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State funerals, amnesia and anarchism
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stinacy to deny the obvious is not unique to the FAU, being shared by similar groups that systematically silent any critical view on the current situation in Venezuela that comes from the anarchism and other radical left voices (not forgetting that they often kept silence too about anything that challenges the "brother government" of the Castro in Cuba). Being a good example of that attitude is the absence of documents with critical views on their websites in Latin America, while promoting curious "anarchists" whose message focuses on propaganda of alleged successes of the Venezuelan State, predicting the plagues that will come on the country if Chavez government is not there, and defame the anarchism that doesn't receive subsidy and / or political lines that come from the state.

If the FAU and the likes are consistent in holding that positive evaluation of the "Eternal Commander" and his legacy, embodied in the document we reviewed, it is expected that they will refute the accuracy of the facts we have presented to deny the supposed progressive condition of that leader and his government. Because under his tutelage nothing essentially different happened for those in the lower classes compared to any of the current Latin American states. In fact, a ruler like Chavez has been more than adequate for the interests of transnational power on this continent today, because he adjusted himself entirely to the model of capitalism and economic globalization. Closing our eyes before the evidence of how this or any authoritarian "revolution" ends up replacing one kind of oppression for another, usually worse, captivating ourselves again with grandiose promises and inflamed words, is to repeat awkwardly the catastrophic experience of 1960.

y el Partido: las Tendencias Autoritarias y el Anarquismo"[17] and in "La Aceptacion del Concepto de Poder como Negación del Anarquismo"[18]. By Daniel Barret in his book "Los Sediciosos Despertares de la Anarquia"[19] and "El Movimiento Anarquista Uruguayo en los Tiempos de Colera". By Gustavo Rodriguez in his work "Los 'Extravíos' Teorico-ideologicos del Pensamiento Acrata Contemporaneo". And by Rafael Uzcategui en "Grupos Libertarios y Poder Popular: Dinamitando el Anarquismo desde dentro"[20].

But if that final section is there should be for a reason, and considering what we have discussed, we estimate that for the FAU was necessary to record their thoughts in the theoretical proposals as an accompaniment to the previous description of how positive is the experience of Hugo Chavez and his "Bolivarian Revolution"; because from that kind of mixtures between anarchism (platformist anarchism) and other "experiences of struggle" (as the one inspired by Chavez), our continent will receive an "ideology of rupture" which, of course, can not be other than "An ideology for the Popular Power". Then, it is likely that this effort to convince themselves and convince us, that what happened in Venezuela in 1999–2013 has been a positive fighting experience that has enriched the ideological source of the continent, has more to do with the aspiration to make reality fit the mold of previous schemes than with reality itself. Because if you don't prove that authoritarian-bureaucratic messes like Chavez (now) and Castro (before) are a necessary part of the course to the social revolution, you can't justify the current political course of FAU and their counterparts in Latin America.

Therefore is this effort to refuse to recognize the many facts that dismantle the claims to present Chavez as a revolutionary, socialist, anti-imperialist, and tolerant or even related to anarchism. Such ob-

[17] materialanarquista.espiv.net

[18] periodicoellibertario.blogspot.com

[19] Edited by Libros de Anarres, Buenos Aires 2011. Accessible at es.scribd.com

[20] rafaeluzcategui.wordpress.com

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This constant harassment against trade unionists and other autonomous activists made possible the climate where murders of social activists, like Richard Gallardo, Luis Hernandez, Carlos Requena, Argenis Vasquez, Jerry Diaz, Joe Castillo, Mijail Martinez and Sabino Romero, just to mention the most shocking cases, have occurred. Crimes to which the ambiguous response of the Chavez government and his inability to find the culprits looks too much like tolerance or complicity.

