

LO NUNCA NUESTRO LO SIEMPRE AJENO



Poder
Para
El
Pueblo

LO TOMAREMOS CIENTOS DE MILES

Brigade
to
Venezuela
2023
Zine



Cover photos and all the high-quality photos in this zine were taken by Rome Arrieche (@romearrieche).



The first-ever Poder Para El Pueblo Brigade was composed of the Los Angeles Tenants Union, Unión de Vecinos, Tenant and Neighborhood Council, Pasadena Tenants Union, Los Angeles Community Center for Law and Action, and Radio Jornalera.

We stand in full solidarity with the people of Venezuela and their Bolivarian Revolution. We condemn the United States economic sanctions against Venezuela, and the American Empire's war of terror meant to break the revolutionary spirit of the comuna.

¡Comuna o Nada! Housing is a Human Right!

Foreword

By T.t. of the KTown Local of the Los Angeles Tenants Union

"What Was Never Ours, That Which Never Belonged To Us, We Will Take Hundreds Of Thousands."

The title of this zine was uttered by comrade Yoda from La Minka on our second day in Caracas, Venezuela. It immediately spoke to me and the baggage that I carried from the Los Angeles Tenants Union (LATU), which I brought with me to Venezuela in hopes of unpacking. LATU as a base building organization is poised to wage a meaningful struggle against the commodification of housing, but we have a long way to go to advance toward the horizon of popular power.

The Bolivarian Revolution, through the work of groups such as El Movimiento de Pobladoras y Pobladores, extends the struggle beyond just housing toward an all-out urban socialist revolution. Traveling from comuna to comuna, seeing the vivid life in their movement, and exchanging realities with our Venezuelan comrades, we caught glimpses of their multi-scale community organizing—and realized how much LATU would have to evolve to achieve the same progress.

The eviction moratorium in Los Angeles has ended, and evictions in some cities are now 50% higher than they were pre-pandemic. Our organizing can persist through these hard times, but how do we meet moments and become better prepared for the next challenge, the next conjunctural window of opportunity, the next Hugo Chávez? Venezuela has taught me that LATU can never reach new stages of struggle unless we constantly grow our membership, work through contradictions and move forward in unison.

How do we heighten our movement? Each day of our brigade, with a different collective in a different context, we were blessed with a different piece of that puzzle. Of course, that puzzle infinitely expands, and the horizon is never-ending. If capitalism is an endlessly destructive process, then we can only undo it with an endlessly generative revolution. If the horizon isn't far enough, we have no incentive to march toward it. We can't stop at a hundred chapters, a dozen coalitions or a thousand new militants.

Even after hundreds of thousands of meetings, victories and evolutions, we should always expect, demand, and win more out of this socialist life.

Day One: **LAYING THE STATE FOUNDATION**



Venezuela's Great Housing Mission (GMV) has built over 4.4 million houses for working-class families since 2011, after revolutionary leader Hugo Chávez declared access to land and adequate housing to be human rights and the foundation for a dignified life. Urbanismo Comandante Hugo Chavez, pictured above and located in the state of La Guaira, has 3,088 homes. The National Assembly gives power to this comuna's fifteen *consejos comunales* to carry out the *ley orgánica de la comuna*.

*nosotros
ejercemos
la
soberanía
del
territorio*



Greeted by communal representatives overseeing athletics, utilities, political development, and health.



Our tour of the communal house had us learning about feminist and lgbtq+ rights in a health clinic, sparring in boxing gym, clapping in a dance studio, observing how social work is managed in tandem with communal governance, witnessing our comrades get interviewed in a live radio station, and vibing while a community watch group plays drums.









Every day of the brigade, at some point, we would be ushered into a room where our hosts would tell us a bit about their community and their work, and in return we would offer some perspective on the American Dream and our tenant organizing work.

They pulled out a projector and played a video showing the beginning of their *urbanismo*. A huge crowd marches and chants, with political representatives proclaiming their decree on the land—an unused parking garage, which by law is to be expropriated for people’s right to housing. The landlord visibly and furiously protests.



Then the next clip shows a bulldozer destroying the garage, with the help of the state police *arresting* the landlord for resisting and disturbing the process. Our room erupted into cheerful applause. What a dreamlike sequence, almost a fantasy of what LATU could accomplish in X amount of time. What we had just watched was the complete opposite of our reality in the United States, where the police are there to violently remove tenants from their homes.



What an emotional punch to start our brigade. But we were perplexed, and unsure of how to connect this to our struggle. Venezuela has laid the foundation for a state that actually creates access to dignified housing and land. Meanwhile, most of our city council are landlords themselves. How do we keep fighting for housing and land when we haven’t laid enough of a foundation for a state that will articulate and defend those rights? The next few days would offer us some clues.





This comuna's "police" or "neighborhood watch" are a bunch of teenagers and young adults. We asked them what kind of issues they normally deal with, and one responded: "sometimes, people play music too loud, and you know, we are trained to negotiate that kind of disagreement between people..."





