

“Revolutionaries have to fight to change the system”



Heryck Rangel is a national leader of the United Socialist Party of Venezuela youth organisation, the PSUV-J. He toured Australian campuses in August 2009, speaking at meetings organised by Cuba-Venezuela Solidarity Clubs. “Australians are like koalas”, he said. “It’s time to wake up and join the revolution that is taking place in Venezuela and Cuba!” Heryck presented each participant in the Australian Cuba-Venezuela Revolutionary Youth and Student Tour with a signed letter of thanks for our solidarity with Venezuela’s Bolivarian Revolution.



Caracas, Venezuela
July 14, 2010

Dear Comrades,

I wanted to write to you these lines of joy to see the revolutionary commitment that has brought you to visit our country and our people, who share and live the Bolivarian Revolution.

After two hundred years of struggles and dreams, today Venezuela is living one of the most important moments in our history. We are fighting for our second independence; we are building a new homeland. I firmly believe that sooner rather than later Australia will lead a revolution, a revolution considered necessary in order to ensure the greatest possible happiness for everyone.

Today, when humanity is living through one of the greatest economic crises in its history, revolutionaries have to fight harder to change the system. Therefore, you are challenged to tell the truth to the people of Australia about what is happening here in Venezuela, and you also have the challenge of working to sprout a new society.

On behalf of President Hugo Chavez, Commander in Chief and leader of the Bolivarian Revolution; Comrade Hector Rodriguez, National Youth Coordinator of the PSUV, on my own behalf and that of the millions of men and women who strive to build the socialist homeland, we thank you for taking some time out of your lives to live this experience.

Heryck Rannyer Rangel Hernández

Militant of the PSUV Youth



Hugo Chavez

How can we change the system?

“The way they did it in Cuba. That’s the way. The same way we are doing it in Venezuela: giving power to the people and taking it away from the economic elites. You can only do that through a revolution.”



Myth 1: Chavez is a dictator

We put this to the test in our lab, Venezuelan society. The evidence is clear: Hugo Chavez has won every presidential election since he was first elected in 1999. His socialist movement has also won the majority of votes and constituencies in elections for state governors and local mayors. Chavez narrowly lost a referendum on constitutional changes in 2007 — his sole electoral defeat at the national level since 1999 — and accepted the result.

There was a dictator in Venezuela: Pedro Carmona, head of Venezuela’s business council, who ruled Venezuela for less than 48 hours following a US-backed military coup against the elected Chavez government in April 2002. Chavez’s

supporters overthrew this short-lived dictatorship in a popular revolution that restored Chavez to the presidency. We found that most of the mass media is still in the hands of Venezuela’s capitalist elite, who use their press freedom to spew forth a torrent of lies aimed at sowing confusion and fomenting destabilisation.

Yet despite this media terrorism by the corporate rich, Venezuela is developing a vibrant socialist democracy because the revolution has awakened a thirst for political participation reminiscent of the words of Vladimir Lenin, a leader of the 1917 Russian Revolution: “Revolutions are a festival of the oppressed”.

Verdict: **BUSTED!**

Myth 2: Cuba is a dictatorship

Capitalist governments take many forms, from fascism to parliamentary democracy. But the essence of capitalism is the very opposite of democracy, if democracy means “the rule of the common people”. Under capitalism, wealth and power are concentrated in the hands of a tiny elite, the capitalist class. Capitalism systematically excludes the vast majority of people, those who create society’s wealth, from participation in the key decisions that affect our lives. Governments come and go, but the most important decisions are made in the unelected and unaccountable corporate boardrooms, or by politicians that serve them. Democracy is reduced to ticking a ballot paper once every few years. There’s no economic democracy: factories and offices are despotisms.

By contrast, Cuba’s socialist constitution enshrines social ownership of the key economic resources and the right to food, housing, free health care and education, sports and culture. There are no great differences in wealth as in capitalist societies. Homelessness is almost unheard of, despite an acute housing shortage. Children play in the streets late at night without fear of strangers. Cuba, with about one-tenth the GDP per capita of the US, has a lower

infant mortality rate and a life expectancy of 77 years, just one year behind the US. Such high indices of social development flow from an economic and political system in which the market is subordinated to planning to meet social needs.

Cuba’s socialist democracy is based on participation rather than exclusion. It rests on four pillars: Cuba’s system of government, known as People’s Power; the mass organisations of workers, farmers, women, students, neighbourhoods and other constituencies; an armed forces, arising out of a popular revolution, that has never been used against the people; and the guiding role of the Cuban Communist Party, a selective organisation of the most committed revolutionaries.

People’s Power is based in local communities, where neighbours nominate candidates for election as delegates; the Communist Party does not nominate. Since electoral advertising is banned, candidates are elected on their merits. Delegates and can be recalled at any time by their constituencies. Disagreeing with the socialist government is not a crime. But accepting bribes from US agents to create the appearance of a pro-capitalist opposition movement — where none exists — is considered subversion. Verdict: **BUSTED!**