

No to US Intervention in Venezuela!

Faced with increasing US imperialist intervention and the threat of a new counter-revolutionary offensive, the Venezuelan Revolution must advance towards socialism in order to defeat reaction!

In recent weeks, the campaign of provocation and pressure from US imperialism against the revolutionary process in Venezuela has intensified. Leading US administration spokespersons have made statements, putting pressure on the National Electoral Council to rule in favor of the bourgeois opposition in their effort to call a presidential recall referendum. The Venezuelan government has publicly denounced this growing foreign intervention. Evidence has also been uncovered that the opposition organization which coordinated the signature collection effort, SUMATE, has received funding from the US National Endowment for Democracy, together with a whole host of other opposition organizations. The reactionary opposition clearly will not recognize an NEC ruling against the validity of the signatures they allegedly collected. There have been widespread allegations of fraud in the collection of signatures by the opposition, including thousands of collection sheets where all signatures had all been written in the same handwriting. We denounce this campaign as a new attempt to overthrow the democratically elected Chavez government and put an end to the revolutionary process that has opened in Venezuela.

Imperialism and the local ruling elite cannot allow things to go on any longer. They cannot tolerate a government that increases investment in health and education, refuses to privatize publicly-owned companies and utilities, opposes the Free Trade of the Americas Agreement, reasserts the nationalized character of the oil industry, etc. Above all they cannot tolerate the process of mass organization and politicization that has taken place in the country. The revolutionary movement of the Venezuelan masses has defeated the plans of imperialism and the local oligarchy on two occasions. First, when they organized a coup on April 11, 2002, and during the oil sabotage and bosses' lock-out of December 2002 and January 2003.

But the danger of a reactionary coup is not completely gone. The local oligarchy and foreign imperialism will again and again try to put an end to the revolutionary process. Even though their forces are now weaker, more divided and demoralized, there is no room for complacency. The only way for to safeguard the revolutionary process is to strengthen it and to move it forward. Those who organized the coup and the oil sabotage are still free or in exile. They must be brought to justice. But the justice system is still firmly in the hands of the reaction. This was clearly shown when the Supreme Court of Justice ruled that there had been no coup in April 2002 but just a "vacuum of power". The old reactionary justice system must be disbanded and the principle of popular election of the judges established as the only guarantee of a fair justice system in favor of the masses and not of the rich.

The Venezuelan oligarchy and multinational companies still have a firm grip over the mass media, private industry and the banking system. They use their ownership of these key levers in society in order to sabotage the will of the majority and plot another reactionary coup. They must be nationalized and put under the democratic control of the workers and the people. These resources must be used to satisfy the needs of the majority as a part of a democratic plan of the economy. Though the oil sabotage was defeated

through the direct action of the oil workers who took control of the oil industry (together with the local communities and the National Guard), the same bureaucratic structures are still largely in place in the state-owned oil company, PDVSA. This must be put under democratic workers' control and management as the only way to prevent the emergence of a new bureaucracy running the industry in their own interests.

Though many reactionary army officers left the Army when they declared themselves in rebellion, many are still active within the Army, and the traditional capitalist structure of the Army remains largely intact. The only guarantee that the Army will not be used against the people is the setting up of committees of soldiers and revolutionary officers, and for this to be linked to the revolutionary organizations of the workers and the people that already exist outside the army. The Ministries and the state apparatus in general is full of reactionaries who constantly sabotage the revolutionary process. These capitalist institutions must be done away with and replaced by the popular election of all public officials with the right of recall, with wages no higher than that of a skilled worker.

The revolutionary Venezuelan masses have shown again and again their willingness to fight reaction. But the revolutionary structures are still small, divided and dispersed. They need to be united on the basis of revolutionary assemblies and revolutionary defense committees in all working class neighborhoods, factories, schools, and villages, where all revolutionary political tendencies are free to put forward their views to be democratically discussed. These committees need to be linked up at the local, state and national level on the basis of democratically elected representatives with the right of recall. Only through democratic debate can the revolutionary movement achieve the necessary unity.

These measures, if implemented, would amount to the beginning of a movement towards socialism. This is the only way in which the future of the revolutionary process can be assured. Some will say that implementing these measures would be a provocation for US imperialism and would led to military intervention. But in fact US imperialism and the local oligarchy do not need any further "provocation", they have already been plotting and intervening against the revolutionary process from the very beginning. The only way to prevent or defeat an imperialist intervention is to make an appeal to the workers and peasants in the rest of Latin America as well as to American workers to follow the same road as the Venezuelan people and take the future into their own hands. A socialist revolution in Venezuela with a clear internationalist appeal would prove a powerful attraction for the masses of workers and peasants throughout the continent that have already started to move in countries like Argentina, Ecuador, Bolivia, the Dominican Republic, etc. Spreading the revolution is the only way to safeguard it.

- * **No to US intervention in Venezuela!**
- * **Defend the Venezuelan revolution!**
- * **Forward to Socialism!**



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