Call to drop charges, boycott IHOP
Community fights racist police terror

By Lizz Toledo
Atlanta

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, who is Black, asked, “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 Lu-breeze Franklin Lewis, Mr. Lewis’s 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.

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.

The woman 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 faked Mr. Lewis’s five times and punched him several times, breaking his tooth and injuring his head.

Then, three of these officers stood in front of him 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 a way to justify what they did. Right now, according to the media, he’s being held for “providing “terroristic threats.” The truth is all on video, and there is no justification for the gestapo tactics these and other cops use against Black and Brown people.

Mr. Lewis is not alone. On April 2, his spouse and children, attorney and community supporters from Marietta and Atlanta held a press conference and protest demanding that the charges be dropped and that IHOP apologize for its staff’s racist behavior.

Rally to Demand Justice for RENARDO LEWIS
APRIL 6 5 pm - 6 pm
IHOP, 179 Cobb Parkway South Marietta, Ga.
Abolish the racist police! Boycott IHOP!
Further actions to be announced. You can watch the video on Struggle-La Lucha’s website: tinyurl.com/y5d36oxu
The Peoples Power Assembly and other groups are asking people to call, fax and e-mail John Melvin, Acting District Attorney of Cobb County.
Demand that he do the right thing and drop all the charges against Renardo Lewis.
John Melvin, 50 Haynes Street, Marietta, GA 30090
Phone: (770) 528-3080
Fax: (770) 528-3030
cobbdistrictattorney@cobbcounty.org

Message to the movement:
Don’t justify war and sanctions
By John Parker

In March alone, 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 international loans. Before the latest measure added on March 19, U.S. sanctions already cost Venezuela $30 million per day.

Should sanctions be considered an act of war? Since 1990, according to United Nations and non-governmental organization (NGO) data and well-researched scientific studies, it’s estimated that at least 4 million people have died from the U.S. “war on terror” in Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan alone.

The majority of those deaths didn’t come from direct killings, but rather from denial of necessities like clean water, medicine and food.

That denial is caused by U.S. and Western European use of international sanctions — utilizing their control over the United Nations.

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 17 percent of the world population, they represent 64 percent of the countries affected by U.N. sanctions.

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

Imperialist sanctions are also justified in similar ways. They are supposedly made to rid people of government leaders engaging in corruption, violence and denial of democratic rights. Of course, their sovereignty must go as well.

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...
San Diego celebrated Women’s History Month by commemorating the 400th anniversary of the arrival of the first enslaved Africans in Jamestown, Va., in 1619, as recorded by historian Lerone Bennett Jr. in “Before the Mayflower: A History of Black America.”

Two Black women’s marches were held in San Diego: the 1619 National Celebration of Black Women (NCBW) and the Second Annual March for Black Women—San Diego (MLBWSD). Both events were organized and led by Black women.

A tale of two marches

The 1619 NCBW march and rally was held on March 2 in Ruocco Park, at one of San Diego’s ports of entry near downtown. Sheryl Malory-Johnson, founded and visionary of the 1619 march, explained: “This historic national movement arose out of the necessity to honor women in American history who have emerged from slavery, defied the odds and come out victorious. Women who bred, fed and nurtured an entire nation.

“Our mission is to recognize the extraordinary contributions women of African descent have made in building this country,” said Malory-Johnson. “Through a dynamic vision of uplifting and educating Black women and girls about their ancestors, we inspire them to walk in their power.”

The second annual MLBWSD was held on March 10 in Southeast San Diego, in the heart of the Black and Brown community. Kelsey Daniels, one of the co-founders, explained that MLBWSD was “created for the purpose of uplifting the demands of Black women.” It originated in San Diego as a result of two town hall meetings in 2017, where Black women made it clear that they had something to say about our current condition.

Both marches echo the words of Black Women’s Blueprint” call to action and the legacy of the October 1979 Million Women’s March in Philadelphia, organizers emphasized that it is not and never will be a knee-jerk reaction to the failures of white feminism. Both marches featured drumming, music, poetry and speakers who addressed the issues facing Black women.

Honor the past, fight for the future

Many people came out in the rain to participate in the 1619 NCBW march and rally, prompting Sheryl Malory-Johnson to say, “The rain is the tears of our ancestors.” Other speakers noted that the rain was nothing compared to what our ancestors had to endure since arriving on this soil.