This woman has lived in her home since the *urbanismo* was built. She has remained loyal to the revolution ever since.



[Party bus
photos are
redacted]





Nuevamente la inmensidad de la mar insurgente ignotiza a sus visitantes,

Sus olas parecen traer un poema entendido por todos y todas, su fuerza rompe con las barreras idiomáticas,

Un deleité, una mirada de grandeza de una mar cargada de historia y sentimientos...

Cada cual en su misterio tiene una conversación con la mar, que se dice es un secreto, pero seguramente la mar le dice: luchen y conquisten sus sueños para sea suya la victoria del pueblo.

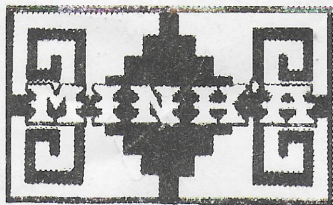
Leo
LEOH

Day Two: TERRITORIALIZING POPULAR POWER



This bakery used to be privately-owned, and would hoard the flour distributed by the government amidst sanctions, overprice and speculate on their bread, and only cater to an upper caste of customers. The government allowed the bakery to be seized by La Minka, who then began producing bread for the people—the cheapest in the country and at unprecedentedly high quantities. La Minka— self-described by Natalia as crazy hairy hippies and whose name is a Quechua term meaning *collective work done for the community*— fosters the communal subject through five vertices of accumulating productive, communicational, cultural, defensive, and militant forces.

Occupying land was a recurring theme in our parsing of La Minka's territorial logic.



PANADERIA
MINKA COMUNAL
PARROQUIA ALTAGRACIA
SIN VALOR FISCAL

09/07/2023 10:28 AM
CAJERO: ERICH
TURNO # 267
FOLIO: 22813

CANT.	DESCRIPCION	IMPORTE
1	MALOJILLO S	BS10,00

NO. DE ARTICULOS: 1
TOTAL: BS10,00
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Back-to-back, we had gotten to see an expropriated bakery and an urban garden which started as an occupation of an unused vacant lot. The garden not only raises staples like chickens, rabbits and mangoes but also traditional medicinal herbs that help foster well-being and serve as alternatives to allopathic medicine.

These takeovers were part of a long-term contingency plan to systematize, diagnose and treat different needs in the territory. They played an integrated role in the five-vertex plan, particularly with productive, cultural and militant forces. The people were producing things they needed, creating a culture around that shared production, and propagating their innovative social lives into political realms.

While yesterday felt a bit removed from our fascistic circumstances in the U.S., today really concretized our immediate task of building popular power that is self-governed, self-sufficient, productive, and creative. The urban nature of the Miraflores comuna lent itself to the creative solution of occupying and repurposing sites of urban decay for the people and their identified needs.

LA discourse around squatting has been fleeting and tenuous. Besides the Reclaimers, there hasn't been much organized effort to occupy land in a way that is self-sufficient and fulfills an outlined contingency plan like La Minka's.

I think about what comrade Luis said later that day—the revolutionary decision doesn't just come from the brain, heart and mouth, but also the stomach. Actions that truly advance struggle are supposed to arouse internal discomfort and make your gut uneasy, like the audacity of occupying land. But it must arise from the people's needs and be driven by the people's ownership. This is what advances tactics like land occupation from purely being a stunt to being an organic accumulation of a comuna's forces.





“small
people in
small
places
doing small
things that
together
transform
the world”

As of July 2023, our Venezuelan comrade Rome is single. As you can see, cats love him. Good sign.
Hit him up on Instagram:
[@romearrieche](#).



Singing and
dancing to
the beat of
African
drums.
Roots are
important.



POPULAR CULTURE



The Afro-
Venezuelan
tradition of
San Juan
(St. John
the
Baptist).



Screen
printing



Radio
station



Acá van en la conversa, se habla el idioma universal de la revolución, las oraciones están versadas de tal manera que genera una conexión entre seres e iguales, las palabras son construidas como el obrero y así nos entendemos.

Como dice Alí, van tocando puertas, tocando corazones,

Una parada en una esquina cualquiera, llega a sus oídos un susurro de la historia insurgente de este pueblo.

En la comuna Miraflores, sus habitantes cuentan como un pueblo salió a revertir la historia de un golpe ejecutado por el imperio, más adelante en otra esquina cuentan como han hecho para resistir en tiempos guerra, las paredes hablan porque en cada una de ellas hay un mural con mensaje.

La diversidad de las cosas que se hacen son un misterios resueltos para avanzar en la lucha, y se cuenta como se hizo y cómo se hace, el secreto es hacer haciendo.

Y al ritmo del tambor se despidió la brigada, porque cada latido de nuestros corazones hay un compás de tambor que hace que espíritu se estremezca para continuar la lucha.

Así que la brigada lleva rostros, historias y ritmo para su tierra.

A handwritten signature in black ink, followed by the word 'LEOH' written in a stylized, blocky font.

