

# **Venezuela and the Bourgeois Reformists of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

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## **I. Introduction**

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The blunders of Nicolas Maduro, committed in the name of “Socialism of the Twenty-First Century” and the “Bolivarian Revolution”, are giving a bad image to the reformist parties which for more than a decade supported the experiment of building socialism without destroying the bourgeois bureaucratic-military machinery, without breaking the relations of dependence with imperialism, and without abolishing private property. The world capitalist economic crisis, from which Venezuela is not exempt, and the measures that the rulers of that country have taken to mitigate it, reveal the true bourgeois character of their “socialism” and have become a new failure for those who purport to reform the prevailing decrepit regime.

Taking advantage of the situation, the bourgeoisie and imperialism have launched a new offensive against socialism and communism.

Why this new reactionary crusade, if with the fall of Russian social-imperialism in 1989<sup>1</sup> they had already declared the death of communism, the end of history, and established the “Millennial Kingdom”<sup>2</sup> of capital?

As the communists have already declared, the rejoicing of the reactionaries was only fleeting, as what fell with the Berlin Wall in 1989 was only the socialist mask being worn by Russian imperialism. This collapse gave a brief respite to the Yankee and European imperialists, allowing them to extend their domains to the former socialist camp. Today, it is an irrefutable fact that imperialism finds itself once again shaken to its foundations by the economic crisis. This debacle has given rise to the rebirth of detachments of the proletariat that are waving the flags of revolution and communism, but also to “new” social theories that only aim to postpone the inevitable death of imperialism.

Once more, life has shown that socialism and communism are those dead that never die...and now those specters, no longer only haunting Europe as in the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century, frighten the reactionaries to the ends of the Earth. The time is ripe for the forces of the class-conscious proletariat to reintroduce to the whole world their concepts and aims, placing, in opposition to the lies, myths, and false socialism, their own convictions.

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<sup>1</sup> For the workers movement, it is clear that after 1958 the proletariat was overthrown in Russia and a new bourgeoisie, socialist in name but imperialist in deed, took the reins of power. The same occurred in China in 1976.

<sup>2</sup> Revelation 20:1-6, a reference to the thousand-year reign of Christ [Translator]

The idea that this is the best of all possible worlds doesn't require much effort to refute: the facts speak for themselves, and the barbarities of this hell of exploitation, the deepening economic crisis of global capitalism, the aggravation of the social crisis in every country, the inter-imperialist competition for raw materials, labor-power, and geopolitically strategic areas, the preparations for a new imperialist world war...in short, the extreme sharpening of all the contradictions of imperialism, of capitalism in its moribund stage, drive the proletariat and the people of the world towards social and political revolution.

But the task of refuting the lies spread by the imperialists, bourgeoisie, and reformists against socialism merits a greater effort.

What is this "Socialism of the Twenty-First Century", this new revolutionary theory to overcome the (according to their detractors) "failures" of the "old" socialism and communism of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin, and Mao Zedong? The same tired old "remedies" for capital, disguised as new theories, which Marx and Engels had identified since the *Communist Manifesto* in 1848.

What do the "new theorists and politicians" present as the panacea for "overcoming the old dogma" of socialist planned economies? State capitalism disguised as socialism.

What hides behind their lofty phrases and declarations against Yankee imperialism? Pro-imperialism disguised as anti-imperialism.

What do they have to show the world as the fruit of their efforts? Miserable social reforms disguised as Revolution.

What does the track record of rulers like Maduro in Venezuela reveal? A bourgeois dictatorship disguised as a people's democracy, a dictatorship of the bourgeois Bolivarian party, whose mask as a party of the poor slipped with their persecution of the poor at the border.

What do the facts show about the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela? The failure of "Socialism of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century" and the "Bolivarian Revolution", a new failure, not of any communism founded by Marx and Engels, but of the bourgeois utopians and reformers.

Such are the problems we will tackle in this polemic.

## **II. The Theoretical Roots of Socialism of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

*October 29, 2015 in Revolución Obrera #440 and November 7, 2015 in #441*

The credit goes to Heinz Dieterich for the brilliance of presenting a new alternative to capitalism in the face of the supposed failure of the socialism of Marx, Engels, Stalin, and Mao Zedong. However, the concept was first put forward in 1996 by Alexander V. Buzgalin, an intellectual of the bourgeoisie that usurped power in the former Soviet Union.

In his work, *Socialism of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, Dieterich further recognizes that he takes ideas from a “Pleiad” of intellectuals<sup>3</sup>, among which the German economist and historian Arno Peters stands out: “a veritable Renaissance genius he [sic] discovered the economic principle of the new socialist society, upon which hang all serious proposals for a non-capitalist system”<sup>4</sup>

Dieterich affirms that:

*“For more than two hundred years, from the French Revolution (1789) until now, mankind had two great evolutionary roads at its disposal: capitalism and historical socialism (actually existing). Neither has been able to solve the urgent problems of the humanity, among them: poverty, hunger, exploitation, economic, sexual and racial oppression; the destruction of nature and the absence of real participatory democracy. What characterizes our time is, therefore, the exhaustion of the social projects of the bourgeoisie and of the historical proletariat, and the opening of the global society toward a new civilization: Participative Democracy”*

From the start, Dieterich uses the trick of asserting a lie as the truth in order to later refute it: socialism as it actually existed in Russia until 1956 and in China until 1976 did manage to solve the “urgent problems of humanity.” Obviously Dieterich is not referring to this socialism, but instead to social-imperialism—imposed upon Russia after the defeat of the proletariat—and to its collapse in 1989. Dieterich, like the majority of the intelligentsia who have made common cause with the most recalcitrant enemies of the working class, has swallowed the imperialist and reactionary story that “socialism had failed”. Dieterich relies on that lie in order to give support to his “project”, above all negating the need for the violent destruction of the State of the exploiters and bourgeois democracy, and its replacement by the Dictatorship of the Proletariat, the direct democracy of the workers and peasants; in order to introduce, in the name of a supposed socialism, the old banner of the petty-bourgeoisie: “Participatory Democracy”.

He defines his proposal as “*participative democracy*”, “*new socialism*”, and a “*New Historical Project*” which he considers synonyms and which are based upon “*participative democracy*”, “*democratically planned equivalence economy*”, the “*non-class state*”, and, consequently, the “*rational-ethical-aesthetic man*”.

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<sup>3</sup> Carsten Stahmer (Germany), Enrique Dussel (Argentina), Nildo Ouriques (Brazil), Pedro Sotolongo (Cuba), Hugo Zemelman (Chile), Raimundo Franco (Cuba).

<sup>4</sup> All citations of this book are from the English translation by Paul Cockshott, available online here: [https://www.academia.edu/41348577/21st\\_Century\\_Socialism](https://www.academia.edu/41348577/21st_Century_Socialism) [Translator]

<b>Newton</b>	<b>Darwin</b>	<b>Marx</b>
Classical Physics	Classical Biology	Classical Socialism
17th Century	19th Century	19th Century
↓	↓	↓
Modern Physics	Modern Biology	Modern Socialism
↓	↓	↓
<b>Einstein</b> - relativity	<b>Crick , Watson</b> - DNA	?
<b>Planck</b> - quantum mechanics	<b>Mullis</b> - PCR	?
<b>Heisenberg</b> - uncertainty principle	Various <sup>10</sup> - Human Genome	?
<b>Gell Mann</b> - quark theory	<b>Wilmot</b> - mamalian cloning	?
		21st Century Socialism
		↓
		<b>Cockshott/Cottrell/Peters</b> -
		Equivalence Economics,
		Non-class state
		Participative Democracy

TABLE 2

*This table from Dieterich's book (pg. 43 of Cockshott translation) claims to show the "scientific" progression of "21<sup>st</sup> century socialism"*

What is novel about this "new theory" which presents itself as both socialist and the overcoming of the "old" socialism and communism?

With regard to its philosophical method, even when it expresses itself as a defender of materialism and dialectics, it is nothing more than metaphysics. To accept that in Russia there existed "real socialism" until the collapse of the social-imperialist bloc in 1989 is to ignore objective reality, to ignore the fact that the Russian proletariat was defeated by the bourgeoisie in 1956, and that this bourgeoisie and its regime became socialist in words but imperialist in deeds—social-imperialist. This is how the workers' movement correctly characterized the country in the 1960s, a fact amply demonstrated with the criminal and terrorist invasion of Afghanistan and the plundering of the countries that remained under its aegis as semi-colonies, in the case of Vietnam and Cuba, among others.

To say that in China there is an "actually existing socialism" is the height of stupidity, when the objective truth is that China is ruled by a reactionary and bloodthirsty bourgeoisie, the murderers of revolutionary Maoists in the 70s and butchers of the youth in Tiananmen Square at the end of the 80s, yet who still have the gall to call themselves "communists." And with a touching candor—touching because it is reactionary—Dieterich salutes the fact that this bourgeoisie has decided to encourage the discussion of his monstrosity: *"In an event of historical significance, the official newspaper of the Communist Party of China (CPC)—Renmin Ribao or People's Daily—introduced to the country's public debate on January 16<sup>th</sup>, the concept of Socialism of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century...The maturation of the process of "reform and opening" obliges us to direct national politics towards a superior form of scientific and democratic socialism, under penalty of falling into the model of Hong Kong and Taiwan...The opening of debate towards Socialism of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century by the only world power ruled by a Communist Party, appears as a breath of fresh air at a juncture of obstacles toward the evolution of global post-capitalism."*<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Heinz Dieterich, Jan. 23 2012 'La única alternativa disponible – Partido Comunista de China se abre al Socialismo del Siglo 21' "The only available alternative—Communist Party of China opens up to Socialism of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century", available online in Spanish at: <https://web.archive.org/web/20210801180319/https://www.desdeabajo.info/mundo/item/19039-partido-comunista-de-china-se-abre-al-socialismo-del-siglo-21.html>

Without a doubt, his salute to the reactionary Chinese bourgeoisie has its source in the scandalous failure of his hypotheses in the governments of Chávez, Morales, and Correa which according to him are a “*social-democratic alternative to neoliberalism. However, none of them have created any institutional structure that transcends the market economy or bourgeois parliamentarianism, nor will they.*”

Here are some of the pearls of “genius” from those who claim to be the carriers of the “only scientific model of a post-capitalist society that exists today.”