As for quoting characters to give legitimacy to any political position, we must remember the Commander-President opportunism regarding theoretical references and declaring his affinity towards: Marx, Jesus Christ, Bolivar, Mao, the natives, Trotsky, Gramsci, Castro, Peron, Che Guevara, etc.., a massive tangle of ideas that makes his socialism of the XXI century entirely incoherent. This is the character described earlier by FAU as "creative". Moreover, for one positive reference to Kropotkin we have Chavez, and his entourage, repeated calls against anarchism, its basic principles and practices. On this, we refer you to three articles of EL LIBERTARIO: "Un cierto panfleto bolivariano", # 29, 2002; "El socialismo chavista", # 42, 2005; and "Chavez y el anarquismo", # 53, 2008.

Why persist in repeating the same mistakes and the authoritarian myths?

The final section of the FAU text, subtitled "An ideology for the Popular Power", states a summary of basic concepts of the current platformism in Latin America, which at first glance looks detached from the title and apparent basic objective that the document shows at the begining. Since the core of this reply to the FAU is to discuss his views on Hugo Chavez and Venezuela, we won't deal here with the critical analysis these conceptions deserve. This evaluation has been well developed (in terms that we share) by Patrick Rossineri in his work "Entre la Plataforma

councils, communes etc. This, as a whole was called Power of the People. The party bureaucracy grew in interference and increasingly displaces the authentic representatives of these popular formations.

This is only a fable about how the state power conceived, created and imposed the community councils and other similar agencies of social control. There is a mythical image of how in Venezuela, since Chavez presidency, a power of the oppressed was forged from top down, born independently, and somehow endures despite the bureaucratic attempt for submission. The truth is that we have suffered the assembly of a device created and always regulated by the state, and they didn't hesitate to destroy or mistreat real combative and worthy popular organizations of prior existence, and "Popular Power" is basically a name that has been copied from the Cuban government structure. About the details of this process see what has been published in various issues of EL LIBERTARIO, Uzcategui's book, and the research work of Maria del Pilar Garcia available in the section Textos of our web: www.nodo50.org.

If the lie of the boost autonomous popular organizations have experienced thanks to the "Bolivarian Revolution" were not enough, the paper recalls the time the Beloved Leader publicly quoted Kropotkin, which apparently gives credit to the affinity or sympathy the president have towards some anarchist conceptions. With that excuse they pretend to ignore that in the specific and daily practice of his government, Chavez was the main responsible of the bureaucratic and authoritarian-militarist characteristics of a regime that has been completely opposite to the aspirations of libertarian socialism. One example is how they have treated the unions, wholly or partially independent from official control, where harassment and destroy attempts were always supported and inspired by the Commander, according to evidence gathered in the dossier "Trabajo y Sindicalismo en Venezuela" (Work and Unionism in Venezuela), also available at: www.nodo50.org.

Dated the day after the death of the Venezuelan president (03/06/2013), a statement was released entitled "La muerte de Hugo Chavez. Su impacto en America Latina y el mundo" — "The Death of Hugo Chavez. Its impact in Latin America and the world",[1] published and maintained (at the time of writing) in a prominent place on the website of the Uruguayan Anarchist Federation — FAU, the group that claims authorship of the article.

In the text are various statements about the personality of the deceased, his historic role in Venezuela and Latin America, on the government and the political movement that he led, and the contemporary socio-political process in Venezuela; leading to an assessment and conclusions to which we felt obliged to reply. These statements, based on erroneous and / or uninformed evaluations about Chavez and Venezuela, lead to a positive judgment, not only removed from anarchism, but also suggesting a "qualified support") of these figures and their governments that, as we understand, completely distorts the anarchist ideal and practice, and in this way ends up becoming a parody of Marxism, especially regarding its limitations and mistakes.

Repeating the same mistakes 50 years later

This course is similar to that which in the 1960s led to the "qualified support" of the Castro regime in Cuba by the FAU, with such negative results not only for the FAU itself, but for Latin American anarchism in general, and specifically for Cuban anarchism. At that time, and according to the words of Daniel Barrett in "El Movimiento Anarquista Uruguayo en los Tiempos de Colera"[2], the Uruguayan Anarchist Federation, founded in 1956 and recognized as an important expression of the libertarian socialist movement

[1] federacionanarquistauruguaya.com.uy-... Also published in LUCHA LIBERTARIA, Montevideo, May 2013, # 23, p. 21–25.

