assange is being held in London’s maximum security Belmarsh Prison, known as “Britain’s Guantánamo” for its role following the Sept. 11, 2001, attack in New York. The overcrowded prison includes more than 100 people being held “indefinitely,” according to a 2018 commission that investigated conditions inside the facility.

Daily protests are being held outside Belmarsh demanding Assange’s release and no extradition to the U.S. Protests have also been held at U.S., British and Ecuadorian sites worldwide.

### Exposing imperialist crimes

While the corporate media and Washington officials promote the lie that Assange “hacked” Pentagon



Quito, Ecuador

computers, the actual indictment only spells out that he helped Manning cover her digital tracks to avoid detection — something covered by the First Amendment right of journalists to protect their sources.

Manning, the heroic trans veteran who spent seven years in military prison under President Obama, was thrown back in jail in March when she refused to testify before a grand jury that was fishing for material to use against Assange. This was the tipoff that an attack on the WikiLeaks founder was fast approaching.

Manning spent almost a month in solitary confinement before protests finally won her release into the general population at the Truesdale Detention Center in Virginia on April 4. But she is still jailed and could be held up to 18 months.

While campaigning for president, Trump was happy to use WikiLeaks’ revelations for his own political gain. But that changed the moment he assumed power and his own regime’s crimes might be exposed. Trump’s CIA director, Mike Pompeo, declared WikiLeaks an enemy of the U.S. “akin to a hostile foreign intelligence service,” and the administration turned up the heat on Ecuador to hand over Assange.

### Worldwide solidarity

Assange’s arrest and the threat of extradition have prompted protests and solidarity from progressive and revolutionary organizations worldwide, as well as whistleblowers, independent journalists, artists and

political prisoners.

The people of Ecuador were especially outraged by the Moreno government’s capitulation to U.S. imperialism. On April 16-17, protesters fought running battles with police in the streets of Quito as they denounced the handover of Assange.

Former President Rafael Correa, a close ally of Venezuela and Cuba who granted asylum to Assange, declared

Moreno “the greatest traitor in Ecuadorian and Latin American history. Moreno is a corrupt man, but what he has done is a crime that humanity will never forget.”

Alicia Castro, former Argentinian ambassador to Britain, wrote a statement called “My Friend Julian Assange.” Castro explained, “Unlike other platforms, WikiLeaks does not reveal information related to a certain political affiliation, but publishes the information it receives, once it is accurately deciphered and checked, and without revealing the source. It has published more than 10 million classified documents revealing the secrets that once belonged to a small elite linked to the military-industrial complex.”

Cuban hero Gerardo Hernández, who spent 16 years in U.S. prisons for defending his socialist homeland from right-wing terrorists, told *Trabajadores* newspaper: “I think what is happening to Assange is a shame. We live in a world where people spread lies, half-truths, fake news. Assange and his group disclosed factual information that exposed the global interests of the powers that be, and now they are punishing him for it. His crime is finding the truth and revealing it.”

Hernández, now a deputy of the Cuban National Assembly, said his own experience taught him the dangers that Assange faces if he is extradited to the U.S. “We witnessed how they were always trying to distort the truth as a way of demonizing us.”

More at [tinyurl.com/y2m5cfd](https://tinyurl.com/y2m5cfd)

## Four die at Pine Ridge reservation

Continued from page 1

as “Rez Cross” — was in high gear, with Native people and others working round the clock for weeks to deliver water, food and other desperately needed items on foot, on horseback, on farm equipment and any way they could get to some of the most heavily flooded areas.

Puerto Rico, New Orleans, Haiti and other places have also been devastated as a result of climate change, and the U.S. government has largely turned its face away from their suffering, too — the same U.S. government that has money to support Zionist repression of Palestinians and money to rebuild a Catholic church in France.

One effect of this has been to increase solidarity among the many impacted communities. For instance, during a national news appearance, San Juan’s mayor, Carmen Yulín Cruz, referenced the situation at Pine Ridge and FEMA’s failure to provide for communities of color.

### On the front lines resisting pipelines

In the midst of the flooding crisis, Trump issued a presidential permit to allow the Keystone XL pipeline (“KXL”) to cross the Canadian border into the U.S. “Trump’s decision to ram KXL through while our families suffer feels like being kicked while we’re down,” Bear Runner said.

The Trump administration is doing its best to increase the impact of climate change, grabbing lands wholesale for exploitation and ramming through multiple pipeline projects. Vulnerable communities in the U.S. and worldwide are directly impacted by climate collapse. The massive use and extraction of fossil fuels directly link to the flooding, droughts and other extreme weather that are felt broadly.

Attorney Chase Iron Eyes, public relations director for the Oglala Sioux Tribe, said that “Trump’s insistence on circumventing court decisions designed to reign in oil pipeline development on, or near, Sioux tribal land is particularly egregious given our current suffering.” He continued, “Mr. Trump apparently has no respect for scientific or Indigenous perspectives on what is causing these super storms, and he has no respect for the rule of law.”