In spite of the allusions to Marx and to the categories of economic science, the economic theories that Dieterich borrows from Arno Peters are neither new nor scientific, but are taken directly from Aristotle and his predecessor Thales of Miletus. The latter define ‘chrematistics’ as the art of enrichment through trade and usury, and considered these activities as going against human nature and separated from the economy. Thus, for the “geniuses” of Socialism of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, the secret of capitalist exploitation is not in production but rather in circulation, in commerce and usury, which they judge as immoral: “*As distinct from economic activity, there exists chrematistic (enrichment) activity based on trade and moneylending whose sole objective is monetary profit. It diverts the economy from its free development and prevents it from carrying out its true task...the chrematistic search for profit knows no bounds. It is insatiable, unnatural and hostile to life...Chrematistic [sic] is the ultimate cause of trade, robbery and war.*”<sup>6</sup>

And the solution of Socialism of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century?

“*Labour time alone can then determine wages, that means the wage for work done is the same, independent of age, sex, marital status, skin color, citizenship, the nature of the work, of physical effort, of background, of demand, skill, experience, personal dedication, independent also of the weight of the work and health risks - in short: The wage corresponds directly and absolutely to time worked. Prices correspond to values, and they contain nothing other than the full value of the work embodied in goods. The economic cycle locks into [sic] values instead of prices. The exploitation of people by their fellows (= acquisition of other’s labour products that exceed the value of one’s own work) is over, each human being gets the full value they put into goods or services.*”

This “new” theory is, in the first place, true gibberish that only the authors understand, since under capitalism wages also “correspond directly and absolutely to time worked” which the worker contracts with the capitalist. The capitalist doesn’t “rob” the surplus value as Dieterich claims in his work, but rather pays the worker for the contracted working day. The catch is that in the course of the working day, the worker covers their own wage (necessary labor-time) which they take home, and on top of this creates surplus value (surplus labor-time) which stays with the capitalist. This is what capitalist exploitation consists of.

Secondly, as to whether the worker will “*get the full value they put into goods or services*”, which is now presented as a novelty and the last cry of “truly scientific socialism”, is nothing more than an empty phrase taken from the old formula of Ferdinand Lassalle: “*...the proceeds of*

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<sup>6</sup> Dieterich, *21<sup>st</sup> Century Socialism*

*labor belong undiminished with equal right to all members of society... The emancipation of labor demands the promotion of the instruments of labor to the common property of society and the co-operative regulation of the total labor, with a fair distribution of the proceeds of labor.”* This was the formula adopted in the Program of the Socialist Workers’ Party of Germany at the Gotha Congress, and severely criticized by Marx and Engels in 1875, **more than 100 years ago!** It was criticized not only for being illusory, but for being reactionary, since it is impossible to give to each member of society the “*undiminished proceeds of labor*”—according to Lassalle—or “*the full value that they put in*”(Dieterich), nor can “*wages correspond directly and absolutely to time worked*”—according to Peters and Dieterich—since a part of the value created by labor goes to “*the general costs of administration not belonging to production*”; another part to “*the common satisfaction of collective needs*” such as daycares, schools, universities, hospitals, recreation sites, defense, etc.; another part goes to “*funds for those unable to work*” and, finally, another part to expand production in order to prevent society from perishing.<sup>7</sup>

Finally, Marx said that under socialism there would still be exchange of equivalents: “*The right of the producers is proportional to the labor they supply; the equality consists in the fact that measurement is made with an equal standard, labor.*” He shows that under socialism, this exchange of equivalents remains bourgeois right, and that only “*In a higher phase of communist society, after the enslaving subordination of the individual to the division of labor, and therewith also the antithesis between mental and physical labor, has vanished; after labor has become not only a means of life but life's prime want; after the productive forces have also increased with the all-around development of the individual, and all the springs of co-operative wealth flow more abundantly – only then can the narrow horizon of bourgeois right be crossed in its entirety and society inscribe on its banners: From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs!*”

In other words, the idea that all members of society will receive the “undiminished proceeds of labor” as Lassalle believed, or that “each human being gets the full value they put into goods or services” as the ignorant 21<sup>st</sup> Century socialists boasted, only fit in the imagination of utopians. Marx described this “brilliance” of the petty-bourgeois democrats and vulgar socialists as ideological, legal, or other sorts of nonsense.

And if in the terrain of economics, Dieterich cannot offer anything more than absurdities, in the political terrain he cannot go beyond the old remedies that attempt to refurbish bourgeois democracy, whose center is the individual, the ethical, philosophical citizen, existing above classes:

*“The one significant historical contribution made by the bourgeoisie in the advance toward a just society, is the Rule of Law, with its key elements: constitution, separation of power and formal rights. All these measures are anti-absolutist. Their intention is to politically regulate the power relationship between state Leviathan and citizen, by a negative demarcation of the powers of the former. Since the problem of the excessive power of the State will exist so long as there are class societies, the negation of formal democracy can only benefit the State and the power elite, not the citizen. Therefore, the logical conclusion is: formal democratic rights are an*

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<sup>7</sup> All quotes from Critique of the Gotha Programme (1875) available online at: <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1875/gotha/ch01.htm> [Translator]

*indispensable, necessary, but not sufficient, condition, for future democratic society; they should not be replaced, but be enlarged in the direction of social and participative rights...*

*To return him the right of to live and to evolve worthily, the humanity has to recover to the global society and to make it his. The only means that we have to achieve this objective is the Participative Democracy (DP)...*

*Which will generate, miraculously, “a new public authority, one that will prioritize public interests and which, by losing its class functions will lose its repressive nature. The notion of the representativeness, which in our bourgeois plutocracy is essentially demagogic, it [sic] will then have recovered a real political meaning, in those public functions that require such representation.”<sup>8</sup>*

In summary, patches on the old and rotten state machinery of the exploiters, which Dieterich recognizes as an instrument of domination and exploitation of the “elite global oligarchy”, but which he naively believes can possibly be placed above classes and class interests to serve society in general: the joint action of all citizens through universal suffrage is enough, and not the revolutionary action or the exercise of direct power by the armed masses, as the workers’ movement learned from the experiences of the Paris Commune in 1871, the Soviets in the early years of the USSR, and the People’s Communes in the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution in China in 1966.

Who are the protagonists of Socialism of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century?

*“This subject emancipador [sic] is conformed [sic] by the community of victims of the neoliberal capitalism and of all those that are solidary [sic] with her [sic]. The labor class it [sic] will continue being a fundamental posse inside this community of victims, but it won’t probably constitute their force hegemónica [sic]. The community of victims is multicultural, pluriétnica, policlasista, [sic] of both goods [sic] and global, and it embraces to [sic] all those that coincide in the necessity to thoroughly democratize the economy, the politics, the culture and the coercion systems physics [sic] of the world society.”<sup>9</sup>*

And who leads them?

Dieterich does not respond openly, but in the course of his work it is obvious that the leading role will be played by the bourgeois parties, of the Bolivarian type in Venezuela, of Alianza País in Ecuador, and even fascists such as the fake “Communist” Party of China, advised by the “Pleiad” of intellectuals of the Dieterich type: “...those subjects potentially democratizadores

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<sup>8</sup> Dieterich, Ibid. (English)

<sup>9</sup> This is how the paragraph appears in the original English translation. A more complete and grammatically consistent translation of this paragraph: “This emancipatory subject is formed by the community of victims of neoliberal capitalism and all those in solidarity with them. The working class will continue to be a fundamental detachment within this community of victims, but probably will not constitute a hegemonic force. The community of victims is multi-cultural, multi-ethnic, multi-class, of both genders, and global, and it embraces all those who agree on the need to thoroughly democratize the economy, politics, culture, and the systems of physical coercion of the world society.” [Translator]

*[sic] of the global society - precarious sectors, the natives, the women, the critical intellectuals, the progressive Christian, the independent ONGs, etc. - they won't accept them [sic] to be imposed the leadership of a sociopolitical entity whose genuineness be not derived of their practice libertadora. [sic]"*<sup>10</sup>

Overall, Dieterich does not go beyond the petty-bourgeois daydreams criticized by Marx and Engels as far back as the *Communist Manifesto* in 1848, repeating as a comedy the tragedy of the petty-bourgeois socialists of that epoch in Germany, ending by defending “*not true requirements, but the requirements of Truth; not the interests of the proletariat, but the interests of Human Nature, of Man in general, who belongs to no class, has no reality, who exists only in the misty realm of philosophical fantasy...*”<sup>11</sup> accompanied by the philanthropy of those bourgeois who have always intended to remedy the ills of capitalism without doing away with it, and who have always been concerned with improving the lot of the workers with small administrative reforms which, according to Marx and Engels, end up serving, in the majority of cases, only to “*lessen the cost, and simplify the administrative work, of bourgeois government.*”

Even so, in spite of the absurdities of Socialism of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, Dieterich has become the oracle of Chávez, Correa, Morales... catapulting him as the social genius of our time.

Dieterich provided those rulers with an action plan in the fields of economics and politics, which has allowed the bourgeoisie of the region to position Brazil among the countries which is “leaving behind backwardness”; to build an unstable regional bloc prone to Russian and Chinese imperialism, in dispute with the hegemony of American imperialism but without breaking with it, and carrying out some minor social reforms in education, health, housing...