[2] www.nodo50.org

in this part of the world, ended up becoming "FAU without dots", where anarchist principles, like the dots in their acronym, were lost by repeating the rhetoric, actions and mistakes of Latin American Marxism at that time.

It's not our intention here to scrutinize what that position of the FAU ended up meaning, but more information and analysis about it, in addition to the above essay, can be found in another text from Barret: "Cuba y la Revolucion Latinoamericana", in particular the section "Cuba, Socialismo y Libertad "[3]. This topic is also discussed in the book "Cuban Anarchism: The History of a Movement" by Frank Fernandez[4]; in "Los 'Extravios' Teorico-ideologicos del Pensamiento Acrata Contemporaneo", by Gustavo Rodriguez[5]; in the article by Nelson Mendez "Anarchism in Latin America: considerations about their history, traits and prospects"[6]; and in the brochure (with various authors) "The Uruguayan Anarchist Federation (FAU): Crisis, Armed Struggle and Dictatorship"[7].

Later in the 80s, when the Uruguayan organization began to rebuild itself from the fierce repression under the military dictatorship, it seemed that these ambiguous visions were starting to be left behind; but when the XXI century arrived we see how this and other groups of platformist bias in the continental anarchism aligned themselves, with a curious silence and neutrality, with "anti-imperialist left" governments, such as the longstanding Cuban dictatorship and the brand new "Bolivarian Revolution". Although in the second case the neutrality has given way, over time, to various expressions of sympathy or even support, some tried unsuccessfully to be more nuanced, such as the FAU document and

[3] www.nodo50.org

[4] Fundación Anselmo Lorenzo, Madrid, 2001. issuu.com [English: 2001. See Sharp Press]

[5] www.nodo50.org…

[6] estudios.cnt.es [In English, there is a condensed version of this article in i-f-a.orga]

[7] libcom.org…

FAU would be valid to present similar arguments of admiration to these or other authoritarian rulers, Marxists and / or populist, that manage to die while still on power with a massive funeral tearful apotheosis.

The respectful and neat opening paragraph closes with a lesson about how, the now named "Eternal Commander," proposed and persevered in building new organizations throughout Latin America, asserting that this would result in more independence that would bring significant improvements to the living standards of the people." This would sound very convincing and even touching if it were not for the fact that the essence of these "new organizations" is include in the IIRSA (Initiative for the Integration of Regional Infrastructure in South America) and in the Plan Mesoamerica (formerly Plan Puebla-Panama); two agreements where, with total shamelessness, the "Bolivarian revolution"- and the other governments that belongs to these treaties — are committed to do what is required to strengthen the model of capitalism that transnational imperial powers promote in this continent through mining and other forms of extraction[16].

Theoretical foundations of state anarchism

The FAU text not only raises myths about Chavez, but also about his scene. Thus, there is another paragraph that is also worth quoting in full:

> In recent years Venezuela have been developing a range of popular activities especially for those in low social status, this began to take shape in different forms of organization: collectives, communal

[16] More information about IIRSA in periodicoellibertario.blogspot.com; for the Mesoamerica Plan (formerly PPP), see www.soberania.org, www.aporrea.org and www.aapguatemala.org

They give us as an example of that solidarity with Uruguay, the resources provided to that country by Venezuela for the "recovery of industries that would be managed by workers', ignoring the fact that the big slice of the exchanges between the two countries went for the Uruguayan and Bolivarian bourgeoisie (eg: the meat imported to Venezuela and the fraud of manufactured homes[15]). Furthermore, it seems that the FAU ignores that the support given for the creation of industrial jobs outside Venezuela is happening while the Venezuelan industry is experiencing a crisis situation, where the capitalists opposing the government are abandoning their activities (in many cases closing factories and going out), while the local buoyant bourgeoisie (growing in corruption through finances, services and trade) prefer more prompt profit and easy enrichment. We should also remember to FAU what happened in Venezuela with the "recovery of industries that would be managed by workers", a resounding failure of the bureaucracy on charge. For more information about this subject we invite you to see what is described in the printed version of EL LIBERTARIO, on the Venezuelan websites mentioned above, and in the sections "El Cooperativismo bolivariano" y "Las 'fábricas tomadas' venezolanas", in Rafael Uzcategui's book.