Day Three:

GROWING THE COMMUNAL UNION



Comuna Socialista 5 de marzo, in the working-class barrio of El Valle, comprises seven consejos comunales, and as a whole is part of the super-communal structure, Unión Comunera, in which it is the most central and urban region. While Unión Comunera seeks to unify disparate grassroots movements, 5 de marzo undergoes a microcosmic process of cohering different “communalization” efforts happening in its different territories.

We got to witness this at a cellular level, in a real meeting with organizers duking it out. We also got to see how communalization is propagated in all ages, genders, and walks of life.

COMUNA Socialista

5 de Marzo

Comandante Eterno



Censo Económico:

Es la fuente de información oficial para estadística sobre los negocios y la actividad económica del país.

Se usa para que la toma de decisiones de negocios y de política pública.

Se conforma por dos etapas:

1. Registro estadístico.
2. Encuestas de estructura económica y sectorial.



Registro de Actividades Económicas

"Constituye el elemento principal de un sistema de estadísticas económicas."

Tutor Académico:

✓ González José Elías.

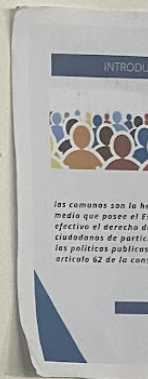
Tutor Comunitario:

✓ Hernández Andy

Prestado

- Berroterán Geo
- Colmenares Dou
- Hernández Ose
- López Camila
- Ramos Gerso
- Roman Valeri
- Romero Valenti
- Ruiz Abril
- Perche Igna
- Salazar Manu

Caracas 30 de Mayo.





This consejo comunal meeting was composed of communal representatives each representing different territories of the comuna. Some achievements were celebrated, such as accomplishing 100% of renovation needs. The debate of the day, however, was about base-building. The woman with red hair who seemed to be leading the meeting made it clear that the

overarching issue was a gradual decline in numbers of volunteers, and others in the room were made to defend their outreach efforts in their individual areas.

Organizers described the makeup of their territories as divided between Chavistas, the *ni-ni's* (people who are neither here nor there), the *simpatéticos* (not yet explicitly Chavista but support the movement) and *la oposición*. Another characterization was of people who benefit from the revolution but don't support the movement.

Debate around strategies on who and how to target was impassioned. Whenever someone would speak, they would stand up and speak for a minimum of two minutes. Others would respond, offering feedback or even criticism of the organizing perspective. At the end, the woman with the red hair facilitated reconciliation between opposing points and brought everyone in with action items and a renewed sense of **collective duty** to building comunas.

Analogous LATU meeting structures are not at this level, because we have an unproductive politeness about even obligating organizers to uphold certain standards of base-building. A lot of organizers are more generally conflict averse and avoid debating ideological differences openly, which has created destructive schisms. Some locals don't even have a base, others don't have as much as the neighborhood potential calls for. Seeing this meeting drove home why it's important to openly hold members accountable to base-building, foster debate among base builders who have equal amounts of commitment and duty, and to encourage and nurture each other to base-build more effectively.

Check out this communal gas!
Households periodically trade
in their canisters for refills.

These women (and men) are hard at
work constructing new needed
buildings. The sanctions haven't
heavily impacted the material
imports, but more so the
technological management of
logistics, finances, and health. The
builders and ordinary people are
learning by doing with help from the
State. 🙌





At some point, they asked us: what kind of cultural production do you all do? One of us sheepishly said something about potlucks. The ensuing spectacles were almost like them saying: these poor, culturally deprived Americans, bring out the dancing and singing kids!

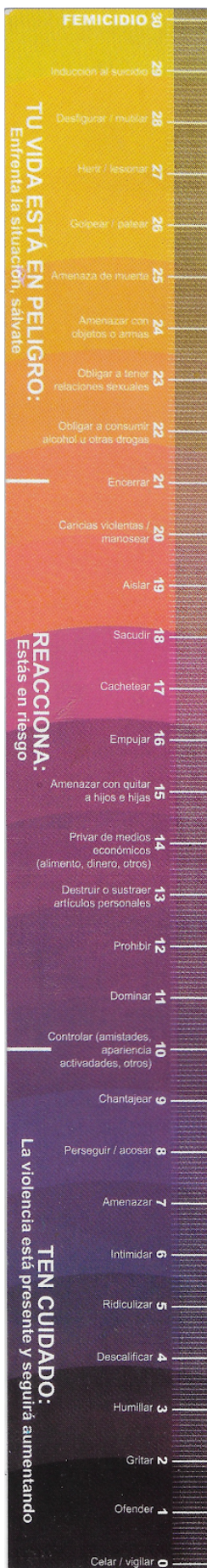
Venezuelan

children are the life-blood of the movement. The culture that we produce for their upbringing is the indoctrination of the revolution. Older comuna militants, such as the ones in the consejo communal meeting, recognize that their time is nearing, and that they must focus on nurturing the next generation of militants. Why do we in Los Angeles neglect our children, and not focus on their protagonism? We need to create more spaces for youth and create a popular culture where youth participate and help write the future—*their* future.