Indigenous people — at the front lines of the resistance to pipelines — are particularly targeted everywhere. In the U.S., corporations do not want to see a recurrence of the type of resistance that occurred at Standing Rock against the Dakota Access Pipeline, where thousands joined to protect the water and more than 800 people were arrested, with the stiffest sentences imposed on Indigenous water protectors such as Red Fawn Fallis.

The energy corporations have directly colluded with police forces and private security firms as well as legislators and regulators. According to *In These Times*, energy companies have sponsored bills in at least seven states to criminalize resistance to their corporate terrorism, and at least eleven more such bills have been introduced.

In South Dakota, while Oglala homelands were still underwater, Gov. Kristi Noem signed into law two bills designed to help the state government police what are expected to be massive, Indigenous-led demonstrations against KXL construction. One of the laws creates new civil penalties for “riot boosting,” which would apply not only to so-called “riot” participants but to anyone who “directs, advises, encourages, or solicits other persons participating in the riot to acts of force or violence.”

## BE IN PHILADELPHIA APRIL 27

# Justice for Mumia

The fight for a new trial and freedom for political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal has moved forward. On April 17 Philadelphia District Attorney Larry Krasner withdrew his block of Mumia’s appeal rights. Krasner’s decision opens the door to building a movement in the U.S. and internationally to win freedom for Mumia Abu-Jamal.

Pam Africa, of the International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal, said at an April 18 news conference: “We call for Mumia’s release,

because of 37 years of police, judicial and prosecutorial misconduct. Such practices permeate the whole injustice system. They are major causes of mass incarceration of Black, Brown and poor people in the U.S.”

On April 27, there will be a rally in Philadelphia supporting Mumia.



April 18 in Philadelphia.

PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

# La verdad sobre el petróleo y la guerra de Trump contra

# VENEZUELA



El Presidente Maduro fue elegido por la mayoría del pueblo venezolano. Recibió más de 6.2 millones de votos, un porcentaje más alto del total de votantes elegibles que los que votaron por Donald Trump.



Venezuela tiene las mayores reservas de petróleo del mundo.

La revolución Bolivariana Venezolana ha dado combustible de calefacción gratuito a personas pobres y de clase trabajadora en los Estados Unidos en el Bronx, Chicago e incluso en un refugio para personas sin hogar en Maryland.

## Maduro es conductor unionado de bus



La revolución Bolivariana subió el pago mínimo como también subió el nivel de vida de los pobres y la clase trabajadora de Venezuela.

El pago mínimo en los EE.UU no ha subido de \$7.25 desde el 24 de julio de 2009. Trump cerró el gobierno porque no le aprobaron el dinero para el muro, agitando así el racismo y dividirnos. Amenazó con quitar cupones de alimentos y viviendas para personas mayores y pobres, y puso en peligro el bienestar de más de 800,000 trabajadores federales.

¿Quiénes han salido a las calles por el presidente Maduro? La mayoría son de clase trabajadora, negros, e indígenas

¿Quiénes han salido a las calles por el presidente elegido por los Estados Unidos, Juan Guaidó? En su mayoría los venezolanos más acomodados de la clase media y ricos.

## Trump es un empresario billonario

Trump fue elegido por el colegio electoral, un artefacto de la era de la esclavitud. El no ganó la mayoría del voto. Mas bien, el recibió 3 millones de votos menos que Clinton.

Estos son sólo algunos de los hechos! Lo que todos deben de saber es que los imperialistas de los EE.UU, los grandes banqueros y empresarios, han estado librando una guerra encubierta y no tan encubierta contra Venezuela, que ha incluido sanciones económicas impuestas por los Estados Unidos que cuestan a Venezuela 30 millones de dólares por día, protestas callejeras violentas, incluyendo el intento de asesinato del presidente Maduro, mentiras por la prensa, la incautación ilegal de activos petroleros y mucho más.



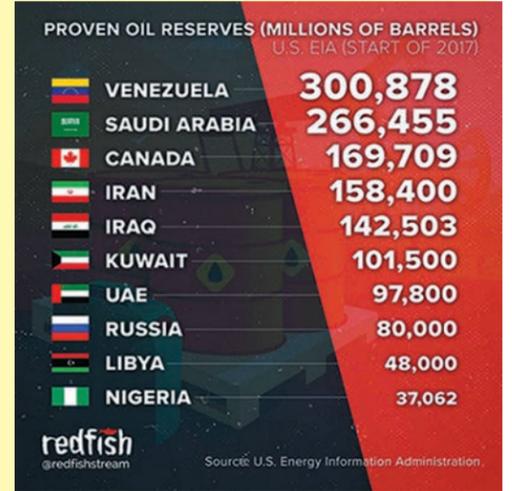
Los jefes y multimillonarios de EE. UU. quieren controlar y aprovechar estos recursos sin importarles los obreros o la gente pobre ni en Venezuela ni en los Estados Unidos.