One don't have to be an expert in international relationships to realize that these states and governments are afflicted to lose a friend so convenient to their power interests, so all the praise they displayed it was to be expected. But it is unexpected that an anarchist federation presents this situation as an indication of acceptance. As for the "sorrow of the people" as a sign of the positive role of Chavez in Venezuela, one needs to remind the scenes in North Korea after the death of Kim Il Sung; in the old Soviet Union with Stalin; in China with Mao; Nasser in Egypt; in Argentina Eva and Juan Peron… just to mention a few state despots whose funerals were defined by the presence of crying crowds. Presumably for

[15] www.reportero24.com

a similar sermon in a text by Manu Garcia from Chile[8]; and others with apologetic and delusional attachments (see the proclamation of the Libertarian Communist Organization of Chile[9]). The result is that, in the end, we end up with an air of deplorable familiarity between approaches subscribed to by the FAU half a century ago, those in present day Venezuela and in Cuba once before; as if history has taught us nothing.

Myth and discretion from Uruguay

It is essential to reproduce word by word the first paragraph of the declaration of the FAU, since it contains, quite clearly, the impression the writers have of Chavez, his performance as leader and the legacy he leaves:

> The world has been shocked by the death of a militant and leader of unique features. Quite controversial, polemic and thought provoking, of vigorous political statements, Chavez was creative, tireless in his words and proposals, possessing a powerful charisma. He brought the name socialism to the political social scene when few or almost no one, at governmental level in a capitalist structure, made any mention of that name; much less after the downfall of the so called real socialism. With Marx and God in his mouth he launched an original XXI century socialism. There is still some dispute about the meaning and content of that concept. The neoliberal model was then, as now, on the throne of infamy. He marked his political ways with a very personal seal. Paternalistic, individualist and authoritarian ruler were the more common terms

[8] www.anarkismo.net
[9] fel-chile.org

> that were used for his actions. He created mysticism and hope for much of his people and in part for other peoples of Latin America. He energetically proclaimed, with certain contradictions, his anti-imperialism; his views on the Latin American "Patria Grande"; on independence, and on the "Popular Power" created primarily from the top down. His mark is evident in the political relations woven with various world governments. He implemented a policy of solidarity within Latin American countries and beyond, the sale of oil on favorable terms and other support to serve as examples for the recovery of industries that would be carried on by workers, like in our country. He also proposed and persevered in building new organizations throughout Latin America, asserting that this would result in more independence that would bring significant improvements to the living standards of the people.

Considering this description, our initial reaction was disbelief. Can we expect from a group that claims to be within the anarchism, this kind of indulgent description of a leader of a capitalist state, of military profession, that is always presented by himself (and by his followers) as a sort of leader with absolute wisdom and good by definition; to whom it only be possible to obey?

No doubt there are some critic descriptions of the character, but who wrote the text is careful not to present those critics as opinion of the FAU, instead those critics are assigned to unknown voices but, we must presume, would be from Chavez malicious opponents. The opposite happens with the positive adjectives that are delivered to the deceased at length and without any of the safeguards of writing, supporter apologies or ideological misgivings. To anyone who read this paragraph it is clear the general tone of praise. And it is clear that those who wrote it believe Chavez has a se-

sults in the statistical data (clear in the general sense, although confusing in the arithmetic); which he provided in a statement to the newspaper ULTIMAS NOTICIAS 7/6/10[13]:

> The capitalism (private) in Venezuela increased from 64.7% of GDP in 1998 to 70% in 2009, while the public sector fell down from 35% to 30%."The social economy is less than 2%.