We walked up and down stairs through narrow winding walkways to arrive at the Casita Morada, a comuna space for women and victims of

gender-based violence. In the comuna, you will still overhear adolescent boys with their usual sexist language, or contend with older señoras and their Catholic mores. As women work, take care of domestic tasks, and care for the greater community, they are also leading political education so that the comuna becomes a violence-free society for the very people that make it run.







Strangely we didn't hear much about the Gran Misión Vivienda Venezuela today. We just saw this awesome development across the street from the supermarket headquarters where we had our discussions at.

The communards are busy organizing their comunas in the hills. The State and its housing initiatives will catch up to them.



El barrio educa, tiene su propio metabolismo, el ciclaje de la vida tiene otros códigos.

Desde El Valle de Caracas, ciudad inmortal que resiste desde sus simientos, surge como las flores lo nuevo y lo bello, una flor son miles flores, la pradera se enciende llena de colores diversos, claros y oscuros creando un paisaje construido sin odio.

Cada escalera recita como un poema: el esfuerzo de la gente y sus luchas, no se sobrevive sino que se lucha para la vivir, porque se vive luchando.

Nos sentamos al final de la tarde, los métodos parecen distante solo desde el idioma, pero en la práctica la forma se encuentra como el coro en una canción: asambleas, reuniones, compartir, formación, cultura, lo comunicacional, y más y más y más.

Los niños y niñas se acercan, curiosos de palabras desconocidas al oído, pero conocidas en el alma, en su inocencia generan conexión ideal para el intercambio y aprendizaje, crecerá un hombre y una mujer nueva en defensa de la humanidad.

El objetivo es sumar, despertar a la gente del sueño americano que es la pesadilla de todos los pueblos, la misión es hermosa luchamos acá en contra del imperialismo desde afuera, y nuestro amigos y amigas de la brigada del sindicato de inquilinos de los Ángeles luchan contra el imperio desde adentro, juntos y juntas venceremos. Juntos y junta declaramos: tomaremos el cielo por asalto, Todo el poder para el pueblo.



Day Four:

CONSTRUCTING THE POPULAR FOUNDATION

“No se improvisa, se planifica”





The AVV (Asociación Viviendo Venezolano) Jorge Rodríguez Padre are 96 families who began organizing twelve years ago to build their own housing on formerly private unused land. Each family provides one person to help with construction—76

of these builders are women—as well as food for communally-shared lunch breaks. None of them knew anything about construction, but driven by a maternal desire to secure dignified housing for their children, the mothers were quick to learn how to mix cement, lay bricks, and bend metal.

The sanctions hit the construction process hard in 2017, especially on women, but they are working and exchanging materials with other housing assemblies to finish construction within a year. We were absolutely floored by witnessing this feat of popular power in progress.





Comrade teaching
us how to bend
metal rods.







This woman is proudly posing for a photo inside her future home. Like all her future neighbors, not only did she have direct input on which unit and location she wanted, and the format of her

home, but she also is helping build it with her bare hands.

Many families of the AVV Jorge Rodríguez Padre currently live nearby, where they are facing steep rent increases from their landlord. We couldn't help but imagine the creative depth of the seemingly tri-fold solution that the State helped engineer: create new housing by expropriating an unused car lot (why does it always seem to be car lots or parking garages?), prevent evictions of organized tenants by giving them truly affordable housing, and make their landlord have fewer tenants and be more readily expropriable in the future :)



The mujeres of AVV Jorge Rodríguez Padre gettin' down!



The children had so many gifts for us 🥹



We met with Campamentos de Pioneros in a reclaimed parking lot. They are part of the larger Movimiento de Pobladoras y Pobladores, in which they struggle for self-organized popular housing construction. More broadly, in the context of Pobladores' Urban



Revolution, the subject is not necessarily the proletariat, but it is the **urban poor living in a**

rentier capitalist state (LATU, take note!). Families who need homes and are willing to organize are prepared to do popular rescues of vacant lots, such as this parking lot, and defend their takeovers from reactionary forces.





The Campamento de Pioneros **Amatina** was one of the first expropriations under Chavez (taken from the Polar Corporation, apparently the beer of choice in Venezuela, which tastes alright), and he himself has visited this site in key moments of its development. As we got a tour of the communal library, and met teens who grew up here, I couldn't help but think of Hillside Villa—a slumlord-owned housing development in LA that's been through years of struggle to get expropriated and has hit a dead end with mayor Karen Bass ghosting the organized tenants after the city's false promises.

At Campamento de Pioneros **22 de enero**, we toured the abodes of families living dignified lives with dignified homes. We learned that if we can't lay the state foundation tomorrow, we need to construct a stronger popular foundation today. It all begins with organizing stronger popular power.





Hoy estuvimos en la marcha con más energía y más alegría, Anni, con sus cabellos rojizos como el sol, salió a la luz en esta patria, con su paso de gigante camino los sueños de Bolívar, conoció los proyectos del pueblo que lucha, se rodio de niños y niñas y camino los pasillos de una patria en libertad.