Bajo toda esta presión, la revolución bolivariana ha seguido en pie. Esto hace que la sugerencia de una agresión militar abierta (una guerra) sea muy peligrosa. Una guerra que como el estúpido muro de Trump nos costaría billones y mucho más importante nos llevaría a la muerte y destrucción de innumerables personas inocentes.

# Get the Facts on Big Oil and Trump's War on VENEZUELA



President Maduro was elected by the majority of the Venezuelan people. He received over 6.2 million votes, a higher percentage of the total eligible voters than Donald Trump.



Venezuela has the largest oil reserves in the world.

Venezuela's Bolivarian revolution gave away free heating oil to poor and working class people in the United States. In the Bronx, Chicago and even to a homeless shelter in Maryland.

## Maduro was a union bus driver



The Bolivarian revolution raised the minimum wage along with raising the living standards of Venezuela's poor and working class.

No increase in the U.S. minimum wage of \$7.25 since July 24, 2009.

Trump shut down the government over a wall to whip up racism and divide us. He threatened food stamps, housing for seniors and the poor, and endangered the well being of 800,000+ federal workers.

Who are in the streets for Maduro? Mostly working class Venezuelans the majority who are Black, Brown, and Indigenous.

Who are in the streets for the U.S. hand-picked (self-appointed) president, Juan Guaido? Well-heeled, mostly better off middle class and wealthy Venezuelans.

Trump was elected through the electoral college, an artifact from the era of slavery. He did not win the majority votes, in fact, he received 3 million less votes than Clinton.



*Trump is a billionaire businessman*

U.S. bosses & billionaires want to control and profit from these resources with no concern for workers and poor people either in Venezuela or the United States.

These are just a few of the facts! What everyone should know is that U.S. imperialists, the big bankers and business owners, have been waging a covert and not so covert war against Venezuela which has included U.S. imposed economic sanctions costing Venezuela 30 million dollars per day, violent street protests including the attempted assassination of President Maduro, media lies, the illegal seizure of oil assets and much more.

Under all of this pressure, the Bolivarian revolution has continued to stand. This makes the suggestion of open military aggression (a war) very dangerous. A war that just like Trump's stupid wall will cost us billions and more importantly will lead to the death and destruction of countless working class lives.



# Understanding gov't overturns in North Africa: What is imperialism's role?

By John Parker and Greg Butterfield

In early April, longstanding governments were toppled by protest movements and military coups in the North African countries of Algeria and Sudan.

The contradictions of these governments are real. That must be acknowledged. What must also be acknowledged is that, even if it seems apparent in the corporate media that the protests are a genuine reflection of anger and frustration by the people, it doesn't answer important questions like: Which class forces are the primary engines of these events? How much influence is coming from the United States and other Western imperialist powers?

Even many progressive media outlets and left organizations reported uncritically on these events, despite the fact that both countries have been frequent targets of Western aggression and "regime change" threats.

Which begs other questions like: What is Washington's role? Do these changes benefit the oppressed workers of the region, or shift the balance of power further in favor of the U.S. and other imperialist countries? Is there an increased danger of Western intervention, military or otherwise?

Asking these questions does not deny a people's right to self-determination, but it must be determined if these protests are a reflection of that pursuit or an attempt by bourgeois forces at denying self-determination in favor of imperialism.

## A second Arab Spring?

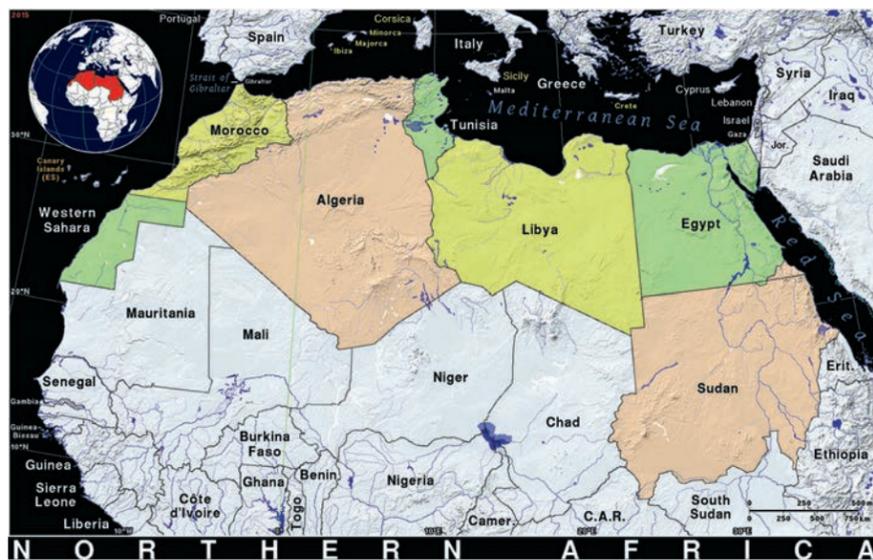
Corporate media, including the Washington Post, have asked if the protests in Sudan and Algeria herald the beginning of a second "Arab Spring." But the events commonly grouped under that term were very contradictory.