Speakers honored many Black women in history, past and present, including Harriet Tubman, Rosa Parks, Ella Baker, Maya Angelou and Michele Obama. Honor was given to Black women survivors, inventors, writers, nurses, artists, architects, journalists and the list goes on. Name it, we’ve done it.

Organizers of the 1619 NCBW event were presented with a San Diego County proclamation declaring March 2, 2019, to be “1619 National Celebration of Black Women’s Day.”

Giving voice to the voiceless

Organizers of the MLBWSD passed the mic to Black women who are rarely given the opportunity to speak, and whose voices need to be heard. Speakers praised the courage, strength and power of Black women. But they also spoke truth about what we are facing today in San Diego.

One example is an upcoming court hearing in the case of 23-year-old Aleah Jenkins, who died in police custody on Dec. 6. Jenkins was arrested by police in La Jolla on a warrant. Then, something happened to Jenkins in the back seat of the police car. Police body cam footage showed her asking for help and finally saying she couldn’t breathe. By the time Jenkins was finally taken to a hospital, she was in a coma with severe brain swelling; she died nine days later.

Then there is Muna Kuri, a 36-year-old Somali woman, who was found dead in her City Heights apartment on March 7. Authorities identified her husband as the main suspect. Kuri’s cousin, who spoke at the rally, reported that Black women are killed at nearly three times the rate of white women.

Organizers emphasized that “we represent the most oppressed women,” including transwomen, and gave a condensed version of their four demands: Challenge and acknowledge the violence, end the abuse, increase access to health care and economic justice for low-income women.

March 10 was a beautiful, sunny day, and the march was over 300 strong. Marchers stepped off with a call and response chant: “Say their names!” and the response began with the names of Aleah Jenkins and Muna Kuri. Brown Berets provided security. Although the two marches had different themes, speakers and atmospheres, both were successful, had community support and were able to empower Black women.

Love, protect and respect Black women.

Angola 3’s Albert Woodfox welcomed

By Anne Pruden
Brooklyn, N.Y.

Nearly 200 people packed the auditorium of the Brooklyn Public Library at Grand Army Plaza on March 8, 2019, to be “1619 National Celebration of Black Women.” It originated in San Diego as a result of two town hall meetings in 2017, where Black women made it clear that they had something to say about our current condition. Both were successful, both had different themes, speakers and atmospheres, both were successful, had community support and were able to empower Black women.

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By Anne Pruden
Brooklyn, N.Y.
MEXICO

Thousands strike at U.S.-owned factories

Dozens of Coca-Cola workers are camp ing out at a major bottling plant in Mexico until they get a raise. More than 8,000 Mexican Walmart employees were prepared to walk off the job until management addressed their demands.

And 30,000 striking Mexican factory workers have finally returned to work after a monthlong strike.

Workers are organizing at unprecedented rates along the U.S.-Mexico border — in Mexico. Since January, thousands of factory workers in U.S.-owned factories and subcontractors (maquiladoras) have put pressure on U.S. companies to raise wages in Mexican border cities, which are home to hundreds of factories run by U.S. companies and subcontractors (maquiladoras).

Factory workers, who generally earn about $2.50 an hour, make car parts, washing machines, appliances and even soda for U.S. consumers across the border.

More at tinyurl.com/yydy3y

War and sanctions

Continued from page 1

poverty, illness, starvation and des peration, targeting the people to weaken resistance to economic and military occupation.

Venezuela’s crisis

Today’s version of endless wars started in Iraq. That nightmare of sanctions and war was justified by false U.S. government assertions that Saddam Hussein had “weap ons of mass destruction,” bolstered by the corporate media and even individuals and organizations on the left who, uncritically and unprincipled, would rather go with the State Department narrative than believe any accusations of siding with dictators or terrorists.

These are similar to the “critical” voices that echoed Washington’s attacks against Venezuela’s Bolivarian government regarding “flawed” elections. Never mind that all observers of the elections, from trade union officials to social justice organization leaders, lauded the process.

A recurring argument used by leftists even some so-called socialists, and thus justifying the ire of the U.S., is that opposition candidate Henrique Capriles Radonski was disqualified from running in the 2018 Venezuelan presidential election.

They say that while Capriles was accused of illegally fomenting vio lance by encouraging a right-wing crowd to storm the Cuban Embassy and threatening diplomats with vio lence during the 2002 coup attempt against then-President Hugo Chávez, he was “cleared” of all charges.