Su voz se hizo sentir en agradecimiento a este pueblo que la recibió con los brazos abiertos.

En su mirada se va el reflejo de sus sueños que son los mismos de acá.

Leo
LEOH

Bienvenidos al futuro,

Como en una máquina del tiempo, viajamos al futuro-presente del Proyecto Bolivariano, deslumbrante es la obra que se ejecuta, aprender haciendo es el método participativo que edifica un mundo nuevo.

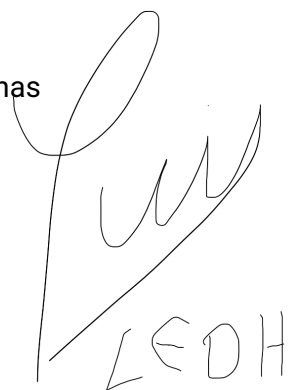
Las mujeres, desde su belleza, su sabiduría, sus formas, son las principales artífices de esta obra, son: arquitectas e ingenieras, maestras de obras, cabilleras, y también son madres, amigas, esposas, y con su ejemplo suman a los hombres a participar, demuelen desde la casa el patriarcado, la consigna es clara: Cuando una mujer avanza ningún hombre retrocede.

A la hora del día, la organización es clave, brigadas a conformar: de construcción, agricultura urbana, de guardias, la clave es incorporar el amor al proyecto la eficiencia es vital y en el AVV Jorge Rodríguez Padres, no se improvisa sino que se planifica.

El baile es conector de saberes,
es el lenguaje universal de la felicidad,
la alegría la melodía perfecta,
los corazones al ritmo de la música aceleran los cambios sociales,
la felicidad se construye como un edificio,
cada bloque, cada grano de arena, cada litro de agua,
cada metro de acero cuenta para edificar un mundo mejor,
porque un mundo mejor es posible,
porque lo hacemos posible.

El bloqueo no las detiene, ante una necesidad y una adversidad hay una solución creativa, es un parto creativo para seguir dando nacimiento a lo nuevo. Está prohibido cansarse, dar un grito de un joven que aviva la jornada, sentenciamos al capitalismo como culpable de las desgracias de la humanidad.

Seguimos avanzando con nuestras formas y ritmos con nuestros cantos y consignas
Tenemos patria, nosotros somos la patria.

A handwritten signature in black ink, followed by the letters "LEOH" in a stylized, blocky font.

Day Five: SQUEEZING OUT THE CONTRADICTIONS



One of the first videos we watched as a brigade to prepare for Venezuela was a Movimiento de Inquilinas e Inquilinos tweet documenting an eviction defense taking place for a tenant who was accused of operating a business in their home and whose possessions were illegally being moved out by their landlord. We were naively flabbergasted by this video—how could this still be happening *in a socialist state* with pretty advanced tenant protections? We finally got to sit down with our tenant comrades from a parallel universe to learn about how Inquilin@s plays the role within the broader Pobladores of squeezing out the most stubborn contradictions emanating from the vestigial landlord-tenant relationship and all economic forces who continue to exploit it.



Rigel Sergent, our contact from Movimiento de Inquilinas e Inquilinos who we saw in that Twitter video, welcomed us to our first stop at an apartment building located in the parroquia of San Bernardino (totally different from the Inland Empire one).

Contrary to what some believe, San Bernardino isn't just a normal middle-class neighborhood, and this building filled with senior residents isn't just ordinary tranquil living. The elderly tenants are facing landlord harassment, as is seen in the broader neighborhood, and just like our elders are in Los Angeles.

We heard a little bit about their fight against evictions, which, in the context of Venezuela's advanced legal frameworks, means being able to deploy more legal mechanisms at various points of eviction, or preparing for the most "illegal" evictions, since those are what remain. Like LATU, they build networks of rapid solidarity, such as nearby comrades who can come help physically defend forms of landlord harassment and aggression.





MOVIMIENTO DE INQUILINAS E INQUILINOS



GUÍA DE ACTUACIÓN POPULAR ANTE UN DESALOJO ARBITRARIO

La siguiente guía es un instrumento dirigido a las familias inquilinas u ocupantes legítimas, comunidades y organizaciones sociales que sirva para orientar y apoyar la actuación desde el Poder Popular en cumplimiento al ordenamiento jurídico existente y estableciendo algunas etapas y actuaciones que brinden protección integral a las familias que se encuentren ante la práctica de un desalojo arbitrario.

A pesar que la legislación venezolana establece el procedimiento para la desocupación de vivienda, tanto por vía administrativa como por vía judicial, dándole empeño a la conciliación y la mediación para procurar un acuerdo voluntario entre las partes involucradas en un conflicto de vivienda, cuando ocurre un desalojo arbitrario de una vivienda son vulnerados directamente derechos humanos y constitucionales de la familia víctima de ese hecho.