Nevertheless, a few years were enough for reality to show the utopianism of his theories, of attempting to fight capitalist-imperialism with the same weapons that sustain it. In 2007 Dieterich left his role in the Venezuelan government, not convinced that his remedies to the system could only yield what they did, and instead blaming their failure on the inconsistencies of his ruling friends, although all they did was put his ideas into practice, as we shall see later.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> A more complete translation: “*Those potentially democratizing subjects of the global society—precarious sectors, indigenous peoples, women, critical intellectuals, progressive Christians, independent NGOs, etc.—will not accept a leadership of a sociopolitical entity imposed upon them, whose legitimacy does not derive from their liberatory praxis.*” [Translator]

<sup>11</sup> The Communist Manifesto, Marx & Engels (1848). Available online:

<https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1848/communist-manifesto/ch03.htm>

<sup>12</sup> Dieterich explains in this archived online post the reasons for his break with Chávez and his view of the Venezuelan situation at the time:

<https://web.archive.org/web/20111225124652/http://old.kaosenlared.net/noticia/dia-de-ruptura-con-hugo-chavez> He quotes himself as saying in 2007: “*Aquí no hay socialismo en el sentido histórico del término. Lo que se hace es crear las condiciones para una sociedad más justa [...] Venezuela estaba destruida por una mala administración y la estrategia que escoge el Presidente Chávez para reconstruirla es la misma que usó Alemania después de su destrucción, en 1945: la economía social de mercado [...] El socialismo del siglo XXI sería la transición de lo actual hacia una economía que no será para el crecimiento individual [...] La idea sería volver [...] a la economía de equivalencias, democráticamente planeada por los ciudadanos, que no opera sobre los precios sino sobre el valor (el tiempo invertido en el producto) [...]*” English: “*There is no socialism here in the historical sense of the term. What is being done is creating the conditions for a more just society... Venezuela was destroyed by a bad administration and the strategy President Chavez chose to rebuild it is the same that Germany used after its*



For this reason, it is no surprise that Dieterich has spoken, several years ago, about the red-tape of his pupils:

*“Rafael Correa's latest comments on the market economy, the economic model assimilated by Ollanta Humala and the political regression of Hugo Chávez, leave no doubt that the New Criollo Political Class (NCPC) has given up any claim of attempting to create a post-capitalist economy. All center-left governments in Latin America, regardless of their origin—civil or armed, indigenous or mestizo, agrarian or industrial—have adopted the model of bourgeois developmentalism, which Lula once defined as "the market with a heart".”<sup>13</sup>*

And later on: *“Since the arrival of Bolivarianism to power (1999) in Venezuela, there has never been any socialist economic measure: neither Socialism of the 20th Century, nor Socialism of the 21st Century. The political-economic model developed by Hugo Chávez after 2003, was never more than a progressive developmentalism, similar to the first government of General Perón. Exhausted already in 2010, he entered the second stage of Perón: the growing erosion and the road to the abyss. The Guayana Socialist Plan, the Workers' Control, the Communes – the greatest nonsense of the socialist Rasputins of Miraflores (Marta Harnecker et al) – are nothing more than chimeras in a capitalist market economy (chrematistic) like the Venezuelan one. Now this whole fantasy implodes...*

*“The policy of Maduro and Cabello is due to the surrealist attempt to prolong the political-economic model of Hugo Chávez, already structurally exhausted in 2010. As the model had nothing to do with socialism, the Comandante never had any intention of destroying the bourgeoisie. He just wanted them to accept the legality of his rule. The same with Perón, Correa, Evo et al. Therefore, in the face of any serious conflict, each gave in and sacrificed his lieutenants (Samán, Vielma Mora, etc.).”<sup>14</sup>*

But like all misunderstood geniuses, some months before, in April of [2013], he had said to the BBC about Nicolás Maduro: *“He is evolving his own profile. He maintains the pattern of a commander, but he’s gaining a stature of his own. He’ll be a good president, lacking the requirements of a Chávez or Fidel, but he’s going to be because the system is structured. There will not be a catastrophe.”<sup>15</sup>*

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*destruction in 1945: the social market economy... Socialism of the 21st century would be the transition from what exists towards an economy that is not for individual growth... It would be a return... to an economy of equivalents democratically planned by its citizens, which does not operate around prices, but instead around value (the time invested in the product).” [Translator]*

<sup>13</sup> Heinz Dieterich, Aug. 8 2011, “Fin del Socialismo estatal en América Latina” “End of state socialism in Latin America” Available online in Spanish at:  
<https://web.archive.org/web/20240805140014/https://www.desdeabajo.info/actualidad/internacional/item/fin-del-socialismo-estatal-en-america-latina.html>

<sup>14</sup> Heinz Dieterich Oct. 14 2013, “Sólo un radical cambio del modelo económico y del gabinete, salvará al gobierno venezolano.” Available online at:  
<http://web.archive.org/web/20150316114433/https://lalineadefuego.info/2013/10/18/solo-un-radical-cambio-del-modelo-economico-y-del-gabinete-salvara-al-gobierno-venezolano-por-heinz-dieterich/>

<sup>15</sup> BBC, April 2013 “El hombre que imaginó el "socialismo del siglo XXI" “The man who imagined “socialism of the 21<sup>st</sup> century” Available online:

And this is where the “novel” “actually existing scientific” socialist theory ends, in sheer misery.

In conclusion:

As we have stated since the beginning, Socialism of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century doesn't have anything in common with socialism and communism, nor does it supersede the theories of the teachers of the proletariat, Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin, and Mao Zedong.

Socialism of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century is a patchwork quilt of borrowed theories from Aristotle, passing through the utopian socialists of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the “Austro-Marxists” of the 1970s, until reaching the Trotskyite and revisionist theories of Russian social-imperialism.

And if Dieterich himself has unambiguously expressed that his Socialism of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century does not exist in Latin America, it is pure stubbornness to continue affirming the contrary, like some of the friends of the rulers of Venezuela, Ecuador, and Bolivia do. This grave mistake leads, independently of anyone's will, towards becoming an accomplice to the bourgeoisie and imperialism, those who, “actually existing”, sow illusions with lies and utopias.

### III. The Practical Results of Socialism of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

#### State Capitalism Disguised as Socialism

March 6, 2016 in *Revolución Obrera* #446

Dieterich should have no reason to complain about his pupils in Latin America because he himself endowed them with a “*Latin American Transitional Program Towards a New Socialism*”<sup>16</sup>, arguing that “*The Bolivarian national and regional project is the only immediate hope for change. The nucleus of this Great Fatherland*<sup>17</sup> *can only be Mercosur*<sup>18</sup>, which is the only regional economic space not controlled directly by Washington, with incipient structures of a regional proto-State. This regional bloc is, of course, a capitalist entity, just like the Great Fatherland laid out by the Liberator Simón Bolívar...”

He adds that “*The programs of national change which will be carried out in coordination with the regional Latin American bloc, are the immediate answer to the current Latin American situation. The strategic horizon of Our America, like that of all humanity, is participative*

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[https://www.bbc.com/mundo/noticias/2013/04/130412\\_venezuela\\_mexico\\_heinz\\_dieterich\\_chavez\\_socialismo\\_siglo\\_xxi\\_icps](https://www.bbc.com/mundo/noticias/2013/04/130412_venezuela_mexico_heinz_dieterich_chavez_socialismo_siglo_xxi_icps)

<sup>16</sup> Cockshott's translation English appears to be only partial, as it does not include the first or final two chapters included in the Spanish version, one of which is " Programa de transición latinoamericana al nuevo socialismo" available here: <https://www.rebelion.org/docs/121968.pdf> English translations from those chapters were translated by ourselves [Translator]

<sup>17</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Patria\\_Grande](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Patria_Grande) [Translator]

<sup>18</sup> A South American trade bloc and customs union with aim of creating a common market and promoting free trade between members: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mercosur> [Translator]

*democracy, or new socialism. Upon integrating this third programmatic level of change in the national and regional struggle, the road towards the “kingdom of liberty” opens up, and avoids getting bogged down in day-to-day politics.”*<sup>19</sup>

Removing the empty words, in short, he is referring to creating a strong bloc of Latin American capitalists, “independent” of Yankee imperialism, in order to compete with the other blocs of imperialist power and in this way advance towards “truly scientific socialism.”

The argument for the capitalist formula with “socialist” etiquette is the underdevelopment of Latin America, and because *“not only does a Latin American socialist program rooted in the masses not exist, but there are no social subjects organized and with the operational capacity to carry out such a program...”*

Up until this point, it can be said that “truly existing scientific socialism” only exists in Dieterich’s head, and what remains for its practical attainment is the *“strategy of protectionist state capitalism [which] has to be achieved with three criteria in order to be successful: 1. It must be national-regional; 2. It must base itself internally in the four poles of development; and 3. It must resolve the problem of the financialization of the expanding accumulation of capital.”*

The “four poles, or structural columns, of development” that Dieterich refers to are: *“1. The small and medium-sized enterprises; 2. The national transnational corporations; 3. Cooperatives; and 4. Strategic state enterprises. This truth should constitute the starting point of all the theory and economic planning in Latin America.”*<sup>20</sup>

Thus, the program to develop **protectionist state capitalism**, which is *actually existing* in “Socialism of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century”, consists of: Firstly, giving breadcrumbs to the petty-bourgeoisie in order to develop small and medium enterprises and some cooperatives, thus buying their support for the program of the big bourgeoisie—this is a dirty trick, disguised with the lie that these such enterprises have a great capacity to innovate, create employment, and conquer international markets. Secondly, without breaking the existing ties with imperialism, the program urges the Latin American bourgeoisie create its own “Regional Power Bloc”, starting with Mercosur, further creating large regional imperialist corporations, starting with the exploitation of petroleum, medicine, aeronautics, etc., which will allow them to compete with the “transnational corporations” and the other regional power blocs.

Part of that program has already been proposed by the governments of Brazil and Venezuela before Dieterich; the only new thing done by this “genius” was to give it a set of laws and a justification, making the ruling classes see the power they have and are not using against imperialism: *“Only when the important parties and social movements of Latin America dare to suggest the use of the three powers for the construction of a Regional Power Bloc built upon protectionist state capitalism—like the European Union and United States—and with integral elements of post-capitalist Participative Democracy, will there be the possibility of improving the living conditions of the majorities in Latin America. Anything else is a chimera.”*

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<sup>19</sup> Dieterich, Ibid. (Spanish)

<sup>20</sup> Dieterich, Ibid. (Spanish)

As far as the results go, although the failure is now well-known and admitted by almost everyone, they deserve some attention—above all in the banking system, since it deals with finance capital, the king of capital in the imperialist epoch, where the parasitism of capitalism in general stands out in greater relief as a sign of its decadence and decay, from which Dieterich's recipes offer no escape.

In Venezuela, according to SOFTline Consultors, in their report in January 2015 on the Venezuelan financial system, based on financial statements of the 32 institutions that make up that system (24 universal banks, 4 commercial banks, and 4 development banks, not including the consolidated balances of offices and branches abroad) leaves no doubts:

*“The Net Result (Profit) for the first month of 2015 was Bs. 8,224 million for the total of the Venezuelan Financial System. When compared with January 2014, it registers a growth of Bs. 2,926 million (55.23%) ... In Private Banking, there was an increase of Bs. 60,160 million (4.08%) compared to the previous month, while total deposits in Public Banking showed an increase of Bs. 73,920 million (1.93%) month-on-month.”* The credits granted add up to a total of 1,183,544 million Bolívares, which represents a growth in the month of Bs. 23,422 million (2.02%) which, compared to the previous year, grew by 532,701 million Bolívares (81.85 %).<sup>21</sup>

In summary, all is going well for parasitic finance capital, while the opposite is occurring in other sectors. The economic crisis is worsening, with the economy shrinking more than 7% and inflation growing beyond 180% according to official statistics. The social crisis is sharpening as well, which, by the way, puts the Maduro government in a predicament as it loses more and more of the support it had won with welfare measures, as the latest elections have shown.

