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Venezuela

The Party of Revolution and Socialism

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Stalin Perez Borges, trade union leader and long-standing Trotskyist militant, is at the heart of the revolutionary process in Venezuela. He is one of the four "national coordinators" of the new - and today majority - trade union confederation, the UNT. He is also a member of the "initiating committee" of a new party that is being formed, the Party of Revolution and Socialism.

The following interview, conducted by Fabrice Thomas and Yannick Lacoste, was first published in the September 22nd, 2005 issue of Rouge, weekly paper of the LCR (French section of the Fourth International).

Can you give us your analysis of the present stage of the process that is underway in Venezuela?

Stalin Perez Borges: The revolutionary process is continuing, but there are contradictions at work and it is being undermined by corruption and inefficiency. In the recent elections for municipal and neighbourhood councils, there were clashes between the rank and file of the 'Chavist' parties and sections of the party leaderships, which bureaucratically imposed their candidates.

For the moment, the confrontation within the revolutionary process with these conservative bureaucratic governmental sectors is essentially verbal. But we think that it can in the future become much sharper and lead, especially if the confrontation with imperialism becomes more tense, to a considerable deepening of the revolutionary situation.

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

Stalin Peres Borges at May Day rally

What is the situation on the trade union level?

With the crises of the coup d'etat against Chavez in April 2002, the oil blockade by the bosses at the end of 2002 and the beginning of 2003 and the open treason of the old confederation, the CTV, the workers understood the need to take their trade union organizations into their own hands.

It is on the basis of this taking place, on a nationwide scale, that anew trade union confederation, the National Workers' Union (UNT) was established. The UNT has been considerably strengthened. It is now the confederation which comprises the majority of trade union organizations in the country.

It is difficult for the moment to give a figure for its real strength, but we can say that we have more than a million members and that the immense majority of unions are affiliated to the UNT. There are four tendencies. We are waiting for the next congress to know whether the bureaucratic sector - a reformist current which includes many corrupt and incompetent leaders - has the majority.

There is also the current of the "Bolivarian Workers' Force", which is close to the government and which is also a reformist current. And then there is the "classist current", many of whose cadres have been involved in the recent formation of the Party of Revolution and Socialism (PRS).

Can you tell us a bit more about the PRS?

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The formation of the PRS is a consequence of this battle in the UNT. In most of the meetings that were organized across the country, the majority of those who intervened demanded the formation of a force distinct from those which today support Chavez, that is to say the MVR, the PPT, Podemos, the Communist Party and some others.

Seeing this need, we decided to establish the PRS. We think that in the present situation the workers need a political organization which defends their interests, which is for class independence and which has a well-defined anti-imperialist project.

Within our trade union current, some people reproach us for having this project. We have to carry out both tasks; build the UNT as a trade union confederation that is independent of political parties and from the government, and build a political party for the workers.

The discussion around the formation of the PRS is at present being conducted by five distinct political groups. Other organizations will be able to broaden out our political platform, and we hope to be able to announce the official launching of the PRS at the beginning of next year. We want to plan a founding congress. We already have a paper, *Opcion socialista* ("Socialist Option").

This project has involved us in organizing a number of events: on July 9, we held a national meeting which brought together 450 people in Caracas. We have organized and will be organizing other meetings throughout the country to proclaim the need for a new organization. We have produced a political platform to serve as a basis for discussion. [1]

What difference is there between the PRS and the official Chavist parties that exist at present?

The organizations in the leadership of the process are reformist, Stalinist or ultra-left, and they do not help to fight against the bureaucratic character of the state.

It is necessary to ensure the transformation that the popular masses are demanding, which requires greater participation by ordinary people. The population has acquired - this is a characteristic of the process - a certain amount of power. It is no longer possible for either leaders, ministers or bosses to impose anything on them.

This combat against bureaucracy, against corruption and against reformism is beginning to show results that are significant for the future of the country.

To take one example: co-management, in other words workers' control and direct participation by the workers in the running of a state enterprise or a private enterprise.

Some members of the government think that co-management is a risk, because enterprises that are strategically important, for example PVDSA (the nationalized oil company), must remain under the control of the country's leaders.

In reality, they are afraid of participation by ordinary people. We are working a lot on these experiences of workers' control. Giving power to ordinary people, that can be the leap forward that is needed for the pursuit of the revolutionary process.

Chavez says that we have to give people power,

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well, power is controlling your factory, controlling your community and controlling the people you elect. That's why we think that the PRS can have a strong influence on the workers. We are placing great hopes in the building of our organization, in order to enable Venezuela to advance rapidly from pure statements of intention to real anti-imperialist measures.

[1] We have published large extracts from this political document - [Political Declaration of the Party of Revolution and Socialism](#).