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Venezuela

Hugo Chavez: “For a new United Socialist Party of Venezuela”

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We reprint here passages from Hugo Chavez' speech on 15 December to representatives from grass-roots election campaign bodies:

“So Hugo Chavez invites the country, his followers, all revolutionaries, socialists and patriots, men and women, the Venezuelan youth; I invite the workers, housewives, professionals and technicians, nationalist businessmen, I invite the indigenous peoples of this country, the young people of this country, the women of Venezuela, I invite them all to build a united political party...”

[<https://www.internationalviewpoint.org/IMG/jpg/chavistas.jpg>]

“Do you remember the huge effort we made in the Battle of Santa Inés? [1]”

“And after that I asked everyone not to wind down the UBEs, the Electoral Battle Units, and the Patrols. But they didn't listen to me and in almost all the country the effort was lost... They only kept going in a few places.”

“Well, now, we must not let the same thing happen again with this great victory of 3 December, and the battalions, the platoons and the squads [2]...”

“So the first thing I ask you to do - I'm sure you already have but go back and check it... update it; if you don't have a computer to hand, or a typewriter, then do it by hand - is make a register, do a census, of all the militants, activists, sympathisers, friends, and so on, in each area corresponding to each battalion, each platoon, each squad...”

“So, listen carefully all you commanders of (electoral) battalions, platoons and squads! I'm giving you these suggestions for action starting today do that we can build from the bottom up this United Socialist Party of Venezuela (PSUV), because these squads, platoons and battalions are going to be the basic national structure of this PSUV, its structure across the country.”

“How would we look before history if tomorrow or the day after we made a so-called party, a front, and it turned out that that here on this platform appeared... the same old faces as before, the same leaders of the parties, which had just got together and that was the party? No, that would be a terrible deception!”

“Of course all those who are close to me are free to choose. That even goes for my own brother Adán, for everyone. For the MVR (Fifth Republic Movement), the PPT (Fatherland for All), Podemos (For Social Democracy), the PCV (Communist Party), the MEP (People's Electoral Movement), the UPV (Venezuelan Popular Unity), for Uncle Tom Cobbley and all... I leave them all at liberty.”

“The parties that want to maintain their existence can maintain it, on their own; but of course they will have to leave my government.”

“With me I want just one party to govern, one party. Because every day there are more parties, a whole flock of parties.”

“Let us not divide the people.”

"Let's unite them more and more..."

"Look, in these books there is a part of the history. In this one by Marta Harnecker - which I recommend - we can see what happened with the parties of the left in Latin America, with one or two exceptions. They copied the model of the Bolshevik party; because of course the Bolshevik model was relatively successful in the birth of the Soviet Union in October 1917."

"As we know, there was a big debate that divided the revolutionary movement, between Bolsheviks and Mensheviks, and in the end... the party that managed to lead or encourage that people into the revolution was the Bolshevik Party of Vladimir Ilyich Lenin."

"Later this suffered a deviation, that was the Stalinist deviation that Lenin was unable to avoid because he was ill and he died very young. Lenin died within a very few years and that ended up being an anti-democratic party and that marvellous slogan which said: "All power to the soviets!" ended up being "All power to the party!", and that deformed, in my modest opinion, almost from the beginning the socialist revolution that gave birth to the Soviet Union - and just look at the result 70 years later..."

"When the Soviet Union collapsed, what worker came out to defend (this process)? This was supposed to be the regime or the system of the workers, and the workers never came out to defend it. Pretty strange, huh? And this happened because it was taken over by an elite, it became a regime of the elite that could not build socialism. We here are going to build Venezuelan socialism, the Venezuelan socialist model."

"For this new era we need to create the United Socialist Party of Venezuela. That's what I propose. Let all these currents of the Venezuelan left come and help build this from below. That's why we need to carry out a census of all the squads, platoons and battalions."

"You know that from the beginning we have to be very strict on the question of morality, of ethics, and this depends on you because you are the ones who know the people in your community. There must be no room here for thieves or those involved in corruption..."

"This United Socialist Party will of course be the most democratic party in Venezuelan history. That's right, the most democratic; it'll be opened up for discussion, across the board."

"The grass-roots members will elect genuine leaders. That's why you need those registers. We've had enough of candidates being selected just by someone pointing a finger at them. [3] And often of course - although not so much at local or state level - it's been my finger that's done the pointing. Certainly, I've always tried to be fair, when I've been asked to make decisions about candidates."

"But it's better if they come from the bottom up, from the grassroots. Let it be the people who take the decisions, just as it has been written in this Constitution here for the last seven years, but which we have never fulfilled. It's high time we did. The time has arrived..."

"Now the party should not be born with electoral aims - even though it will be able to engage in electoral battles like those we have already fought. The party needs to go beyond the purely electoral, and that's why this is a good time for it to be born, when we have no elections coming up in the immediate future. This [is the] Socialist Party..., and in fact I would say that from the bottom up we should call them socialist battalions, socialist platoons, socialist squads."

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“We have to encourage and engage in the battle of ideas. It's no longer the electoral battle, though no doubt we'll have to engage that too in the coming years. This is the battle of ideas over the socialist project, and for this all of you need to study a lot. You need to study a lot, read a lot, discuss a lot, organise round tables, organise square tables, organise meetings of the socialist squads, of the socialist platoons. Yes, read! And those of us in the command posts who have been promoting this process so far, and who will continue to promote it, we have to spread a lot of information, leaflets and so on.”

“Mariategui, the great Peruvian thinker... of the early 20th century, said that our socialism had to be an heroic effort of construction...”

“And one of the fundamental roots of our socialist project, according to Mariategui, and I repeat it here today - and not because he said it but because I am convinced by seeing it so often confirmed in reality; indeed I saw it today when I gave out the awards to our indigenous brothers all the way from Capanaparo, from Tronador, from Barranco Yopal, and there from the Amacuro Delta, where we won almost 100 percent of the vote, so all the more reason for me to believe it - these indigenous peoples are bearers of the socialist seed in our land, in our nation, in our America.”

“They lived in socialism for centuries. And still if you go and visit our brothers the Kuivas, where I won 100 percent of the vote, in one of the many municipalities where I won 100 percent of the vote in CarabalÃ-, there on the banks of the Capanaparo they are still living in socialism today...”

“And so we have to socialize the land, that is another aspect, we cannot just talk about socialist morality...”

“Transforming the economic model is fundamental if we want to build true socialism. So we have to socialize the economy, the system of production, create a genuinely new system - and we're working hard at this, but of course we are only beginning to visualise the way forward, hence the Zamoran funds [\[4\]](#) and the Nuclei of Endogenous Development...”

[\[1\]](#) The campaign to win the Recall Referendum in August 2004.

[\[2\]](#) The names given to the different levels of grass-roots organisation that grew up to organise the 2006 election campaign.

[\[3\]](#) “Dedocracia”.

[\[4\]](#) For land reform.