The attempt to sustain the “revolution” with oil profits, as Chávez did, failed: *“Who is going to deny its success?”*, said Maduro in those days, *“but that model has been exhausted as a result of the abrupt fall in oil prices and the exhaustion of the rentier oil model.”* Hence the measures taken on February 17 of 2016, among them the raising of gasoline prices, seek to dismantle the existing subsidies, and this is only the start. The raising of minimum wage, forced by inflation as a measure to calm the social crisis, will have no positive effects for the people, given the speculation on basic necessities, businesses set up by the very same state officials who “buy at the price of eggs—when they don’t simply steal—and sell at the price of gold.” Likewise, the old recourse of the bourgeoisie of all countries, investment in infrastructure projects to incentivize economic growth and create employment, and the “Great Venezuelan Housing Mission” (a copy of the housing plan of Santos<sup>22</sup> in Colombia) ... all of these are little more than band-aids in the face of the magnitude of the crisis and the evils which *actually existing* capitalism in Venezuela cannot resolve. These are facts which the pro-US imperialist Venezuelan bourgeoisie is taking advantage of to put an end to the chimera of the supposed “Socialism of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.”

In Ecuador, things are not so different. According to the Superintendency of Banks of Ecuador, the net profits of private banks was \$148 million in June of 2014, and in June of 2015 they were \$165 million, representing a growth of 11.35%, although the profitability is inferior to that of

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<sup>21</sup> <https://www.finanzasdigital.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/BCOM201501.pdf>

<sup>22</sup> Juan Manuel Santos, President of Colombia from 2010-2018. In 2012, he signed into law a measure to give 100,000 houses to poor residents of Colombia [Translator]

other countries in the region like Peru, with 22%. And given that private banking represents 80% of the financial system in Ecuador, there could be no other conclusion than that of the Superintendency: *“The Ecuadorian financial system finds itself healthy, solid, and has excellent financial and management indicators compared to other years.”* All while the other areas of the economy are going in the doldrums, and along with it the general discontent of the people which during all of last year, and especially at the end, spilled over again into the streets demanding immediate concessions: against the massive layoffs, against the rise in prices for daily goods, and against the reforms to the Constitution which, in the words of one of the leaders of the strike of last November 11, *“violate the political, social, and collective rights of the peoples of Ecuador.”*

In Bolivia, according to data from the Supervisory Authority of the Financial System: *“In the period from January to June of 2015, the financial intermediation system registered profits of 835.3 MMBS (millions of Bolivianos) ..., an amount slightly lower than that obtained in a similar period of the past administration (872.8 MMBS). Of the total generated in 2015, 451.8 MMBS (54.1%) corresponds to BCC [Commercial Banks], 339.7 MMBS (40.7%) to EMF [Specialized Microfinance Entities], 28.3 MMBS (3.4%) to MAP [Savings and Loan Mutualities] and 15.5 MMBS (1.9%) to CAC [Savings and Credit Cooperatives]”.* It could not have gone better for banking and, especially, for private commercial banking in a country where there are barely 2 banks with majority State-ownership.

Furthermore, nationalization of some enterprises doesn't mean socialization of those enterprises. The “Socialists of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century”, in their attempt to reform the bourgeois state, take for granted that state property is the same as property belonging to the whole of society, concluding that the nationalization of the main enterprises is a step towards socialism. Deluded, they imagine that nationalization of strategic sectors by the bourgeois state is itself socialism, when in reality, such nationalizations, under capitalist relations of production, can do no more than guarantee the distribution of surplus-value between different sectors of the bourgeoisie. In other words, bourgeois nationalization (without abolishing the capitalist base, exploitation and wage-slavery) does not benefit the society but the bourgeoisie themselves, whose class privileges and state power allow them to continue exploiting the people. Nationalization of the banks and powerful means of production (petroleum, steel mills, transportation...) has already been done by the capitalist system under the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, such as in Colombia with the nationalization of Ecopetrol, which has once again been returned to private capital.

In short, the results of “actually existing socialism” lay bare the formulas of Dieterich. Capitalism-imperialism cannot be fought with the same weapons that maintain it as Dieterich guided his pupils aim to do. It was only a matter of time after the oil boom finished that the façade would crumble in Venezuela. It was only a matter of waiting for the outbreak of the world capitalist economic crisis to see the socialist disguise of this new bourgeois utopia come crashing down. And it couldn't have happened any other way, since the first and foremost issue of any revolution that hopes to actually exist is the question of power: “Everything is illusory except power”<sup>23</sup> and in Venezuela, Ecuador, and Bolivia, power has always been in the hands of the bourgeoisie and the landlords, classes which are associates and lackeys of imperialism.

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<sup>23</sup> <https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1905/nov/18.htm> [Translator]

## Pro-Imperialism Disguised as Anti-Imperialism

*April 4, 2016 in Revolución Obrera #447*

The recipes of Dieterich and his “really existing socialism” cannot go beyond spurring on the Latin American bourgeoisie to become a new economic and political bloc able to compete with the other blocs and imperialist powers. Dieterich just “forgot” two small details: First, that we live in the epoch of imperialism, and second, that the bourgeoisie and the landowners of Latin America are lackeys of imperialism; not because by any servile will, but because of the only motive that capital has, i.e. profit, whose rates they managed to level with the imperialists. That is to say, they are not only lackeys but associates of the imperialists, and therefore don’t have any national or anti-imperialist interest.

Accordingly, Dieterich’s advice was ridiculous and could only pique the interest of the utopian petty-bourgeoisie, and not as a program to be practically carried out, but as a daydream.

The facts speak for themselves: the failure of Mercosur and ALBA<sup>24</sup>, the failure of all the Chavista projects to bribe the Latin American bourgeoisie with oil; not a single one of the “*Transnational Companies*” or “*National-Regional Companies*” that Dieterich proposed to them exist. This is a failure that has its origin in the attempt to fight imperialism with the same weapons that sustain it, such as imperialist companies and the domination of some countries over others.

Hence the anti-imperialism of “Socialism of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century” is nothing more than a fraud and one does not have to go very far to confirm it:

“In 15 years of revolution, Venezuela has demonstrated is that it fulfills its agreements, and this year will be no exception, we are ready to continue fulfilling our international agreements completely, to the hair, to the last dollar,” Maduro said some weeks ago, when some warned of the difficulties in paying interest and quotas for the external debt and the threats of the imperialists in the face of a moratorium on payments proposed by indebted entities.

Since the beginning of the imperialist phase of capitalism, the bourgeois reformists and petty-bourgeoisie have aimed to hide its true characteristics, deny its historical place as the prelude to socialism, and thus cover up the need for World Proletarian Revolution, the only thing capable of laying imperialism to rest once and for all. They have even attempted to blur the word “imperialism”, a precise term of Leninist theory, replacing it with “Empire”, coined by social-democrats to signal their apologia for monopoly capitalism, being adopted and raised to its maximum power by so-called “Socialism of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.”

As a consequence, the struggle against imperialism is reduced to a “paradigm shift” to the abusive capitalism they call neoliberalism; they think they “solve” the problem of political domination by expelling one or another ambassador, or breaking diplomatic relations with the

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<sup>24</sup> ALBA stands for Alianza Bolivariana para los Pueblos de Nuestra America, or Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America. It is an intergovernmental organization and trade alliance founded by Cuba and Venezuela in 2004 and currently has 10 member states. Its initiatives include the Petrocaribe deal (which fell apart in 2019) and the TeleSUR news network. [Translator]

“Empire.” In short, they try to modify the foundations of imperialism through reforms, opposing it with a false anti-imperialism that serves, as Lenin said, to “distract attention from essentials by means of absolutely ridiculous schemes for ‘reform’, such as police supervision of the trusts or banks, etc.”<sup>25</sup> as Dieterich does in his illusory aspirations to dismantle the pro-US imperialist military alliance NATO through the UN and that this institution, if it were in the hands of the other imperialist powers, might approve the “indemnities” to the countries that they have enslaved.

Dieterich and his pupils hide and conceal that the total division of the territory of the world during the period of old colonialism continues and is exacerbated in this epoch of imperialism, with new re-divisions of territory, carried out now under a new form of domination intimately tied to the predominance of finance capital: *semi-colonial* domination of oppressed and exploited countries, by a number of oppressor, exploiter, imperialist countries.

In the global economy that chains together the economies of all countries, the power of finance capital is so decisive, that it in fact nullifies the economic and political independence of exploited peoples and countries, reducing it to a mere legal formality, and enveloping them in the net of financial and diplomatic dependency. With the noose of parasitic finance capital around the neck of the oppressed countries, the large monopoly groups of the imperialist countries lay hands on their territories, sources of raw materials, and markets, including the market for the super-exploitation of the labor force available in every country.

Fifty years ago, when dominion of the world was disputed between two blocs of imperialist countries, headed respectively by North American imperialism and Russian social-imperialism, the Chinese communists recommended: “be careful of the bear entering through the back door while expelling the tiger out the front.” Today the so-called “Bolivarian Revolution of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century” which does not even set out to expel Western imperialism, has opened the back door wide open so that the imperialist camp of the East can come in unencumbered.

And in effect, the new Mandarin Xi Jinping—head of Chinese imperialism—and the new Tsar Putin—head of Russian imperialism—are received as heroes and saviors by their “Socialism of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century” lackeys.

Yuri Paniev, one the masterminds at the service of Russian imperialism and member of the Institute of Latin American Studies (Russia), in his 2013 report *Russia—Latin America Relations*, gives an account of the Russian-Venezuelan relationship not much different from that maintained between the U.S. and Colombia in some fields:

*“In 2001, political dialogue began between the two countries and they outlined the principal spheres of economic interaction: the oil and gas industries, chemical and petrochemical, joint exploitation of natural resources, and military-technical collaboration. In all the mentioned spheres, the two countries have achieved notable successes, which has allowed Venezuela to become a privileged partner of Russia in the region.”*

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<sup>25</sup> Lenin, Imperialism. <https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1916/imp-hsc/ch09.htm> [Translator]



*Venezuela is now the second (after India) buyer of Russian military-industrial goods. The Center of analysis of the global arms trade values the cost of Russian armaments acquired by Caracas at \$4.4 billion USD. These acquisitions include 24 Su-30MK2B fighter planes, 100 thousand AK-103 machine guns, more than 40 multipurpose Mi-17B-5 helicopters, 10 Mi-35M2 attack helicopters, three Mi-26T2 heavy transport helicopters, 5,000 SVD sniper rifles, 12 Tor-M1 anti-aircraft systems, ZU-23-2 anti-aircraft systems, and a set of portable Igla-S anti-aircraft missiles. According to data from the official information agency ANV, in August of 2011 Venezuela was given another batch of ZU-23 systems, of portable mortars and armored vehicles. According to Carlos Mata Figueroa, Defense Minister of Venezuela, “these armaments are required for us to be ready for the defense of the Fatherland.”*

*Judging by the results of the negotiations held in Caracas in October 2011, Venezuela will receive a second credit of \$4 billion USD from Russia for the modernization of its military. According to Chávez, it comprises \$2 billion USD in 2012 and the same amount in 2013. Caracas sees its independence from the West in the transferring of its gold and foreign exchange reserves, which are kept in the US and Europe, to its own central bank and to countries such as Russia, Brazil and China.”<sup>26</sup>*

In the last 12 years the export of raw materials to China has increased by 22 times; while this country is about to be the second largest imperialist country, after the U.S. and above Europe, in the sum of “investments” (read: domination of finance capital) in Latin America.