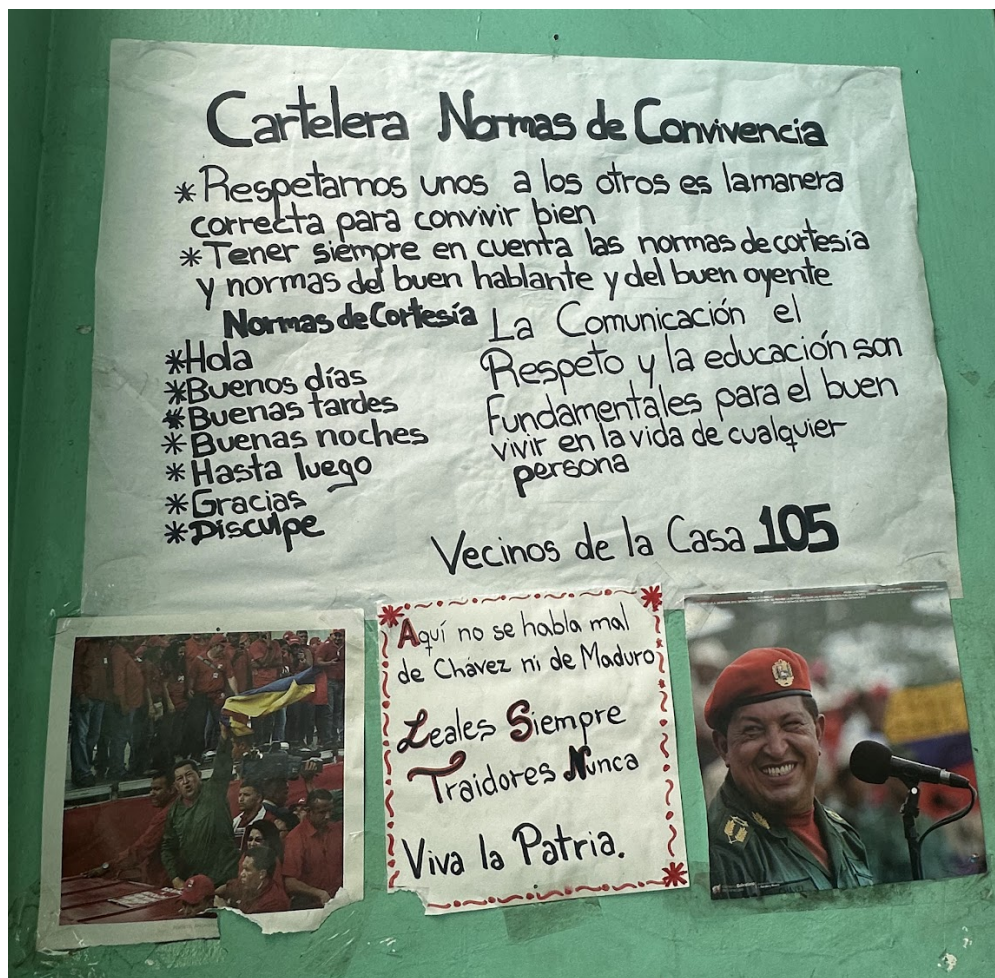
DESALOJO ARBITRARIO

Se considera un desalojo arbitrario cuando una persona o familia que habita como arrendataria u ocupante legítimo de un inmueble destinado a vivienda principal es desalojada de la misma sin el cumplimiento y garantías que la legislación internacional y nacional establece como condiciones mínimas y necesaria para la desocupación o reubicación de los habitantes de la vivienda.

Generalmente, un desalojo arbitrario viene acompañado con hechos de violencia, física y verbal, se pueden dar con o sin la presencia de la persona que ocupa legítima y pacíficamente la vivienda, y por lo general se ejecutan sin la presencia de alguna institución pública, aunque en algunos casos puede haber presencia de algún funcionario que actúe fuera del marco legal.

Delitos más comunes que acompañan a los desalojos arbitrarios son:

- **Perturbación a la posesión pacífica** de la vivienda, art. 472 del Código Penal.
- **Hacerse justicia por sí mismo**, art. 270 del Código Penal.
- **Inviolabilidad del domicilio**, art. 183 del Código Penal, cuando viene acompañado el desalojo con la actuación irregular de algún funcionario público sin tener alguna orden o decisión administrativa o judicial que así se lo permita.







They wanted to make it very clear that this delicacy was called “domino” in reference to the game that older caraqueño folks like to play. It’s black beans dotting white cheese in an arepa, making it appear like a domino piece. The juice was good too, and tasted similar to sugar cane.





Comandante Charles looking like a top-ranking PSUV general on vacation ready to link with Movimiento de Pobladores after expropriating some landlords.



We met in a
PSUV multi-
purpose
room.
Pobladores
and its
umbrella
initiatives
have a
physical
home there.





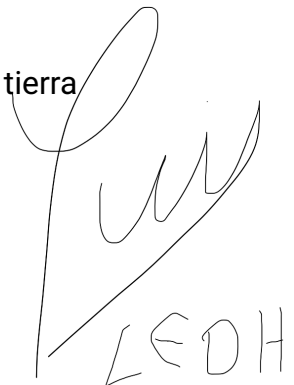
A young girl demonstrates popular youth culture in action with a phenomenal singing performance.