In Egypt and Tunisia, the Arab Spring described genuine popular uprisings against repressive regimes aligned with global imperialism and the Israeli settler state.

But in Syria and Libya, the same slogan served as a cover for counterrevolutionary, pro-imperialist movements, in which Washington and its allies intervened to overthrow governments resistant to U.S. domination.

It should be clear that when the Post, the New York Times, the Guardian, CNN and their like wish for a new Arab Spring, it is the latter version they're banking on.

Even as events unfold in Sudan and Algeria, a war between rival armies to dominate Libya's capi-



tal, Tripoli, is intensifying — nearly eight years since NATO's destruction of the country's central government. The U.S. now has three military bases in Libya.

There are many examples of so-called "color revolutions" — from Yugoslavia in 2000 to Ukraine in 2014 to the ongoing counterrevolutionary attempts in Venezuela today — in which anti-people forces, aided by the U.S., promote an image of popular rebellion to lay the groundwork for an imperialist takeover of a country's wealth, labor and resources.

These movements rely on misdirecting popular anger over the suffering caused by Western economic warfare into destroying governments that, to one degree or another, have resisted U.S. domination.

It's important for revolutionary Marxists to look at these movements critically in their historical development. It would be wrong to assume without investigation that a seemingly popular uprising against oppression and injustice is false. But it's equally wrong to assume without investigation that it is completely progressive — especially when it is praised by the same politicians and media who never fail to denounce fightback movements of workers and oppressed people here at home.

## ALGERIA

The protest movement in Algeria began on Feb. 22, when ailing President Abdelaziz Bouteflika announced plans to run for a fifth term. Underlying the current unrest is high unemployment for college-educated young people, forcing many professionals to emigrate in search of work.

Algeria is one of the world's major oil producers and is third in the world among natural gas producers. It ranks number 16 in the world in proven oil reserves. State-owned oil company Sonatrach is the largest company in Africa. Algeria's oil and gas were nationalized after the country's hard-won independence from France, led by the National Liberation Front (FLN).

Control of its oil wealth allowed Algeria to maintain a degree of independence in its relationship to world imperialism.

As Reuters noted on April 3, "[Algeria] has almost no foreign debt burden but its hard currency reserves have halved to \$70 billion since 2014 due to a slide in volatile oil and gas prices." Falling oil prices have increased the vulnerability of several countries targeted by the U.S., in-

cluding Venezuela, Iran and Russia.

President Bouteflika resigned on April 2 after the FLN and Algerian military withdrew support for his administration under pressure from the protest movement. A caretaker government headed by Interim President Abdelkader Bensalah has called new elections for July 4.

Reuters reported that on April 12, following Bouteflika's resignation, Chevron said it had bought Anadarko Petroleum Corp, which is the biggest foreign firm in terms of oil output in Algeria. This was followed by an announcement by the Algerian state oil firm Sonatrach that it has opened partnership talks with Chevron.

Protests have continued, with some forces demanding the removal of FLN loyalists from government and military posts.

## SUDAN

In 1989, a coup led by Omar al-Bashir deposed a military dictatorship subordinate to Washington and formed an alliance with Iran. Sudan has been in the gun sights of U.S. imperialism ever since.

By some estimates, before the country's division in 2011, Sudan may have oil reserves equal to Saudi Arabia — the country with the second-largest proven oil reserves. Sudan also has large deposits of natural gas, high-purity uranium and copper. China has long been Sudan's top trading partner, helping the country develop its oil and gas infrastructure even while the country was under attack by the West.

President Bill Clinton bombed the Al-Shifa pharmaceutical plant in Khartoum in 1998. The George W. Bush administration, aided by U.S.-based fundamentalist Christian groups, inflamed a civil war between the predominantly Christian south and the Muslim north. This policy continued under Barack Obama.

Washington gave weapons and money to rebel groups in southern Sudan while carrying out a sophisticated campaign to demonize President al-Bashir's government, using charges of genocide in the country's Darfur region.

As a result, the imperialist-controlled International Criminal Court in The Hague indicted al-Bashir for crimes against humanity, war crimes and genocide. The ICC has outstanding "arrest warrants" for al-Bashir.