And if, as official propaganda proclaims, the socialist condition is granted on account of original and big achievements in the collective welfare, the mirage melts when we examine thoroughly and with a critical eye the results declared by the government. This is verified by Rafael Uzcategui in the second part of his book: "Venezuela: Revolution as Spectacle"[14], book that continues it well documented approach on this subject in several subsequent articles published in EL LIBERTARIO, being the latest example: "Statistics, forgery and academic 'liberals'", included in the # 69 April-May 2013.

Another aspect of the Chavez government actions, is the blatant buying of support from the political bosses in our area (remember the suitcase of dollars to the campaign of the fashionable Cristina K. from Argentina, the Christmas donations to the murky Ortega of Nicaragua, or the handed of guerilla members to the Colombian government). All this is concealed with what the FAU document called as "policy of solidarity within Latin American countries," suggesting that they main beneficiaries of the ties with Venezuela have been the people and not the respective State and Capital (private or bureaucratic).

[13] www.revolucionaldia.org. Álvarez expounds on what is referred to these data in chap. 8 of his book Venezuela: Where is the production model going ?, Caracas, C.I. Miranda, 2009, accessible at es.scribd.com

[14] Published in 2010 as a co-edition of Libros de Anarres (Buenos Aires), LaMalatesta (Madrid), Tierra de Fuego (Tenerife), La Cucaracha Ilustrada and El Libertario (Caracas). Accessible in issuu.com

Ruling with the FAU and certain autocrats preferences

…"His mark is evident in the political relations woven with various world governments." What an elegant and restrained way to refer to Chavez's dealings with many disgraceful state authorities who have claimed to be anti-imperialist only to break the international isolation and / or for the necessity of petrodollars! Let's name some of those great friends who were closer to the now defunct: Iran's theocratic government, the bloody Assad family of Syria, a wide range of African dictators (eg: Zimbawbe' Mugabe, Jammeh of Gambia, Obiang of Equatorial Guinea or the deceased Gaddaffi); the grotesque Lukaschenko of Belarus, the Russian mafia boss Putin, and — how to forget! — The Castro brothers of Cuba. At this point and with regard to what we read on previous lines, the FAU seems to be seeing imperialism only when is Yankee imperialism, so you end up believing that everything that is said or brought against the "gringos" is a step forward, even at the expense of silencing abuses (by alleged tactical reasons), oppression and exploitation perpetrated by other imperialists and other ways of brutal ruling.

Very explicit in that first paragraph quoted repeatedly, and appearing again in other parts of their document, the FAU highlights the historical importance of Chavez on account of his demagogic and tricky use of terms like socialism, anti-imperialism and popular power. If this is true, would that excuse work too for other characters that use those same terms like the Castro dictatorship in Cuba, hereditary-militarist despotism that prevails in North-Korea, or the savage capitalism prevailing today in China or Vietnam?

Not to mention how far the management of Chavez reached in terms of the concrete construction of socialism in Venezuela. About which the economist Victor Alvarez, who has worked as a senior official and is a notorious Chavez supporter, summarizes the re-

cured place in the continental revolutionary pantheon and that he was a grand champion responsible for the resurgence of socialism, an anti-imperialist voice, and the face of the Latin American hopes.

Examining the panegyric

Lets consider the claims about which the document of the FAU trace that laudatory look, contained in the words quoted above and elsewhere in the text, which from our perspective are unsustainable and completely refutable by contrasting them with facts and real situations:

FAU begins with a list of what they claim to be "unique features" of the character: One of them would be "thought provoking", which certainly we have never seen in Venezuela, where Chavez, a tireless monologist, never agreed to participate in debates against its contenders in presidential elections (one of his excuses was made with a unforgettable phrase: " the eagle does not hunt flies"); another feature is the ability to be "creative", about of which we will deal later describing the most notorious monster he has created: "XXI century socialism."