If we compare the loans given by the World Bank and [Inter-American Development Bank] with those of the Chinese government and banks to the countries of “Socialism of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century,” one can observe that not only does the subjugation to imperialist finance capital continue, but that the rulers of these countries have transferred their dependence from the United States towards, mainly, the “Asian Giant.” While it is difficult to specify the amount of funds dispersed by the reserves, and in spite of the obstacles to acquiring such information from the Chinese government and banks, the majority of analysts and scholars agree on the figures that we have taken from various sources to elaborate the following chart which serves as an illustration:

***Loans to “21<sup>st</sup> Century Socialist” Countries by the WB, BID, and China Between 2005-2011  
(In Millions of Dollars)***

<b>Country</b>	<b>WB</b>	<b>BID</b>	<b>China</b>	<b>Total</b>
<i>Venezuela</i>	--	6,028	46,500	52,528
<i>Ecuador</i>	153	2,457	7,254	9,864
<i>Bolivia</i>	145	850	611	1,606

Here we can clearly see the exacerbation of the new redivision of the territories of Latin America, still not with the sign-board of tanks and missiles, but the with pen of finance capital



and the ink of the blood and sweat of the people. Here we can see the deceitful anti-imperialism of the ruling “Socialists of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century,” who, at the same time as they cover up the domination of parasitic capital and the big monopoly groups from the U.S. and Europe, boast of breaking with the “Empire” by chipping away at their dependency on the IMF and World Bank, while in reality, their debts and agreements are now equal or greater with the banks of other imperialist countries, mainly China, 90% of whose loans to Latin America between 2005 and 2012 went to four countries afflicted by “Socialism of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century”: Venezuela which owes 54.2% of the total, Argentina with 14.1%, Brazil with 13.7%, and Ecuador with 8.5%.

Moreover, the arrival of projects for infrastructure (such as the inter-oceanic canal in Nicaragua), mining and extraction (such as the iron mines in Peru, of gas in Bolivia, and petroleum in Venezuela), agriculture (such as soy production in Bolivia, Brazil, and Argentina), and other natural resources (such as the anticipated oil reserves of Yasuní National Park in Ecuador<sup>27</sup>)... all served up to the Chinese imperialists on a silver platter, labelled with the brand new slogan “with foreign investment, we all win.” Quite a well-worn argument by the lackey Correa, who slanders the revolutionaries who oppose imperialist dependency as “stupid leftists.”

The economic relation between the countries of “Socialism of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century” and China is regressive, where the imperialist country penetrates the basic branches of production such as petroleum in Venezuela, invests the majority of lent capital in extraction, processing, and transport of those products which it later buys. For this reason, it is not strange that its capital goes basically towards investment in extractive activities and infrastructure. Such a relation reproduces the semi-colonial condition of the oppressed countries, impedes the diversification of their production and imposes on them technological dependency which doesn’t allow them to develop the basic industry to produce machines, or capital goods as the bourgeois economists call them. That is to say, these investments do not go towards developing heavy industry, which is a necessary condition to achieve real economic independence. Instead, such investment is intended to plunder the wealth of a country and improve the pathways to export it, just as U.S. imperialism has done in Colombia, for example.

The true struggle against imperialism requires taking into account one of the most important contradictions in the world today, *that between the large monopoly groups between each other, and between the imperialist countries between each other*, for the domination and redivision of the world. This is a permanent contradiction, not between good and bad imperialists, but between the worst enemies of the peoples of the world. It is the basis for the danger of world war and, at the same time, the basis for the weakness of imperialism, a strategic reserve that favors the

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<sup>27</sup> In 2007 Ecuadorian President Rafael Correa launched the Yasuni-ITT Initiative, to prevent oil extraction in the Yasuni National Park which is mostly Amazonian rainforest and home to the Huaorani people. The region is a biodiversity hotspot, being the location where the Equator, Andes mountains, and Amazon rainforest converge. In 2013, the same Correa shut down the project, saying the results were not economically sufficient. The initiative relied on large donations from imperialist countries, and hoped to receive \$3.6 billion, but according to Correa only \$13.3 million was ever delivered. Drilling in the Yasuni-ITT region began in September 2016 by the state-owned Petroecuador. In the 2021 election campaign, the conservative Guillermo Lasso promised to stop oil extraction in Yasuni. But in July, two months after taking office, he signed an Executive Decree vowing to double the country’s oil production, and planned a new round of licensing concessions mostly in the Amazon. More: <https://hilldavid.substack.com/p/ecuadorians-fear-ethnocide-as-oil> [Translator]

triumph of the proletarian revolution, as was demonstrated in the two World Wars of the past century.

Regarding the “good” imperialists, it is worth recalling Browderism—named for Earl Browder, leader of the Communist Party USA until his expulsion in 1946—a revisionist current that arrived at the conclusion that U.S. imperialism had a progressive character due to its intervention in World War II, negating class struggle and imagining a world of peace and cooperation between North American imperialism, the Soviet Union, and oppressed countries. This is not far from Dieterich’s thesis which still considers imperialist China a socialist country, and the followers of “Socialism of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century” who view European imperialism positively and congratulate the Russian imperialist counter-offensive against the United States, defending a supposed progressive character of these bloodthirsty reactionaries.

The real struggle against imperialism cannot be thought of as isolated from the struggle for revolution in each country, which, whatever its character (New Democratic or Socialist), can only be led by the proletariat, the only class capable of leading the transition from this global capitalist society based on wage-slavery towards a new socialist society based on cooperative labor among people. This is the revolutionary anti-imperialism of the proletariat, diametrically opposed to the false anti-imperialism of “Socialism of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century” which doesn’t go beyond lackey business with other imperialists, in exchange for breadcrumbs from the “socialist” ruling classes, all at the expense of deepening the oppression and exploitation of the working masses and maintaining semi-colonial imperialist domination over the oppressed countries.

### **Social Reforms Disguised as Revolution**

*April 20, 2016 in Revolución Obrera #448*

If we observe the politics propagated by the rulers of Venezuela, Bolivia, or Ecuador, we can ascertain that at no point have these “Socialists of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century” questioned capitalism, exploitation based on wage-labor, semi-colonial oppression, etc. In the social terrain it couldn’t be any different: timid measures to alleviate tensions, improving the conditions of some sectors through welfare programs without ever touching private property. Such a politics was also formulated by Dieterich, who in order to back up his “project” has to support himself on flagrant lies, like saying that:

*From the French Revolution “until now, mankind had two great evolutionary roads at its disposal: capitalism and historical socialism (actually existing). Neither has been able to solve the urgent problems of the humanity, among them: poverty, hunger, exploitation, economic, sexual and racial oppression...”<sup>28</sup>*

From the start, it is necessary to denounce Dieterich’s affirmations as lies, since under **actually existing** socialism in Russia (1917-1956) and China (1949-1976), the periods in which the workers were in power, these countries ceased to be plagued by famines and natural disasters; they ended unemployment and starvation; they eradicated illiteracy and brought electricity to the countryside; they raised life expectancies, reduced infant mortality, and elevated the living conditions of the people; they were pioneers in preventative medicine, and achieved the

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<sup>28</sup> Dieterich, 21<sup>st</sup> Century Socialism (English)

eradication of many diseases considered endemic, they marched at the front of the campaign to wipe out smallpox from the world, and guaranteed universal and free public health services.

In fact, during the so-called “Great Depression” in the 1930s, while the whole capitalist world was sinking, the workers were being thrown to the curb and misery became widespread as a consequence of the general crisis of overproduction, in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics there was no unemployment, production grew to even levels even higher than those reached by the capitalist countries in the best of times, multiplying not only their production but their working population... while in the capitalist world they were promoting birth control, in the USSR they rewarded fertility.

Dieterich’s claims are the same reactionary slander invented by the imperialists, because in **actually existing** socialism, women—condemned in capitalism and semi-feudalism to double oppression and exploitation—acquired the same rights as men: domestic work and child-rearing ceased to be the sole responsibility of women and became the responsibility of all of society, which afforded them true equality to access education, employment, salaries, and participation in all aspects of social and political life.

Such claims are also biased garbage in terms of the nationalities, as Russia—a military-feudal empire and enslaver of other peoples, nations, and countries—with the triumph of the proletarian revolution became the USSR, where the nationalities and oppressed peoples not only enjoyed real equality, but also were guaranteed the right of self-determination, to secede if they so desired. The brotherhood of the peoples of the Soviet Union is an irrefutable historical fact, as is the fact that once capitalist relations were re-imposed, Russia became another head on the imperialist hydra—socialist in name but imperialist in fact—enslaver of its peoples, oppressor of nations, and the main competitor of the United States for the domination of the peoples of the world.