In 2005, Washington succeeded in dispatching a 10,000-strong United Nations "peacekeeping" force

to Sudan. This occupation provided the basis for South Sudan to declare independence in 2011. South Sudan took with it the bulk of Sudan's oil reserves, precipitating an economic crisis that helped spark today's protest movement.

It was in this context that al-Bashir's government attempted to make an accommodation with the U.S., most notably by breaking off its longtime relations with Iran and sending troops to participate in the U.S.-Saudi war against Yemen. "Sudan has at least 3,000 ground troops and several fighter jets fighting in Yemen as part of the Saudi-led alliance," reported Reuters in 2018. "Dozens of Sudanese soldiers have been killed on key coastal battlefronts."

## Protesters and military

A Jan. 24 New York Times article, "On Sudan's Streets, Young Professionals Protest Against an Autocrat," drew an interesting connection between the current protest movement and imperialist efforts to break up and dominate the country:

"Demonstrations that started on Dec. 19 as a howl against soaring bread prices in the city of Atbara have snowballed into a nationwide movement, driven by daily protests calling for the president's ouster. They hope to succeed where international efforts failed; Mr. Bashir's autocratic rule has endured despite American missile attacks, war crimes indictments, international condemnation, economic sanctions, and a momentous 2011 split that led to the creation of South Sudan.

"Just fall, that is all!" cry protesters who mass in the streets of Khartoum nearly every day, often in an effort to reach the National Assembly building on the banks of the Nile. The security forces beat them back with tear gas and live gunfire. ...

"The revolt, which has spread from Khartoum to 35 cities in 15 of Sudan's 18 provinces, is led by disgruntled young professionals from the classes that were long tolerant of Mr. Bashir's iron-fisted rule. Speaking by phone, a dozen protesters, weary of economic decay and international isolation, said they hoped the government's panicky reaction signaled that Mr. Bashir's rule was grinding toward its end."

A military junta deposed President al-Bashir on April 11, placing him under house arrest at an undisclosed location. Defense Minister Lt. Gen. Awad Mohamed Ahmed Ibn Auf announced the formation of a transitional military council to rule the country during a two-year transition to civilian rule. The next day he resigned, appointing Lt. Gen. Abdel Fattah al-Burhan as his successor.

Leaders of the protest movement reportedly thought Ibn Auf was too close to al-Bashir's inner circle, but that al-Burhan was someone they could work with. He had previously made overtures to the protesters.

Al-Akhbar, a Lebanese Marxist publication, reported on April 15 that al-Burhan and his deputy have close ties to Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Morocco and other regional monarchies strongly opposed to Iran.

More at [tinyurl.com/yxohwhsr](http://tinyurl.com/yxohwhsr)

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# Imperialist war by other means

By John Parker

## sanctions

**U.S. sanctions, in general, are even more deadly than war on the battlefields. They are racist and genocidal in nature — disproportionately targeting non-European countries and those least able to endure the denial of basic needs, especially African countries.**

Kwame Nkrumah warned that neocolonialism was the most dangerous stage of imperialism.

Nkrumah, the first prime minister and president of Ghana, led that country's independence from Britain. He and the African independence movement in general in the late 1950s and 1960s analysed the nature of imperialism's use of neocolonialism to expose this relatively new form of exploitation in Africa.

Looking at the endless U.S. wars, from Afghanistan to Syria and now threatening Venezuela, Nkrumah's warnings seem obvious. What is not so obvious is the devastation caused by sanctions — war by other means.

U.S. sanctions are being rapidly fired at various targets by the Trump administration, continuing and expanding on sanctions from the Obama administration. On April 17, National Security Advisor John Bolton announced new U.S. sanctions against Cuba, Venezuela and Nicaragua with racist disregard for diplomacy or respect in characterizing the leaders of those countries as “the three stooges of socialism and communism.”

Before that, on April 5, the U.S. Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control announced additional sanctions targeting the oil sector of the Venezuelan economy for the “violation” by shipping companies supplying Venezuelan oil to Cuba. The sanctions also target 34 vessels belonging to the Venezuela nationalized oil company *Petroleos de Venezuela, S.A.*

On March 4, in addition to an extension of sanctions against Zimbabwe, the U.S. State Department listed eight additional sanctions against Venezuela, further adding to the denial of that country's use of assets or its ability to receive inter-

national loans. Even before a March 19 measure was imposed, U.S. sanctions had already cost Venezuela \$30 million per day.

Also, on March 22, additional sanctions were announced against Iran. The excuse by the Trump administration, also used by the Obama administration, was that they violated a multinational nuclear energy development treaty from 2015. This, in spite of the fact that, according to the International Atomic Energy Agency, Iran exceeded its obligations regarding the treaty.

Justifications for the sanctions are flimsy, at best. For example, regarding the April 5 sanctions against Venezuela, the U.S. Department of the Treasury's website advises those who want specific information on how the corruption in Venezuela occurs: “Please refer to Treasury's Financial Crimes Enforcement Network (FINCEN) advisories FIN-2017-A006.”