Then we met Diosdado Cabello, VP of PSUV & member of the National Assembly, after attending and being shouted out on his weekly talk show, *Con El Mazo Dando*. That show's lit, he's literally just taking shots at the opps for four hours, picking apart hater tweets and putting them in SNL-type takedown videos. The corkboard reads, "Welcome to the only show sanctioned by the civilized European Union." More on information warfare later.

El punto de encuentro de la solidaridad internacional,
El rincón de las palabras y los sueños,
ni Robinson lo hubiese ideado de tal manera,
la complicidad de las locuras vistas se trasladan a la velocidad de los megas.
La conexión de internet permite una extensión de dos mundos,
la virtualidad se hace tan presente que se comparten los nombres,
las ideas,
las cosas vistas,
se genera como el multiverso un espacio para que los amigos, las familias y los
amores desde las distancias se encuentren.
Los abrazos, los besos, los buenos deseos, los exámenes del colegios, todo se
mide en la cantidad de bits por minutos,
de tal manera que se saborea la vida se comparte la felicidad desde la Matrix,
los otros y otras allá en el norte sólo dibujan un paisaje según él narrativa.
Pero hoy es un día especial,
las mujeres adornan la tarde caraqueña con su belleza deslumbrante de pueblo,
la silueta dibuja en su rostro la más bella sonrisa y el sonido de su voz es como
el canto de un turpial,
porque la revolución es ética y estética,
y la belleza no es un producto comercial sino que brota desde la espiritualidad.
Los hombres con su galantería hacen como Chávez sacan pecho y lucen su
belleza sin competencia, ni principios inhumanos,
al contrario saludan a la vida y agradecen estar en la tierra de Bolívar, en la tierra
de hombres que luchamos por las cosas buenas de la humanidad.

A handwritten signature in black ink, followed by the letters "LE DH" written in a simple, blocky font.

Day Six: **TERRACING THE GRAND MISSION**



Clockwise from right: Hugo Chávez, San Juan de los Morros, Simón Bolívar, and Francisco de Miranda in what appears to be Karl Lagerfeld-esque sunglasses. *Frente Francisco de Miranda (FFM)* is for Venezuela's die-hard youth—the adolescent militants formed into cadre who mobilize via “social missions” to further the Bolivarian revolutionary process. We visited Urbanismo Terrazas de Hugo Chávez in the state of Guárico, three hours away from Caracas, where FFM militants are stationed in another school stronghold similar to where we were staying and orchestrating a hybridized vision of popular power. Here, an intricate series of steppes carved into the social-ecological terrain guides the people into grander terraces of socialist organizing.





We visited a woman's home that was built by the joint effort between the Gran Misión Vivienda Venezuela (GMMV), FFM and herself, under the *autoconstrucción* framework. The organized people were part of the construction process.

2 bedrooms, one bathroom, a kitchen and living room.

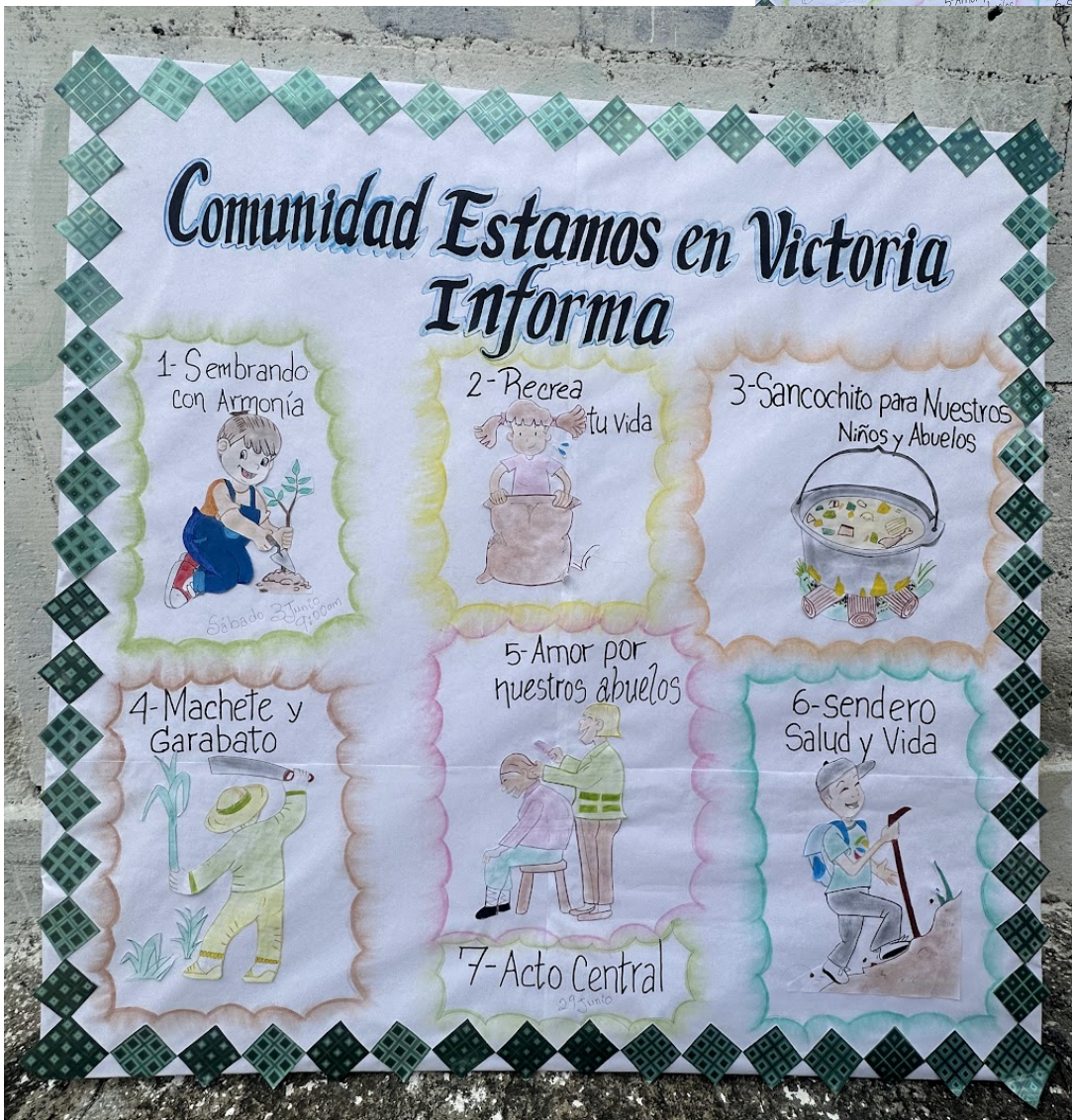
The nation as a whole has succeeded in building over four million houses in 13