But Dieterich has to prop himself up on these flagrant lies and falsehoods regarding socialism, as a trick to sell his speculations and trinkets, old bourgeois reformist ideas presented now as “strokes of genius” to “save” humanity; let us see what he offers in the face of the supposed failure of the experience of socialism:

*“The program has to respond to the legitimate interests of national citizens, that is to say, it must respond to the questions of the greatest necessities of the people, which are employment, land, housing, education, among others. To these questions we must give national satisfaction, because the nation is the immediate space of struggle of the citizen.”<sup>29</sup>*

As one can see, this is a bourgeois program that doesn’t have any major differences with the proposal of Keynes, the “genius” savior of the capitalists after World War II, and his “welfare state”; or with the social-democratic “projects” which failed in Europe, despite the fact that those countries had the advantage of being beneficiaries of the colonial and semi-colonial exploitation of the peoples of Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Thus, when Dieterich encounters the problem of practically resolving his “humanitarian” aspirations, he can only offer up a puerile and ridiculous dissertation without any solution:

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<sup>29</sup> Dieterich, Socialismo del Siglo XXI (Spanish)

*“But it must be explained, at the same time, that the structural solution of the problem at a national level is **not possible**. For example, for the unemployed Argentinians, the programmatic demand is scholarships for all the family heads, who have no job. But, together with this national demand it must be explained to the people that the rate of unemployment depends on the competitiveness of the national economy and that this competitiveness, in turn, is a function of state-of-the-art technologies. To overcome structural unemployment means, therefore, developing cutting-edge technologies, which can only be done—because of the sabotage of transnational corporations and the G7 states—through a regional Latin American bloc—the Great Fatherland [Patria Grande].”<sup>30</sup>*

In summary, Dieterich distills hateful slander and lies against *actual* socialism—which again we must say existed in Russia until 1956 and in China until 1976—to spew his demagogic bourgeois trash with the name of “Socialism”, and end up placing all the hopes of the oppressed and exploited in forming a “bloc” with the pro-imperialist bourgeoisie of Latin America. This gigantic idiocy can only end with some welfare programs as were established in Venezuela, Ecuador, and Bolivia, and which are already bottoming out.

In Venezuela the so-called “National Mission System” or “Bolivarian Missions” which comprise of programs to: 1. “Fight against poverty”, 2. Education, 3. Medical assistance, 4. Subsidized housing credits, 5. Programs to attend to indigenous groups and the environment. All these programs were financed thanks to the oil boom and undoubtedly improved the living conditions of the people. But now, with the economic crisis of global capitalism, they have hit a wall, highlighting the social crisis, which in turn is taken advantage of by Maduro’s opponents for their own ends, in the dispute for power and to align themselves with the highest imperialist bidder.

In Ecuador they likewise established programs which aimed to fight poverty and social exclusion, “which permits people to have access to employment, education, housing, or free social services.” Without a doubt, the Correa government has maintained an important investment in some programs; nevertheless, Ecuador did not escape the social crisis. The programs show modest progress in some aspects and setbacks in others, as even the official spokespeople of the government accept, but as a whole do not prevent the deepening of social inequality, the root cause of the demonstrations and strikes in recent months.

Bolivia has not escaped the social crisis either: there, welfare programs were also set up such as *Renta Dignidad*, *Renta Solidaria*, *Bono Juana Azurduy*, *Bono Juancito Pinto*, *Complemento Nutricional ‘Carmelo’*, and universal prenatal subsidies “*Por La Vida*.” These were also basically financed with the oil and natural gas boom, and in spite of the government demagogically promising to maintain this welfare until 2020, they have had to face gigantic demonstrations and strikes such as in 2010 and 2013 led by the Bolivian Workers Center<sup>31</sup>, and in July of 2015 by the Potosí Civic Committee (Comcipo), among others, for not fulfilling the contracted agreements with the workers and peasants, and for elementary demands such as full payment (100%) of salaries towards pensions and not 70% as has occurred until now.

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<sup>30</sup> Dieterich, *Ibid.* (Spanish)

<sup>31</sup> The main trade union federation in Bolivia [Translator]

That is all that Dieterich's pupils and their bombast are able to offer:

*"The New Historical Project of the majorities which makes the paths to liberation visible and which allows those without voice or face, without land or work, to rise from the bowels of the system, and walk those paths and reconquer the lost future."*<sup>32</sup>

In effect, those without voice or face, without land or work, are rising up to demand that the "Socialist" rulers of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, the followers of Dieterich's formulas in Venezuela, Ecuador, and Bolivia, put an end to all their anti-worker and anti-popular measures, just as the workers and peasants are doing against the imperialist, bourgeois, and landlord ruling classes around the world. These facts serve as evidence of the truism that states that **as long as the exploiters are not dethroned and their state is not destroyed and replaced with a new state of workers and peasants maintained by the armed people; as long as private property in the large means of production is not abolished, any attempt to improve the living conditions of the people, will be a miserable bourgeois reform, a band-aid on a bullet wound, which only temporarily alleviates the situation and, in the final instance, only serves the imperialists to prolong the agony of their system which preys on the people and destroys the environment.**

### **Dictatorship of the Bourgeoisie Disguised as People's Democracy**

*June 25, 2016 in Revolución Obrera #452*

Let us now look at what "participative democracy"—proclaimed as the panacea to overcome the "odious" Dictatorship of the Proletariat proclaimed by revolutionary Marxism—has led to.

The facts speak for themselves, and recent events lay bare the true nature of the progressive rulers and followers of "Socialism of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century" in South America, such as the threatening declarations of Correa to incarcerate the earthquake victims that dared to protest in Ecuador, or the repression and confrontations of the masses in Venezuela, or the repression of social movements in Brazil... facts that are very much taken advantage of by the pro-US imperialist bourgeoisie to destabilize those governments, and for imperialism and reaction in general to disparage socialism. All this confirms our assertion that Dieterich's "participative democracy" is only a front for bourgeois dictatorship disguised as a people's democracy.

But this is also an excellent condition that allows to insist that "Socialism of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century" has nothing in common with revolutionary communism and because, despite the slander of Dieterich and the bourgeoisie, the dictatorship of the proletariat remains the widest democracy possible, and the form of State necessary to achieve liberation for the working class.

We've seen from the start that Dieterich, just as he justifies wage-slavery, also recognizes bourgeois democracy—the "Rule of Law"—as the best political form to "*advance toward a just society... Therefore, the logical[sic] conclusion is: formal democratic rights are an*

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<sup>32</sup> Dieterich, Ibid. (Spanish)

*indispensable, necessary, but not sufficient, condition, for future democratic society; they should not be replaced, but be enlarged in the direction of social and participative rights... ”<sup>33</sup>*

Bourgeois dictatorship that will miraculously generate “*a new public authority, one that will prioritize public interests and which, by losing its class functions, will lose its repressive nature. The notion of representation, which in our bourgeois plutocracy is essentially demagogic... will then have recovered a real political meaning, in those public functions that require such representation.*” Nothing but empty talk and hot air, the practical application of which has been exposed in practice in Venezuela, Ecuador, and Brazil.

It is necessary to recall that Dieterich, even while recognizing the class character of the bourgeois state, does not accept the need to smash this old bureaucratic-military machine, reducing the problem to the “expansion” of democracy (formal, mutilated, and deceitful under capitalism), which according to him can be done by making use of computers: “*The operative technology for these exercises of Participative Democracy don’t [sic] present bigger problems: he/she[sic] is solved with the one Internet. It is placed in each apple[sic] [city-block- transl.] a computer and the citizens that don’t have one own[sic], they go to “to vote” [sic] in that of collective use. In the presidential elections in Brazil in 1998 already you it[sic] used this system of “electronic urn.”*”<sup>34</sup> Thus, with the wave of a magic wand, the problem of real political power disappears: the economic power of the exploiters, which is protected by the power of the gun and defended by the state bureaucracy.

That *superstitious faith in the state of exploiters*, that dumb belief that the State is impartial and places itself above all classes, was denounced as reactionary since the time of Marx and Engels in the struggle against the hogwash of bourgeois utopian socialism and in the ranks of the labor movement against Ferdinand Lassalle who claimed to be able to achieve socialism from the red tape of the bourgeois state apparatus; it persisted in the time of the 2<sup>nd</sup> International, against the revisionism of Bernstein and Kautsky, advocates of gradually passing power to the proletariat, of “the conquest of state power by winning a majority in parliament and by raising parliament to the ranks of master of the government.”; it was the motive for the split in the 1960s between Marxist-Leninists and Khrushchevite revisionists (in particular, over the “peaceful transition” to socialism and the “State of the whole people”) and has continued until today, most recently, the struggle against the refusal of the revisionists in Nepal to destroy the State of the exploiters, and in doing so betraying the People’s War, trading it in for seats in the repressive bourgeois apparatus. This struggle has accompanied the workers’ movement throughout history precisely because the problem of State power is the central problem of all genuine revolutions.

Dieterich is no stranger to this history, but nevertheless, recites in his “Socialism of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century” the same old recipes of the bourgeois utopians of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, and of the revisionists, discarded as useless by the people but very useful for those interested in prolonging the agony of imperialism, since the democratic republic is the best political shell for relations of capitalist exploitation.

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<sup>33</sup> Dieterich, Ibid. (English)

<sup>34</sup> Dieterich, Ibid. (English)

Thus, the results of these recipes in Venezuela, Ecuador, and Bolivia, where the “Socialists of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century” govern, is no coincidence. We will briefly discuss these below:

The State in Venezuela, Ecuador, and Bolivia, paints itself as socialist, Bolivarian, sovereign and independent, united, inter-cultural, pluri-national... but it remains, as it was before, a bureaucratic-military machine to defend the privileges of the imperialists, the bourgeoisie, and the landlords, and to crush the people.

The democracy and the “Rule of Law” defended by Dieterich and his pupils, remains nothing more than democracy for the old exploiting and dictatorial classes against the working classes. It is a real democracy only for those who have real power (economic and military) and a real dictatorship for the exploited and oppressed, who are excluded from power, crushed by a military boot when they protest, persecuted for denouncing the official lies, and incarcerated when they struggle for a real revolution.

Take these two emblematic and telling events for proof of how the dictatorship of the exploiters functions in the countries of “Socialism of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century”: First, in 2011, the labor leader Rubén Gonzalez—of Union of Ferrominera Workers [Sindicato de Trabajadores Ferrominera] and member of the ruling party [PSUV]—was jailed and sentenced to 7 years in prison, for the crime of supporting the strike and the workers, who were demanding their rights in that mixed enterprise, where Chinese imperialist capital was partnered with the state.<sup>35</sup> Second, on the web portal Aporrea<sup>36</sup>, a staunch defender of the Bolivarian government in Venezuela denounced: *“The targeted killings in Barinas began four years ago with the murder of union leader Tomás Rangél, and since then other union, peasant, and other leaders haven’t stopped falling. They could number ‘hundreds’ and are taken as ‘account adjustments,’ ‘confrontations,’ and other names with which the state ends up covering up the substance of the matter, which is the extermination of social and revolutionary fighters. Businesses, landlords, paramilitary and criminal groups seem to have hijacked all the public powers in Barinas, creating a true Parallel State in the hands of economic sectors, landlords, a corrupt judicial system, and police forces at the service of all of them, in the face of the shameful impotence of the regional and local authorities.”*<sup>37</sup> The reader can draw their own conclusions.

