

## Hugo Chávez's pseudo-Zamora

Former Col. Hugo Chávez Frías tells the story that in 1975, shortly after he graduated from the Military Academy with the rank of first lieutenant, "Hunting in the headquarters library [at Fort Tavare], I came upon *El Libro [The Book]*. Surely some curious officer had left it there among various U.S. military pamphlets and publications and a few booklets on Marxist-Leninist theory and guerrilla tactics. That night, I again read the master [Federico] Brito Figueroa (we had previously read him in the Military Academy when we studied 'the insurrections of the Negro slaves in Venezuela's colonial society'), this time in the fascinating pages of his *The Times of Ezequiel Zamora*. From then on, it became my most important book" (reported in *Ultimas Noticias*, May 16, 1993).

Chávez's bigger-than-life image of Zamora is the concoction of Brito Figueroa, who is currently an official in the offices of the the mayor of Caracas, Radical Cause party member Aristóbulo Isturiz. In reality, Zamora was a rather insignificant figure, molded ideologically by Leocadio Guzmán, the leader of Jacobin liberalism in the mid-19th century. Zamora went on to lead several Jacobin uprisings, before his death during the Federal War of 1859-63.

Brito Figueroa's pseudo-Zamora was one of many such socialist-realist figures created by Marxists who were being financed by the old Latin America Institute of the Soviet Academy of Sciences. In his essay *Ezequiel Zamora and Venezuela's History of Militancy*, Brito Figue-

roa constantly repeats that "our interpretation [of 19th-century Venezuelan history], which we once again reaffirm, coincides with that of Soviet historian Anatoli Shulgosky."

For Shulgosky, and therefore also for Brito, Zamora's 1846 uprising in defense of the candidacy of Leocadio Guzmán is the Venezuelan expression of the "struggle of the peasants sent by Pugachov," or the model of Emiliano Zapata in Mexico.

That was a time when in reality, the intellectual leader of the anti-liberal opposition, Fermin Toro, had already written his brilliant work in which he demonstrated that usury is responsible for all of society's ills. With his proposal for a society of solidarity based on the principles of the social doctrine of the Catholic Church, Toro was the antithesis of Guzmán.

For Shulgosky and Brito Figueroa, Venezuela's Federal War, the bloodiest of the last century after its war of independence, was simply a war between the wealthy and the exploited—a class struggle. The truth is that the Federal War wasn't in defense of federalism, but rather was a Jacobin uprising against the Toro's constitutional program. Even Guzmán as an old man admitted that had the Toro's program for the 1859 constitution been called a "federalist" program, the liberals would have raised the banner of centralism.

The first victim of that bloody war was Zamora himself. The tragedy was that the federalist victory brought Leocadio's son to power, the autocrat Antonio Guzmán Blanco, who made corruption a form of government. From then on, official liberal historiography simply removed all mention of Fermin Toro's anti-usury program.—David Ramonet

Hugo Chávez Frías gave the weapons stolen from Fort Tiuna to Congressman Pablo Medina, of the Radical Cause party." Alvarez Bracamonte belonged to Chávez's Bolivarian Revolutionary Movement (MBR).

According to a military intelligence report published on June 12, 1994 by *El Nacional*, Chávez began his political activities by putting distance between himself and Radical Cause. That separation was, and is, fictitious. Members of Radical Cause greeted Chávez in Charallave (a town on the outskirts of Caracas), and accompanied him in all of his tour activities there. The report adds that "Hugo Chávez Frías seeks to advance his strategy for power by trying to channel all accumulated discontent, especially among the poorest sectors, into insurrection."

Radical Cause belongs to a narco-terrorist organization controlled by Fidel Castro, known as the São Paulo Forum, to which the Cuban Communist Party and numerous Latin

American guerrilla groups also belong. The main parties in the Forum are all intimately linked to the gigantic arms depot discovered in Nicaragua in late 1993, along with detailed plans for kidnappings and other terrorist actions.

Rear Adm. Hernán Grüber Odremán, leader of the Nov. 27, 1992 uprising against CAP, wrote in a letter to Chávez and published in his book *The Military Insurrection of Nov. 27, 1992*: "By the way, Chávez, we are firmly convinced that it is inappropriate to arm civilians. Weapons are for the military." In clear reference to Chávez's project, Grüber reprimanded him: "We cannot adopt extremist or ultra ideas as our own, because we are certain that they contradict Venezuelan nature."

### The pincer's right arm

On June 1, *El Universal* reported that Defense Minister Gen. Rafael Montero Revette told the Defense Commission