Drilling down into this information will lead you nowhere near a smoking gun. Instead, you'll find loads of hearsay and stories from bourgeois sources in Venezuela and the financial industries.

The imperialists claim that they are trying to stop the humanitarian crisis caused by the Bolivarian governments of Hugo Chávez and Nicolás Maduro. However, extreme poverty was reduced by 50 percent in 10 years after the election of Hugo Chávez in 1998, and infant mortality rates decreased by 27 percent.

Also of note when looking at the Venezuela rates, infant mortality ceases to decrease and begins

climbing in 2012, one year before the election of current President Maduro and after official sanctions against Venezuela by the U.S. Treasury Department began in 2008.

The greatest increase, by 288 percent, occurred from 2014 to 2015, when oil prices declined by nearly 50 percent, making the added sanctions those years that much more destructive as weapons against the Venezuelan people.

U.S. sanctions, in general, are even more deadly than war on the battlefields.

### Racism and sanctions

U.S.-led U.N. sanctions share some telling similarities. For one, they are racist and genocidal in nature — disproportionately targeting non-European countries and those least able to endure the denial of basic needs, especially African countries.

The Consolidated List of individuals and entities subject to sanctions by the U.N. Security Council exposes the fact that, although peoples on the continent of Africa make up only 17 percent of the world's population, they represent 64 percent of the countries affected by sanctions.

In Venezuela, 57 percent of the population are of Indigenous or African ancestry.

The bottom line is that sanctions are an integral part of the declared and undeclared wars of U.S. imperialism, passed on from one administration to the next — whether Democratic or Republican.

Their purpose is to bring about poverty, illness, starvation and des-

peration, targeting the people to weaken resistance to economic and military occupation of their lands.

### Zimbabwe: punishing land reform

The horror of sanctions continues with the Trump administration's extension of sanctions on Zimbabwe, announced March 4. Why? Because apparently Zimbabwe is an “unusual and extraordinary threat.”

Zimbabwe's economy has been sabotaged by U.S. and British sanctions since 2001, to punish its government for acknowledging the will of the people to take back land stolen by the minority white population that previously benefited from decades of colonialism and apartheid rule. The Zimbabwean Democracy and Economic Recovery Act (ZIDERA), a bipartisan bill supported by Hillary Clinton and Joe Biden, attempted to cut off international loans and institute other economic sanctions.

When Zimbabwe, formerly called Rhodesia, achieved its true independence in 1980, this laid the basis for the most democratic form of government up to that point, as witnessed by the redistribution of land, mostly to the poorest sectors, and contributed to the support and popularity of elected President Robert Mugabe.

In African Arguments, November 2018, Tendai Murisa and Shantha Bloemen report: “18 years since the land seizures, the landscape in Zimbabwe has dramatically changed. Instead of 6,000 commercial farmers controlling 70 percent of valuable farmland, there are an estimated 200,000 new small-scale farmers.”

It's also telling that Trump's extension of ZIDERA includes new provisions, passed by Congress last July, demanding a reversal of the land reform with “reparations” amounting to \$30 billion to be paid to white farmers. 

## Struggle for unity:

# The secret of Cuba's success

The U.S. blockade was imposed on Cuba in 1960, just after the revolution, to try and starve the people of Cuba into submission, into selling their sovereignty and going back to capitalism. But the Cuban people have been absolutely resolute. They've refused.

They've beaten back military attacks. They've withstood virtual starvation. They found a way to develop medicines, so that the blockade doesn't impact the health care of the people of Cuba.

I think everybody knows someone who has diabetes. It's very common. We know people who've had amputations because of it. Cuba has a medicine and a treatment that prevents 70 percent of diabetic foot amputations. But it's not used here in the U.S.

Cuba has a vaccine that very successfully treats lung cancer. It prevents the growth of the tumor and extends the life and the quality of life for people who have lung cancer. It's being studied in Buffalo, N.Y., at the Roswell Park Institute. But again, it's

not available to people in the U.S., at least not yet.

We have an internationalist responsibility to fight against the blockade. It's the same kind of blockade that U.S. imperialism is putting on Venezuela. It's the same kind of unilateral sanctions put on Syria and Iran. The U.S. government uses the fact that the dollar is the international currency for trade to damage the economies of people who want to have sovereignty in their own countries.

There's a question I think that we all have, because we're here fighting for unity, for socialism, for revolution in this country. How is it that Cuba has survived? How have they held up over these past 60 years? What's the secret?

The Cubans will tell you that the secret is unity. Finding what you can agree on in principle, and putting secondary issues aside.

Cuba just approved a new constitution. The new constitution updates the one written in 1976 to reflect the development of Cuban society. And part of the discussion on that consti-

tution was about changing the definition of a marriage, from between a man and a woman to between two people. Marriage in Cuba doesn't carry any special material benefit like it does in the U.S. where, for example, an unmarried partner can be prevented from visiting a loved one in a hospital.