Insofar as the form of the old State, it remains the same: a bureaucracy that rides rough-shod over the people, with privileged functionaries and institutions separate and opposed to the people, supported and sustained by special bodies of armed men. As in all bourgeois States, in the countries of “21<sup>st</sup> Century Socialism”, the State remains little more than a suffocating parasite on society.

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<sup>35</sup> See: <https://web.archive.org/web/20191125155752/https://www.portaloaca.com/contra-info/1615-venezuela-condenado-a-prision-el-sindicalista-ruben-gonzalez.html>

<sup>36</sup> “Aporrea is a Venezuelan website that publishes news and opinions from a left-wing perspective. It ranks as the fourth most visited local political site in the country, according to site metrics Alexa.com, and it claims to be the first among local independent left-leaning outlets. Most of the site's content was supportive of the political changes championed by late president Hugo Chávez, but in recent years, it heavily carries opinions and news articles critical of the current government led by Chavez's protégé Nicolas Maduro, turning it into a "gathering place for dissidence within chavismo".[3]” (--Wikipedia) The site was blocked by the main Venezuelan ISPs in February 2019, effectively banning it. [Translator]

<sup>37</sup> <https://web.archive.org/web/20240805151822/https://www.aporrea.org/ddhh/n260801.html%20>

Under the pretext of attending to the social problems which were ignored by previous administrations, in the governments of Venezuela, Ecuador, and Bolivia, a large number of entities were created that, far from resolving them, aggravated the problems of the “socialist” administration. Let us take Venezuela for example:

In July of 2014, the website NTN24 announced: “Venezuela broke the world record of largest number of ministries”<sup>38</sup>, with 32, right above Burkina Faso in Africa with 31. Here one can see the incoherency of the Dieterich’s pupils. Chávez, when he signed the Organic Central Administrative Law [Ley Orgánica Administrativa Central], announced that he would reduce the state apparatus to 14 ministries and, instead, they increased. Maduro continued adding even more to the number. On top of the demagoguery, it should be noted that in the countries of “Socialism of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century”, the privileged state bureaucracy, divorced from the people, grows at a greater speed than in the states governed by conservatives and liberals; in fact, the functionaries of the State of Venezuela, according to their very own Statistics National Institute [INE], grew from almost 1.4 million in 2002 to around 2.5 million in 2012; that is to say, a growth of 310 new bureaucrats each day for 10 years.

In 2004, the National Decentralized Administration was composed of 589 public administration entities in the following situation: “1 in process of privatization, 40 in a pre-operational stage, 15 in administrative reorganization, 49 in process of liquidation, 43 inactive, and the remaining 438, active...”<sup>39</sup> with the additional problem that the proliferation of such entities, which appeared as autonomous institutions under legal entities like private foundations, merchant societies and civil associations, not only enlarged the bureaucracy and the privileges of functionaries, but also gave rise to a growth in corruption, typical of all bourgeois states lacking total state control, not to mention the total absence of popular control.

One can thus see that it isn’t the people who are deciding, administrating, and controlling the State, but a heavy crust of bureaucrats who live off the workers. One can also see that the Dieterich’s line and his false socialism are not only useless to put an end to the old vices of the bourgeois apparatus of domination, but instead reinforce and nourish them.

The governments of “Socialism of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century”, despite Dieterich’s verbal [diarrhea](#), are identical to any other bourgeois government, in any part of the world. His very own words regarding bourgeois democracy serve both to demonstrate the gullibility in still believing that these governments are “chosen to serve the people,” as well as a description of his own pupils: *“In reality, Members of Parliament don’t represent those who elected them, they substitute for them. Those elected to serve to the people, actually only serve two masters: the establishment and their own interests. Frequently, governments are not even representative from a formal standpoint.”*

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<sup>38</sup> <https://web.archive.org/web/20140801234540/http://confirmado.com.ve/ntn24-venezuela-rompio-record-mundial-con-la-mayor-cantidad-de-ministerios-venezuela-rompio-record-mundial-con-la-mayor-cantidad-de-ministerios-2189733-venezuela-rompio-record-mundial-con-la-mayo/>

<sup>39</sup> <https://web.archive.org/web/20240805152312/https://studylib.es/doc/8421029/potencialidades-de-la-descentralizaci%C3%B3n-fiscal-en-venezuela>



The belief that the State exists above classes prevents the utopians from recognizing that the bourgeois government, independent of the form it takes, or the individuals who compose it, cannot be anything more than the administrator of the shared interests and business dealings of the bourgeoisie, executor of their class dictatorship, in which the “free play of democracy” is a scam because the masses are divorced and separated from power, and the “sacrosanct” universal suffrage—even if a computer is installed in each city block like Dieterich proposes—is nothing more than the “right” granted to the people to “choose” which members of the exploiting classes will crush them. Dieterich’s formulation is a hoax that directly serves to preserve the apparatus that guarantees the survival of a parasitic and agonizing system; an apparatus so decadent that it daily exposes its own rot as seen in the “Panama Papers” and the never-ending corruption scandals, which do not escape the “progressive” rulers and “Socialists of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century”.

For communism, the conquest of power by the proletariat is not a “peaceful” conquest, facilitated by the bourgeois state machine by means of obtaining a parliamentary majority. If the bourgeoisie employs all the means of violence and terror to conserve and consolidate its property and political domination, it will not give up its historical place and its privileges without a desperate and fierce struggle; for this reason, the bourgeois violence organized as state power can only be destroyed through the revolutionary violence of the proletariat and the broad masses.

Hence, the need to destroy the old state apparatus and to replace it with a new one: the Dictatorship of the Proletariat, the widest democracy possible to achieve liberation of the brutalized and enslaved masses; the “necessary transit point” to achieve, according to Marx, *“the abolition of class distinctions generally, the abolition of all the relations of production on which they rest, the abolition of all the social relations that correspond to these relations of production, [and] the revolutionizing of all the ideas that result from these social relations.”*<sup>40</sup>

The Dictatorship of the Proletariat, as opposed to deceit of bourgeois democracy, has as an essential element the fact that the *“source of power proceeds from the direct initiative of the masses from below; in place of the police and army—institutions till now apart from the masses and opposed to them—the general armed people; in place of the bureaucracy, functionaries elected and recallable by the masses, and paid a workers’ salary,”*<sup>41</sup> as the Program for Revolution in Colombia by the Communist Workers Union (mlm) states, recognizing the legacy of the experience of the Paris Commune, the Soviets in the USSR, and the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution in China—experience that Dieterich and “Socialism of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century” distorts or willfully ignores, shamelessly spreading lies and assigning to proletarian socialism the blame of bureaucratism which was imposed by the new bourgeoisie in Russia and China.

In socialism as it *actually existed*, while the workers held power in Russia and China, there was the right to elect and recall delegates at any moment, the union of executive and legislative powers, and elections according to the principle of production—of the factories, workshops, cooperatives, etc.—and not according to territorial principle, guaranteeing the ability of the broad masses to exercise power without intermediaries. It enabled their systematic, constant, and

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<sup>40</sup> Marx, Class Struggles in France 1848-1850. <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1850/class-struggles-france/ch03.htm>

<sup>41</sup> UOC-mlm, Programa para la Revolucion en Colombia (2015) <https://revolucionobrera.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/programa.pdf> [Translator]

active participation in economic, political, military, and cultural life, and as a consequence, established an essential difference between the bourgeois parliamentary republic and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat. Not only from the point of view of the widest democracy, never before seen, but from the point of view of the abolition of the bureaucracy separated from the people and opposed to them, and of practically demonstrating that the new State is thousands of times less costly—as it does away with the bureaucratic privileges, levelling their income with that of the common worker—not to mention that this is the only way to put a stop to corruption.

The experiences of actual socialist construction teach us that socialist society covers a very long historical period, and that from start to finish, the class struggle between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat develops. Lenin already warned in 1918 that *“The transition from capitalism to communism takes an entire historical epoch. Until this epoch is over, the exploiters inevitably cherish the hope of restoration, and this hope turns into attempts at restoration.”*<sup>42</sup>

Dieterich and the “Socialists of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century” interestingly evade the problem and the causes of the defeat of the proletariat in the socialist countries, they evade the conclusion of revolutionary Marxism that the establishment of the new State of the workers and peasants is nothing more than the beginning of the revolution, and not those class’s coronation, and that the necessity to carry the socialist revolution through to the end on political, economic, and ideological fronts requires us to continue the revolution under the Dictatorship of the Proletariat through cultural revolutions. This evasion seeks to give substance to their “genius”.

Learning from the experience of the defeat of the proletariat in Russia, the Chinese Communists discovered a way to continue the revolution under socialism and the proletarian dictatorship, sparking the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of which communists of all countries are celebrating, and which represented an unprecedented revolutionary movement whose objective was to carry the construction of socialism to the end, preventing the conquest of power by the revisionists (the new bourgeoisie) and capitalist restoration. This is crucial historical experience to which Dieterich never refers, as part of his dealings with the new imperialist Chinese bourgeoisie.

It is true that in the struggle of who will defeat who, the proletariat was also overthrown in China; nevertheless, contrary to the distortions that Dieterich falls back on to return to the old, worn-out deceitful democracy of the exploiters, communists continue looking forward and have learned that they were overthrown because they abandoned the road of the Paris Commune, they reversed the process of the Soviets in Russia, and they quit pursuing the example of the Shanghai Commune.

That is to say, the revolutionary proletariat was overthrown because the political form of the new State demands functionaries who are directly elected and recallable by the masses, with salaries equal to those of a common worker; it is a state power that rests upon the support of mass organizations of the armed workers and peasants, executive and legislative at the same time. This line was abandoned.

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<sup>42</sup> Lenin, Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky.  
<https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1918/prrk/equality.htm>

To try and build socialism without destroying the old machinery of domination held by the exploiters, and to talk of democracy for the workers, is nothing but demagoguery. To talk of people's democracy without putting an end to the old privileged state bureaucracy, and workers' and peasant's democracy without arming them, without the general arming of the people, is empty talk, an illusion.

### **Bourgeois Party Disguised as a Party of the Poor**

*January 21, 2017 in Revolución Obrera #459*

To finish up the tedious work of refuting the idiocies of Dieterich and his “only scientific model of post-capitalist society that exists today”, we dedicate this last section to two decisive problems: the “subject of the revolution”, and the strategic mechanism to guarantee its triumph. These problems only gain more importance in face of the imminent collapse of the Chavista government in Venezuela and the massive failure that is “Socialism of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.”