In addition, they said about Chavez that he created "mysticism and hope for much of his people." What he fomented was demagoguery, messianic delusion and patronage, supported by the boom in oil revenues! Which by the way is not new in the nation's history, because in the past similar ways sustained the popular support received in most of the XX century by Accion Democratica, the political party whose most important leaders were Romulo Betancourt and Carlos Andres Perez. The difference with Chavez was that the wasted social democratic populism speech of AD was substituted by Marxist verbiage and "anti-imperialist" tones, but maintaining many similarities with respect to the language of the old party, with the same practices that defined him in the exercise of power, as well as the personal behavior of his government

members; to the point that it is usual in Venezuela to call them "red berets ADecos", which is hardly a compliment.

There is a tiresome insistence on the document, condensed in the following phrase to describe the Commander-President: "He energetically proclaimed, with some contradictions, his anti-imperialism". Appears to be of little importance, and not even worth describing these "certain contradictions"; as for the FAU the stunning aspect is the so-called anti-imperialistic roar. But it turns out there is overwhelming evidence that Chavez's verbal pyrotechnics was only a cover to conceal a shameful surrender of the country's resources to transnational capital, which is the biggest support and beneficiary of that imperialism against which he shouted so loud.

Examples abound in the hydrocarbon area, crucial in Venezuela[10]: The state (that use to have total control of these resources since 1976) gives to its foreign partners, through the private-public partnership, the ownership of up to 40% in the oil fields and 80% gas[11]; the special treatment and excellent profits that have enjoyed Yankee corporations like Chevron, Halliburton and Schlumberger; the agreements that compromise future growing amounts of Venezuelan production in order to pay debts owed to China in terms of usury; and the enormous expenditures with which the state oil company PDVSA benefit its competitors by buying them crude oil for refineries abroad, and gasoline for domestic market.

But there are more evidences in other areas:

The U.S.A as the leading exporter and importer in the Venezuelan market; the more than perfect business done by transnational

[10] Detailed information; "Petróleo y Venezuela: voces alternativas" www.nodo50.org

[11] There are explanations and insightful analysis on this subject in the book of Pablo Hernandez Parra "El Verdadero Golpe de PDVSA", Maracaibo, 2006. Much of this book, and other materials of the same author on the subject Venezuelan oil are available on www.soberania.org

speculative banks with the debt securities issued by Chavez government; the admission of treaties against double taxation that are a delight to foreign capital (where not only 17 international agreements remain valid from the previous government of Caldera, but we have signed over 19 more treaties); the submissive delivery of the mining drilling throughout Venezuela to China's company Citic Group; the massive purchases of arms to Spanish and Russian capitalists[12]; the more than lucrative contracts for construction companies as the Brazil's Odebrecht and Andrade Gutierrez or the Spanish Essentium; the growing presence of transnational companies to control profitable growing areas in the country like telecommunications: DirectTV, Digitel, Movistar; or insurance: Liberty Mutual, Mapfre, Zurich… we could continue with a long list of those "certain contradictions" that the FAU tactfully prefers to dismiss or silence, despite being facts of such importance that discover as pure hypocrisy the shout against imperialism.

For more details on these and other submissive commitments of the past, present and future of the "Bolivarian revolution" with transnational capital, from EL LIBERTARIO we shared a map entitled: "Venezuela, transnacionales, militarismo y resistencia", where many of these commitments are shown and described as well as the struggles and resistance they have faced. It can be seen in our # 63 (May-June 2011) and www.nodo50.org. Also, it should be consulted at the different informative websites available in Venezuela: periodicoellibertario.blogspot.com, www.soberania.org and www.laclase.info.

[12] The government of Venezuela was the first Latin American arms buyer in 2012, and the second for the period 2003–2012. Data to confirm this are on the websites of Stockholm International Peace Research Institute – SIPRI