Now, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people have equal rights in Cuba. The socialist medical system even includes gender-reassignment surgery free of charge.

By upending capitalist relations that thrive and profit from prejudice and divisions, Cuba has advanced in 60 short years. Cuba's educational campaign in unions, among educators, has lifted consciousness. The slogan for Cuba's national celebration of the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia — to be celebrated for the 12th year — is “I'm included!”

The concept is “everybody in, nobody out.” Have everyone come together. Nobody is excluded. Not because of skin tone, gender, gender

identity, sexuality or anything else.

**Cheryl LaBash**

And that's what they've been working on. That kind of unity has been the key to the Cuban Revolution being able to withstand the tremendous hardships imposed by the U.S. economic, financial and commercial blockade.

It's something that's not easy to do, especially here in the U.S., where often organizations define themselves by their differences with others. It's okay to have differences. But we need to find what we agree on and find a way to work together. That's a priority. Every issue that's been raised here is everyone's issue.

To a large extent, I think that's what this conference is about: Talking about it, figuring it out and moving forward with that idea that we're going to find what we can agree on and go forward on that. And what we can't agree on, we'll wait and deal with that another day.

On to building a revolutionary working-class country where the most oppressed are the leaders! 

Talk given by Cheryl LaBash at the “Unity for Socialism and Revolution” conference in Los Angeles on March 16.



SLL PHOTO: GREG BUTTERFIELD

# IHOP insults African American diners – then calls in the police!

## Justice for Renardo Lewis ABOLISH RACIST POLICE!



We're asking people, if they're in the Atlanta area, help us pack the courthouse on April 24th to support Renardo Lewis.

Give me your name and number and we're just going to leave." And the manager said, "I don't have to give you nothing."

And then the police walked in, and it was a male cop and a female cop that walks in. So obviously somebody had called them. I don't know when they called because they were like, they're really fast. And so then the male cop started moving towards Renardo and his wife and immediately started yelling and screaming and saying, "Shut up, shut up, shut up." And Renardo was like, "Why are you talking to me like that? Why are you yelling at me? You don't have to yell at me. You don't have to holler at me. I'm a man just like you're a man. You don't have to holler at me." And the cops started yelling some more. And then the cop says, "Show me some respect."

And Renardo says, "You show me some respect. You walked in here acting all loud and aggressive." And then about three other cops came in. They looked to me like they were surrounding him. They started to surround him. One of them asked Renardo for his ID and Renardo started to pull out his wallet. And he was pulling out his ID from his wallet, and the male cop started yelling at his wife at that precise moment again, and Renardo turned to see why he continues to yell.

"Why is he yelling? Why is he continuing to yell?" And that's when they grabbed him and slammed him up against the window. I thought that window was going to crack and splatter all over the place, but it didn't, it was pretty hard.

And we all were screaming, "He didn't do anything. What are you doing? Stop. Stop." And they just continued to grab him and pull him.

And his wife said, "He's trying to sit down. You don't have to do anything. He's not resisting arrest or anything." He started to sit down, and the cops just pushed her out of the way. Really rough.

And then the original cop that came in and started yelling, pulled out his Taser and started tasing Renardo over and over again, probably about five or six times.

We're all screaming. We're all freaking out. We're all like, "Stop it. Stop it. What are you doing? He's not doing anything." And then the cop pulled his Taser back and started punching him in the head. Just punched him in the head over and over again. You can see it all on video. He was not resisting. He was not being threatening. He was not do-

ing anything. He kept saying, "I'm sitting down. I'm following your instructions. What are you doing? I didn't do anything." And they just continued to escalate and escalate and get viciously violent more and more with him. We were all screaming. Everyone is just completely traumatized as far as I'm concerned.

In our communities, you can never just get used to it, to the violence and the hatred. I mean the evil that they bring down on us.

**SLL:** We're very fortunate to have someone brave, the very brave people who withstood this police assault. Would you let folks know a little bit about what was going through your head when this was going on?

**Lubreeze Lewis:** I was just so confused because of the way everything went down. I could not understand what was going on. I thought they were about to kill my husband. You would never understand how this feels, unless you're there to actually see it and go through it. Because I thought at one point they were just gonna kill him, and this thing would've been, I would've been doing a vigil and not just sitting here speaking on behalf of my husband and we would have been at a vigil. That's where I was at that point in time. I thought that they were about to kill my husband. That's all I could tell you at that time. That was what was going through my head, that they were going to kill my husband.

