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Venezuela

In support of the re-election of Chavez

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Vote for Chavez!

For the twelfth time since 1998, the Venezuelan people have a date with the ballot box, next December 3rd. For the twelfth time, the Venezuelan people will have to defeat the Venezuelan Right, which is the electoral arm of an imperialist strategy that is aimed at weakening the Venezuelan process.

It will also be the occasion to demonstrate that, in spite of the limits of the government's action in favour of the workers and the poorest sectors in Venezuela, in spite of a state structure originating in bourgeois democracy, Hugo Chavez is a decisive support for the victory of the Venezuelan revolutionary process.

1. Defeat the imperialist Right

Governor of Zulia, the province with the biggest reserves of oil, close to separatist circles, anointed by all the forces of the Venezuelan Right and by the U.S. State Department, Manuel Rosales is the candidate of a Right that wants to undo everything that the revolutionary process has achieved since 1998. The democratic gains that Venezuelans have won through their struggles since 1989 - including the defeat of the coup d'etat in 2002, the lock-out in the winter of 2002-2003, the many attempts at armed and economic destabilisation - would immediately be endangered in order to return to a state that would be strictly in the service of the rich.

We are not always in agreement with Hugo Chavez concerning his choices in international policy, which sometimes mix up diplomacy and internationalism. That goes for the unqualified approval that he has given to the Belarusian and Iranian governments and to the Chinese Communist Party. Provoking the United States administration does not imply qualifying as progressive governments which conduct anti-people policies, even in the framework of an international policy which is linked to Venezuela's position as an oil producer.

However, these disagreements should not hide our support for many of the positions adopted by the Venezuelan government, which is carrying out policies that make no concessions to the United States. Its opposition to successive imperialist wars, the recall of its ambassador to Israel in protest at the war in Lebanon, its condemnation of the armed intervention military in Haiti, its unambiguous condemnation of Tony Blair's policies in the Middle East, its open support of the Latin American Left, its active diplomacy in Africa (Venezuela has become, with Cuba, the Latin American country that is most present on the African continent) and in the Middle East, have made Chavez one of the foremost figures of the anti-imperialist struggle.

A large victory for Chavez would be a call to struggle on the whole continent. It would be a further proof that it is possible, even for the President of a country, to maintain intransigent positions.

2. Towards a socialist Venezuela, act in favour of self-organisation, break with the capitalist model

In Venezuela, the situation remains marked by a revolutionary process. A battle is under way between two currents. On the one hand there are those who consider that most of what needed to be done has been done, and that now it is necessary to conduct current affairs in the best way possible for the people, but in the framework of really existing world capitalism, and to find Venezuela's place there. On the other hand there are the partisans of a speeding up, of a deepening of the process, often backed by Chavez himself and probably in a majority in the

country, who consider that the democratic and social conquests are only just a first step towards the proclaimed objective, which is "the socialism of the 21st century", expressed by the UNT trade union confederation as "a socialism without bureaucrats, bosses or landowners".

The workers organised in the workplaces are playing a more and more important role in the Venezuelan process, joining up with the vanguard which has organised itself in the poor neighbourhoods to resist the police and the Right, to win improvements in its living conditions, and even to directly run the neighbourhoods.

The rebellion against the bureaucrats who are incrustated in the state apparatus, whether they come from the former state apparatus or originate within the "Bolivarian" bloc which holds power, is coming up against a series of obstacles, but it is moving forward, in the trade union movement, in peasant communities, in poor neighbourhoods and even in the electoral battles. It is an essential element of the forward march of the Bolivarian process.

The struggles for land, the broader and broader mobilisations of the poorest sectors of the population for new and better public services, for health, education and water; the aspiration to bring power as close as possible to the people, demonstrates the depth of the revolutionary process and the continuing readiness of the Venezuelan people to mobilise.

The most militant sectors grouped around the National Union of Workers (UNT), the Ezequiel Zamora Front (the peasant confederation), the National Association of Free and Associated Community Media or political forces such as the Partido Revolucion y Socialismo (PRS), the Proyecto Nuestra America, or the student association Utopia, as well as the thousands of militants who are not collectively organised but who are essential to the process of self-organisation, have been saying it for years: in order to liberate all energies, for the revolution to continue, for it to definitively take power, it is necessary to attack the political structures of the country, to bring down the state apparatus that constantly reproduces bureaucracy, corruption and clientelism, it is necessary to take on the big landowners, the banks, the steel industry, open the national debate that the workers in the oil industry are waiting for, on the running of their company, PDVSA, and put it under co-management with the workers.

This is the meaning of our support for these political forces and our commitment to get their struggles known and supported in our own countries, because only these struggles and ours will make it possible to move forward towards the building of a society freed from capitalism.

Once Chavez is re-elected, the workers and the poor of Venezuela will have to conduct new struggles. Every victory of the Venezuelan people will be a beacon of hope for the struggles of the workers and the peoples of the whole world.

3. What political organisation in the service of the Bolivarian Revolution?

The image of the party form of organisation has been seriously damaged by 50 years of clientelism, corruption and loyal management of the affairs of the pro-imperialist bourgeoisie. However, after 8 years of the process, the question is today sharply posed: what party has to be organised, and in what form, in order to deepen the Bolivarian Revolution?

We support all the attempts at creating a political organisation which would enable the radicalised sectors mentioned above to come together. The alliance between the Union Popular de Venezuela, the class struggle tendency of the UNT and the PRS, or the proposition of the Socialist League to organise a Congress of Organisation of Socialists, show that important sectors are conscious of the need for a revolutionary organisation.

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On a broader scale, Chavez has proposed the creation of a party that would bring together all the organisations supporting the Bolivarian process, stating that he wanted it to be "non-reformist". The proposition is interesting. However, this organisation cannot be built with the political forces that the popular organisations are fighting against in their anti-bureaucratic struggles, for the deepening of the agrarian reform or the extension of the role of workers in running the economy. The emergence of such an organisation would resolve at least two problems that confront the Bolivarian process: the centrality of the figure of Chavez, which weakens the role of the Venezuelan masses, and the confusion between diplomacy and international policy.

Consequently, this process of construction must make it possible to conduct strategic discussions on the roads that are necessary to defeat capitalism and to lay the foundations of a socialist society.

Resolution adopted by the Executive Bureau of the Fourth International at its meeting on October 21-22, 2006.