A video emerged showing Capriles — then mayor of Baruta — climbing the walls of the embassy, leading the attack. Capriles tried to force Cuban dipломats to turn over the vice pres ident and other government officials to the crowd. The Cuban diplomats refused, and fortunately, massive demonstrations of the Venezuelan people in support of Chávez ended the U.S.-encouraged coup.

Capriles’ organization had previously received hundreds of thou sands of dollars from the U.S.-spon sored National Endowment for Democracy and the International Republican Institute.

So, was he cleared of those charges? No. He did commit those acts. However, he benefited from an amnesty by President Chávez in 2007 for all of those who participat ed in the coup attempt, which granted a pardon.

Does that mean the Venezuelan people don’t have the right to decide who they may be unqualified to run for president, being a known violent traitor and agent of U.S. imperialism?

The movement to build solidarity with the Venezuelan people, or the people of Zimbabwe, Iran, Yemen, People’s Korea, Iraq, Libya and Af ghanistan, or anywhere else that the nightmare of U.S. war and sanctions is occurring, will not benefit from repeating the lies of the U.S. State Department to justify its means of mass murder.

What’s needed is to expose the truth that facilitates building a unit ed movement to defeat the greatest threat to humanity today: U.S. impe lialism.

To read the complete article, including detailed information on the effects of sanctions in Iraq, Yemen, Zimbabwe and other countries, go to StruggleLaLucha.org.

By Scott Scheffer

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

The U.S.-supported “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 in 25 years by Ven ezuela’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 have 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 parlia mentary immunity. This move could even precipitate his arrest and prose cution for his treasonous collabora tion 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 and China are delivering the necessary foreign airlift 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 Minister pocketed a personal gift of tobacco from person Geng Shuang said that “Latin American countries are all sovereign states ... nor is Latin America a cer tain country’s backyard.”

Imperialist economic sabotage has caused hardship, but in addition to aid from Russia, China and other parts of the International Red Cross will now begin delivering supplies as well — initially enough to help 600,000 people survive the effects of the cruel U.S. economic warfare.

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. “We’re here to support Pres ident 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, Elliott Abrams and Mike Pompeo — seem committed to accom plishing a full-blown counterrevolution in Venezuela.

These three war criminals, having failed in the war against the Syri an revolution, 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 contem porary figure that personifies the war for now, but they will continue to plot.

Many corporate media outlets continue to depict 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 be tween the past and the future.” All progressives must rally to the de fense of the Venezuelan people.

The movement to build solidarity with the Venezuelan people, or the people of Zimbabwe, Iran, Yemen, People’s Korea, Iraq, Libya and Afghanistan, or anywhere else that the nightmare of U.S. war and sanctions is occurring, will not benefit from repeating the lies of the U.S. State Department to justify its means of mass murder.

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Socialistas se unen por Venezuela y lanzan nuevo partido

Por Greg Butterfield
Los Ángeles

Durante un fin de sema- na repleto de eventos en esta extensa metrópolis del sur de California, muchos activistas bolivarianos, unidos por la lucha por la democracia y el socialismo en Venezuela, acudieron a reuniones y eventos convocados por el Partido Socialista de Estados Unidos (PSUS) para discutir la situación en ese país sudamericano.

El 16 de marzo fue un día de solidaridad internacional con el pueblo de Venezuela, quienes continúan resistiendo las sanciones económicas, el sabotaje político y las amenazas militares de Washington y sus aliados. Esa mañana, junto a cientos de personas, se realizó una marcha desde el Parque MacArthur en Los Ángeles hasta la sede del Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) en el centro de la ciudad, donde fue entregado un documento de protesta.

La marcha, organizada por el PSUS y otras organizaciones, fue una expresión de solidaridad con el pueblo venezolano y con toda la lucha contra la opresión y la desigualdad que imperan en ese país. La presencia de activistas de diferentes países, como Estados Unidos, Canadá, España, México y otros, muestra la importancia de la solidaridad internacional en la lucha contra el imperialismo y la desigualdad.

En la marcha, se expresó el deseo de que el pueblo venezolano tenga el derecho a decidir sobre su propia suerte y pueda construir un futuro libre de la opresión y la desigualdad. La marcha fue una muestra de la solidaridad con el pueblo venezolano y de la necesidad de apoyar cualquier movimiento popular que luche por el socialismo en Venezuela.

Rebecca Jackson y Sara Benjamin
SLR photos: Greg Butterfield

5 de abril 2019