**Lizz Toledo:** It was a very traumatizing experience for Lubreeze and for everybody who experienced it and watched it. And no matter how many times you may experience it, it's retraumatizing over and over and over again. It has to stop. It's gotta stop. You know, I mean, just the next day, a young man in Atlanta, Oscar Cain, was killed by a police officer in Atlanta, and the police officer is claiming that his cam stopped working, that it didn't work as he is claiming that Oscar pulled out a gun to try to kill him, but yet they found no gun anywhere, and now he's dead.

I am so glad that you know, Lubreeze and her family are not just going to sit down and take this. You know, and I commend Lubreeze because she has pretty much been out there on her own, not being

Excerpts from the #Justice4Renardo interview on Struggle-La Lucha Radio.

afraid, you know, like, this is not my spouse. And it's because of that strength and that power that the rest of the community has been willing to come out and stand for her and stand for Renardo.

**SLL:** I wondered what you all thought people can do in regards to this?

**Lizz Toledo:** Well, we're asking people, number one, to call the DA's office to demand that he be released and that all charges be dropped. We're also asking people to call the local IHOP in Marietta and tell them to drop all charges and for them to call the DA and to ask the DA to drop all charges. Renardo has been in jail going on two weeks without work, without income.

**SLL:** He's in jail, and I understand there's no bond been set, and they plan on keeping him there until April 22nd.

**Lubreeze Lewis:** Well his court date is April 24th. And they have not given him a bond, because of the charges that he has. They said they're felony charges, so they have not given him a bond again trying to assassinate his character basically.

**SLL:** How do people get the number for the DA, and to watch the video and things like that? Is there a place, a website or somewhere folks can go to see that?

**Lizz Toledo:** Yeah, people can go to the Atlanta People's Power Assembly on Facebook @atlpeoplespower. We have the video posted there. We have the information regarding who to call at the DA's office.

Also we're asking people, especially in the local area, if they're in the greater Atlanta area, we're trying to pack the courthouse on the 24th.

**Lubreeze Lewis:** Just reiterating what Lizz said. If you could just call the district attorney. The number is 770-538-3080. And it's the IHOP in Marietta, Georgia, by the Big Chicken. And if you could be there for my husband on the 24th again, just to have the support. We really appreciate it. [R]

**Struggle-La Lucha Radio:** We're on the line with Lizz Toledo and Lizz is a coordinator of the People's Power Assembly in Atlanta. Lizz was just a witness to a harrowing experience involving racist police terror in an IHOP where she was with her family trying to relax. And of course, being Black or Brown in this country, it's only a matter of time when racism puts up its ugly head and lets itself be known. And that's what happened to Lizz and her family at an IHOP. Lizz, tell us what happened.

**Lizz Toledo:** Thank you so much for having me and keeping the attention on this very, very disturbing attack by a racist police department. My family and I were enjoying a dinner out after having been at a concert on March 30th. So we decided to go to the local IHOP in Marietta, Georgia. We were just getting ready to start leaving. We'd finished eating.

We heard a voice that I later found out was Renardo Lewis. I just heard his voice saying to a manager, "Why didn't you tell us this 20 or 30 minutes ago? Why didn't you say something before now?" And the manager that he was speaking to had already moved to my spouse, to my partner at our table. They had gotten into a dispute about a bacon omelette my partner wanted. And as we were moving towards the door, I could hear the manager say something about bacon. And, you know, we started to joke in my family, "Oh no, he's having another bacon episode." And Renardo said, "But what are you talking about bacon for? I don't want any bacon. I never asked for any bacon. I don't even eat bacon."

At that point, his wife was coming out of the bathroom and his wife said, "What's going on?" And Renardo said, "This guy over here is telling me something about bacon and they're not serving anybody. And this, after we've been sitting here waiting all this time, I don't know why he's talking to me about bacon. I don't even eat bacon. You know that baby."

So she said to the manager, "Just give me your name and number, you know this stuff, the way you treat customers. We own a restaurant, so we know how you treat customers. This is not how you treat customers.



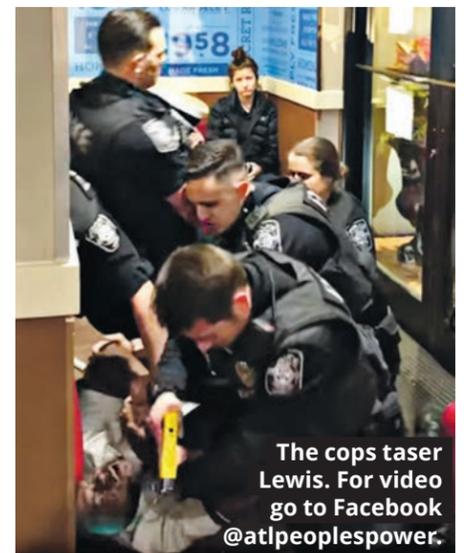
IHOP is disrespectful



IHOP calls in cops.



The cops attack Renardo Lewis.



The cops taser Lewis. For video go to Facebook @atlpeoplespower.

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