**Revolution and imperialism**

Following the Bolivarian election in Venezuela led by Hugo Chávez, and the failure of US imperialist attempts to overthrow it, Venezuela has enjoyed something like a decade of being able to redistribute the country’s oil wealth for the benefit of the Venezuelan masses and considerably improve the lot of the country’s poor. The percentage of households in poverty fell from 55% in 1995 to 26.4% in 2009. When Chávez was sworn into office unemployment was 15%, in June 2009 it was 7.8%. A huge variety of social programmes to educate and provide for working-class Venezuelans have been implemented, engaging and enabling ordinary people to organise themselves in their communities and workplaces.

However, as far as imperialism is concerned, spending good oil profits on improving people’s lives – especially the lives of people who do not live in an imperialist country – is an irresponsible waste of resources amounting to the worst of economic mismanagement, a view shared by Venezuela’s local comprador bourgeoisie. As a result, no sooner had Venezuela’s economic position been rendered difficult by the abrupt fall in world oil prices, US imperialism expected to be able to move straight back in to regain control in the name of responsible economic policy. The death of Chávez also gave imperialism hope that it would not be difficult to sideline the Bolivarian revolutionary government, now led by Nicolás Maduro. The imperialists have, however, so far been unable to fulfil their dreams, and the main reason for this is the ongoing strong popular support for the Maduro government, despite its relative economic weakness and despite the efforts of the local bourgeoisie to assist imperialism in every possible way by facilitating chaos in the distribution of goods to the people who need them.

Between imperialism and its local lackeys, they have made sure that the Venezuelan people suffer as much as possible for backing the Maduro government – something that did enable MUD, a motley coalition of anti-government political hacks, to win National Assembly elections in 2015. However, when the opposition tried to put together a petition calling for a referendum to remove Maduro from office before his term ends next year, it could not get sufficient signatories even to make up the modest number needed and ended up resorting to using the names of thousands of people who had died! Nothing could better illustrate the weakness of the internal opposition to the Maduro government better than that clumsy fraud.

The opposition are using their control of the National Assembly to frustrate as far as they are able the functioning of government. The aim is to cause the people of Venezuela to give up their support for the Bolivarian revolution because the price is just too high. One of its tactics has been deliberately, and quite unnecessarily, to operate unconstitutionally so that the judiciary is obliged to declare its legislation illegal and void.

**Opposition violence**

In the meantime, the Venezuelan opposition tries to boost its credibility, and the case for foreign intervention, by its time-honoured practice of resorting to violent demonstrations that government forces are obliged to suppress because of the violence deliberately engendered by the opposition.

Despite the narrative pushed in imperialist media that the PSUV and Chavistas are responsible for the violence, the opposition is guilty for the majority of confirmed deaths so far. National Ombudsman Tarek William Saab confirmed that a National Guard sergeant, Neuman Jose Sanclemente (28), was shot and killed by a ‘sniper’ in the middle of violent protests in Las Salias municipality in Miranda state.

The right-wing El Nacional newspaper columnist and Central University of Venezuela professor, Tulio Hernandez, encouraged his followers to ‘neutralise’ government supporters, alluding to the use of blunt objects like “flower pots” as weapons. Recently an opposition mob horrifically burned a young man, Orlando José Figuera, alive. An eyewitness recounted that: “a group of opposition supporters appeared and they asked: ‘Hey black guy, are you a Chavista or opposition?’ They told him, ‘You can see what happens to Chavistas. They began to punch him, stab him and they burned him alive.”

The damage inflicted on public and private property by opposition terrorists during their demonstrations in April has amounted to some $5bn. Alongside the political manoeuvring and violence on the streets, multinational corporations such as Kimberly-Clark and Pirelli have been sabotaging or withdrawing from operations in Venezuela.

In the meantime, notwithstanding the violent threats and danger posed by the terrorist opposition, millions of Venezuelans regularly turn out in demonstrations in support of the Venezuelan government, far outnumbering the supporters of the opposition. It would seem that if the people of Venezuela are not always happy with the turmoil caused by the workings of the capitalist system, they have certainly not yet lost sight of the fact that their position would rapidly become considerably worsened were they to lose their government so devoted to their interests and replace it with one pleasing to US imperialism.

**Propaganda war**

Despite the popular support of the United Socialist Party of Venezuela, the party of Chávez and Maduro, it has been routinely smeared by the BBC, The Guardian, and many other media outlets. The reality of Venezuelan life and politics has been grossly distorted by exaggeration, omission, and outright falsification by supposedly ‘progressive’ or ‘impartial’ media outfits.

The opposition is, in the press controlled by the bourgeoisie, conferred the time-honoured euphemistic status of ‘pro-democracy’, despite the extensive evidence that proves otherwise. These latest ‘pro-democracy’ demonstrations and the way they are reported are nothing new.

On the election of Chávez, the BBC insinuated he had no popular support (despite winning 56.2% of the vote) and published an article calling him a ‘dictator’. After two more elections, with the PSUV vote increased, and a successful constitutional referendum, they presented the 2002 coup almost entirely from the opposition’s perspective, with the only pro-Chávez views coming from government officials, Chávez’s daughter, or Cuba, clearly designed to turn the truth on its head. In reality, the working class of Venezuela heroically rallied around Chávez and stopped the coup in its tracks.

The BBC lies and it knows it lies. There is no accident or confusion about this, just a concerted attempt to create a propaganda picture that fits with the imperialist agenda – whether that be of destroying independent Syria, bringing down the elected government in Ukraine or destroying the gains of the Venezuelan revolution. It is what the military refer to as ‘psyops’ – psychological operations – and it’s a crucial and criminal part of every imperialist war effort.

The constant barrage of lies and war propaganda to which we are daily subjected is a vital cornerstone of the imperialist fortress that keeps our rulers protected and their system in place. It is the job of communists and progressives everywhere to do all in their exposure and challenge these psychological operations, and to replace lies with the truth.

15 June 2017
Communist Party of Great Britain (Marxist-Leninist)

Fighting for communism – the future that works!

About the CPGB-ML

An understanding of society (theory) and a way of uniting to change it (organisation) are the two things that we need to make a socialist revolution. Ordinary people in Britain have everything to gain by getting involved in this process sooner rather than later. This world isn’t working for us and we deserve better!

Not only do we need to campaign against the bad conditions and lack of prospects for working-class people in Britain today, but we need to work for a completely different type of society – one where people’s needs decide everything.

So many problems face this world: environmental catastrophe, poverty, disease, racism and war. They’ll never be solved while capitalism remains, but they could all be sorted if society was set up for the benefit of the majority rather than the private gain of a few billionaires.

Our party is different because we consistently apply Marxist science to all areas of our work, and we’re not scared to tell it how it is. We refuse to be intimidated by the barrage of lying propaganda that fills Britain’s mainstream media. It is the capitalists’ job to try to stop us from building a socialist society; it is our job to do it anyway!

Challenge your ideas – challenge their propaganda – seek the truth – serve the people – change the world!

Contact the CPGB-ML to find out more.

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