

Hugo Chávez backs his friend Muammar Gaddafi

Dave Stockton Thu, 03/03/2011 - 19:12

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Hugo Chávez has disgraced himself by refusing to condemn Gaddafi's murderous regime in Libya

Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez - who poses as a revolutionary socialist ? has irredeemably ruined his reputation in the eyes of working class and progressive forces worldwide. Chávez has refused to condemn Libyan dictator Muammar Gaddafi for his massacres of unarmed protesters, claiming to have ?no information? on events that to the rest of the world are as plain as day.

Chávez posted a message on Twitter last week saying "Long live Libya and its independence! Gaddafi faces a civil war!" He has also stated

?A campaign of lies is being spun together regarding Libya," adding, "I'm not going to condemn him. I'd be a coward to condemn someone who has been my friend." Let ye be judged by your friends.

As the saying goes tell me who your friends are and I will tell you who you are. No Comandante, you are a political coward for not condemning him for his crimes and not supporting the revolutionary people.

Indeed Chávez has phoned ?his friend? to offer to create a commission of ?friendly countries? to mediate between him and the revolutionary forces. An offer they have quite rightly refused with contempt. Gaddafi, his dreadful sons and his entourage of butchers deserves not mediation - nor even a bolt hole in Caracas if he flees - but summary justice from the people he has exploited and oppressed.

Chávez by this act has further exposed his politics as having more in common with the fake ?anti-imperialists? of the stripe of the Iran?s Mahmoud Ahmedinejad or Zimbabwe?s Robert Mugabe - who have shamelessly flattered one another in recent years. But to paint up Gaddafi as any sort of anti-imperialist when he has been in bed with Britain and France over the last decade - doing their every bidding is frankly ridiculous.

The mere fact that these countries are, or were for a time, targets of imperialist threats does not make them into regimes that must be defended against the revolutionary uprisings of their own people. Quite the opposite. A regime which exploits and oppresses its own people will not in the long run even be able to stand up against imperialism. Indeed by such brutal repression it sows illusions in imperialism amongst its own people and in the world generally.

Revolutionaries must at one and the same time support the Libyan revolutionaries and do all they can materially and morally to assist their overthrow of the tyrant and at the same time oppose any sort of attack on or invasion of Libya. A ?flight ban? is only a first step to an invasion and the horrific state of Iraq and Afghanistan are proof positive of what a ?humanitarian? or ?democracy-building? invasion by the USA or Britain and other EU states will bring.

In fact the Obama Administration seems quite weary of an intervention. US Defence Secretary Robert

Gates stated to Congress: "Let's just call a spade a spade-a no-fly zone begins with an attack on Libya, to destroy the air defences. That's the way you do a no-fly zone... It also requires more air planes than you would find on a single aircraft carrier." Secretary of State Hillary Clinton added: "We are a long way from determining a no-fly zone is needed for Libya."

However Republicans like John McCain are calling for intervention. Clearly they want to get their grubby paws on even more of Libya's oil - the largest reserves in Africa. Correctly the anti-Gaddafi forces have stated that there must be no invasion of Libya: they have seen what this invasion did for Iraq and Afghanistan.

Chávez moving to the right

Hugo Chávez disgraceful stance shows how totally unsuited he is to assume the mantle of leader of a new world socialist working class movement. Over a year ago he issued a call for the formation of a Fifth International and then did nothing about calling the conference he has talked of. Certainly now he has squandered any capitals he may have had. Indeed there are many signs that he has turned sharply rightwards in his own country too. 21st century socialism must have nothing to do with the barbaric regimes of Colonel Gaddafi and his "revolutionary committees" which for too long have repressed the people of Libya.

Perhaps then it is no accident that whilst Chávez has signed a pact with politicians from the bourgeois opposition and freed those arrested in the coups against him he has just condemned militant union leader Rubén González to seven and a half years in prison for participating in a two week strike over unpaid wages in July 2009. González has now been in jail already for more than a year and a half.

Chávez has also recently denounced strikes in public sector industries accusing them of "getting at me directly" and claiming that "stopping a state enterprise, is messing with the Head of State. He has also ordered the "intelligence agencies" to act against union leaders who promote strikes.

The working class worldwide should re-affirm the lesson included in the lyrics of the Internationale "no saviours from on high deliver." No presidents and military men, however left their populist and anti-imperialist rhetoric, will free the working class from political oppression or capitalist exploitation. As Marx said "The emancipation of the workers must be the task of the working class itself."

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