Venezuela is being shaken by a profound economic, social, and political crisis that is a result of the insatiable capitalist exploitation and semi-colonial dependency; in other words, the so-called Socialism of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, as we have shown throughout this work, ended up being more of the same: super-exploitation of the people, dependency on US, Russian, and Chinese imperialism, multi-millions in profits for the parasitic classes and monopolies, and in turn an increase in the misery and oppression of the people.

The popular uprisings, the looting of supermarkets, the shortages, the repression... taken advantage of by the most backward forces to defame socialism in general and to channel popular discontent in Venezuela towards their own aims, highlight the real lack of a working-class party, of a communist party, that can lead the revolutionary struggle of the people to put an end to the privileges of the exploiters, including the Chavista leadership. The facts speak for themselves, and while the Venezuelan people endure starvation, with the worst inflation of any country, and get brutally repressed, the ultra-rich continue to enjoy their former privileges:

Inflation near 450%, the high cost and scarcity of basic goods and food—this is the daily reality for a people who are sick and tired of the demagoguery of the bourgeois Bolivarian party, that no longer has to continue disguising itself as a party of the poor. The rebellion unleashed by Maduro's “*billetazo*” (the demonetization of the 100 Bolivar note) increased and spread the protests and looting, leaving a number of people dead and hundreds wounded and detained. Venezuela now occupies second place in homicide rate after El Salvador.

The corruption of state apparatus, the enrichment of the heads of the ruling party, the illicit deals, are now impossible to hide, leaving it clear as day that all the suffering is meant for the people, because the “powers that be”—including the current rulers—continue to live a life of luxury and opulence, and at the same time move to guarantee their own safety and security. The most exclusive places in the country like the Lagunita Country Club in Caracas have not closed a single day—on the contrary, they have seen new clients and partners emerge from the governmental bureaucracy and from the party led by Maduro, and who are known as the “*boliburgueses*”. According to BBC, “*There is a Venezuela that still lives like that. A Venezuela where the trendy restaurants continue to fill up, where there's a line to pay in the shops that sell imported products. Where a woman buys some luxurious Swarovski earrings in a shopping mall,*

*at midday on a Tuesday... A Venezuela where birthdays are still celebrated with 18-year old whiskey, where parents hire musicians like J Balvin and Farruko for a quinceañera, and where a woman celebrates with her friends with a private concert from Luis Miguel...It is calculated that this influential class represents 16% of the population, a little under 5 million people.*"<sup>43</sup>

The big Venezuelan bourgeoisie maintains its businesses in the country and abroad. They don't fear the government because, despite the socialist song-and-dance, they keep on exploiting and accumulating capital like always. And although Maduro's excesses annoy them, what they really fear is a popular uprising that leaves no stone of their order unturned.

The main divergences between the old Venezuelan bourgeoisie and the Chavistas don't consist in some measures of secondary importance which don't touch the foundations of capitalist exploitation, but rather in the general instability and the exhaustion of the people with the deprivation which pushes them to rise up; thus, in the face of an imminent general uprising of the people, the openly pro-Yankee bourgeoisie has proposed recalling Maduro, while another section of the opposition already reached a compromise with the government, and if the proletariat doesn't organize itself as an independent political party, surely the dominant classes will rearrange their forces to keep plundering the people and handing the country over to the imperialists.

What is happening in Venezuela did not arise from a Yankee imperialist conspiracy as Maduro and his friends assert, nor is it simply an unfortunate coincidence, but instead a natural and necessary consequence of the economic crisis of world capitalism, of which Venezuela is a part; and to which the formulas of Dieterich and his "Socialism of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century" or State monopoly capitalism have contributed. *Revolucion Obrera* declares it as a failure, because one cannot build something new while destroying neither the old social relations of production nor the State which defends them, ensuring and reproducing what happened in Venezuela, despite the pseudo-socialist demagoguery of Chavez and his followers.

An additional ingredient in the crisis which Venezuelan society has been struggling against for years is due to the inexistence of a revolutionary Party of the proletariat, whose construction the rulers have fought against with the support of the "left", as we shall see.

Dieterich says that his "New Historical Project" will be carried out by a diverse community of subjects, all victims of neoliberal capitalism: *"This emancipatory subject is formed by the community of victims of neoliberal capitalism and all those in solidarity with it. The working class will continue to be a fundamental detachment within this community of victims, but probably will not constitute a hegemonic force. The community of victims is multi-cultural, multi-ethnic, multi-class, of both genders, and global, and it embraces all those who agree on the need to thoroughly democratize the economy, politics, culture, and the systems of physical coercion of the world society."*

But this stroke of "genius" is not his discovery, but copied straight from the "Critical Marxists" who, same as Dieterich in Venezuela, tried to theorize the Nicaraguan "revolution", where the

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<sup>43</sup> <https://web.archive.org/web/20200201152314/https://www.bbc.com/mundo/noticias-america-latina-36680377>

*“emancipatory subject” was “a heterogenous conglomeration of social forces and ethnicities, in which the peasantry and urban sectors difficult to locate in the traditional class system [were] the predominant force, and a revolutionary small bourgeoisie as the leading group...” As a result, “... the old models of the industrial proletariat as the leading force and the vanguard party as its political representative within a dictatorship of the proletariat are not valid for the transitions to socialism that occur in the small countries of the periphery.”<sup>44</sup>*

And much earlier than the “Critical Marxists” Herbert Marcuse and his sidekicks of the so-called Frankfurt School, for example, proposed the “nature and efficacy” of the new social movements, in particular of the intelligentsia and other sectors of the petty-bourgeoisie, *“as a revolutionary substitute for a working class that has been integrated into the system.”<sup>45</sup>*

Dieterich doesn’t dare to categorically deny the role of the working class, as Marcuse did in the 60s and 70s, and the “Critical Marxists” did in the 80s, or as Negri and Hardt do in their book *Multitude*: *“When the flesh of the multitude is imprisoned and transformed into the body of global capital, it finds itself both within and against the processes of capitalist globalization. The biopolitical production of the multitude, however, tends to mobilize what it shares in common and what it produces in common against the imperial power of global capital.”<sup>46</sup>* Or as the revisionist and renegade Avakian does with his “New Synthesis”, in which the working class disappears and we only find the oppressed, poor, nationalities, movements...

But yes, as Dieterich affirms, “probably” or “surely” the working class will not constitute the leading and hegemonic force of the victims of capital. But who will?

As we denounced from the start, Dieterich doesn’t respond openly to this question, but in the course of his work it is obvious that the leading role will be played by the bourgeois parties in the mold of the Partido Socialista Unido in Venezuela, Alianza País in Ecuador, or Movimiento al Socialismo in Bolivia, and even neo-fascists like the fake Communist Party of China...all advised by a “Pleiad” of intellectuals like Dieterich, who resorts to an old bourgeois trick to introduce the idea to the proletariat that they should not organize themselves into an independent political Party: *“Those potentially democratizing subjects of the global society—precarious sectors, indigenous peoples, women, critical intellectuals, progressive Christians, independent NGOs, etc.—will not accept a leadership of a sociopolitical entity imposed upon them, whose legitimacy does not derive from their liberatory praxis.”* A malicious trick that is nothing more than an idiotic affirmation, since everyone knows that one occupies the leading role because they lead, unless one is stupid enough to accept *“the leadership of a sociopolitical entity”* that does not lead and *“whose legitimacy does not derive from their praxis...”*

But the underlying and key issue is that the Dieterichs, Avakians, and all other kinds of poisonous weeds, just like the “sages” of the Frankfurt School and long before them the utopian

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<sup>44</sup> Carmen Diana Deere—José Luis Coraggio y otros, ‘La Transición Difícil : La Autodeterminación de los Pequeños Países Periféricos’

<sup>45</sup> From

[https://monoskop.org/images/9/99/Laclau\\_Ernesto\\_Mouffe\\_Chantal\\_Hegemonia\\_y\\_estrategia\\_socialista\\_1987.pdf](https://monoskop.org/images/9/99/Laclau_Ernesto_Mouffe_Chantal_Hegemonia_y_estrategia_socialista_1987.pdf) [Translator]

<sup>46</sup> Hardt and Negri, *Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire* (2004)

socialists of Marx's era, don't recognize or disregard the existence of the working class as the revolutionary class in the epoch of capitalism. The proletariat is the only class called upon to lead all revolutionary transformations because of its social and economic conditions, and, above all, to organize as an independent political party for itself, and only in that way to lead society through its class dictatorship.

All of these "socialists" and false communists are traffickers of bourgeois ideology that cheat the proletariat and the masses, making them believe that they are not part of the most revolutionary class of our time: are not the immense majority of Christians are not wage-workers, or do they only live from divine breath? Are not the indigenous people, in their majority, wage-workers or agricultural workers, and as a result natural allies of the proletariat? Which of the "precarious" sectors, oppressed nationalities, students, LGBTI, do not belong mainly to the working class—that is to say, those who live or depend on wages, on the sale of their labor-power to capital?

The "sages" like Avakian and Dieterich, beneath the empty talk and demagoguery, in reality hide their desire to attain a privileged status as leaders of the "new society" where they, as the petty-bourgeois, become the mediators of the contradictions that are tearing class society apart, because they believe that they are above classes—this is nothing more than an old utopian dream, whose failure they refuse to learn from.

The sharpening of the political, social, and economic crisis, in Venezuela and around the world, is demanding the leadership of the proletariat, constituted in a political Party, to carry out the profound and radical transformations that are required to get out of the quagmire the bourgeoisie and their system has driven society into. Today, that system is a rotting, stinking corpse that is contaminating society and threatens its destruction.

The working class needs its revolutionary party, not to compete with the other parties for the bureaucracy of the old State, the guarantor of the interests of the exploiters, the machine of exploitation and oppression of the people. It needs a Party that organizes and leads its class, and with it, the rest of the working people, so that through a People's War they destroy the bourgeois state machinery and build a new type of State, without bureaucracy or a permanent professional army, where the armed workers of the city and countryside expropriate today's exploiters and take control of the destiny of the country.

The revolutionary proletariat in Venezuela should rid itself of the Chavista regime and all illusions that they could advance a revolutionary program through it. They must strive to transform themselves into an organized and independent detachment, capable of occupying the vanguard role in the struggle against the dominant classes (including the faction of "*boliburgueses*" who rule today), acting as political chief of the working class so that, at the front of the popular masses, it can take advantage of the turbulent days ahead...