years through the GMMV. In Guárico, the FFM is most interested in carrying out the *autogestión* that advances the new communities' needs with organized bodies and productive forces specific to Guárico's context such as food production.

FFM are like youth consultants for the Bolivarian process. They mix bureaucratic institutional resources with fresh, creative approaches in order to fully carry out their social mission—in this case, housing.



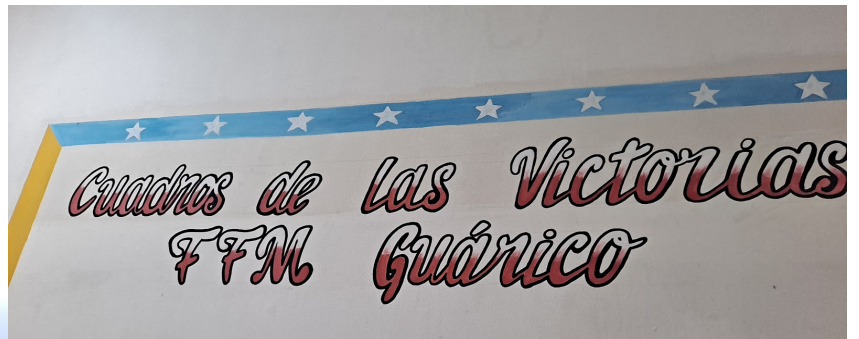
Valores llaneros.





Like the FFM, Terrazas de Hugo Chávez features a social organization that always has participants laddering up to more committees, more councils, higher needs, and bigger forms of organization. As FFM militants put it, this broad vision creates the conditions for people to never stagnate, to always be in community and accumulating bigger swaths of communal forces.





#3. Sancochito para Nuestros Niños y Abuelos.





The FFM comrade sang us a Spanish version of the song *Zombie* by Cranberries. The song describes capitalism—living socially isolated from humanity and society, and being among the living dead, like a zombie. Socialism and the Bolivarian process are here to reverse that alienation, he says. Yup, you can tell FFM is a genuine youth movement.

In return, our resident youth countercultural icon Eddie surprised us all by playing a Billy Bragg song. The room was silent, save for sancocho slurps.





My favorite FFM militant and youth™, Luis Ortuño, gifted me this book, *La guerra del pueblo*. He called it the Venezuelan version of People's War, People's Army: The Viet Công Insurrection Manual for Underdeveloped Countries by Vo Nguyễn Giap after we had a conversation about revolutionary linkages between Venezuela and Vietnam. Luis's social mission is in urban agroecology—we'd call it guerrilla farming back home, but in Caracas, microfarming is fully supported and mandated by the State. Luis teaches different comunas how to implement grow-ops in their territories, and the harvesting of the produce is managed cooperatively on a rotational basis among the different beneficiary households. Luis grew up a Chavista and under the

leadership and influence of Chávez his entire life. FFM was started by Chávez and Castro shortly after the 2002 coup, in the interest of preserving and raising the new generation as a vanguard force with the task of constructing a new socialism. It gives Luis and other young people a path to leadership and ownership of their future.

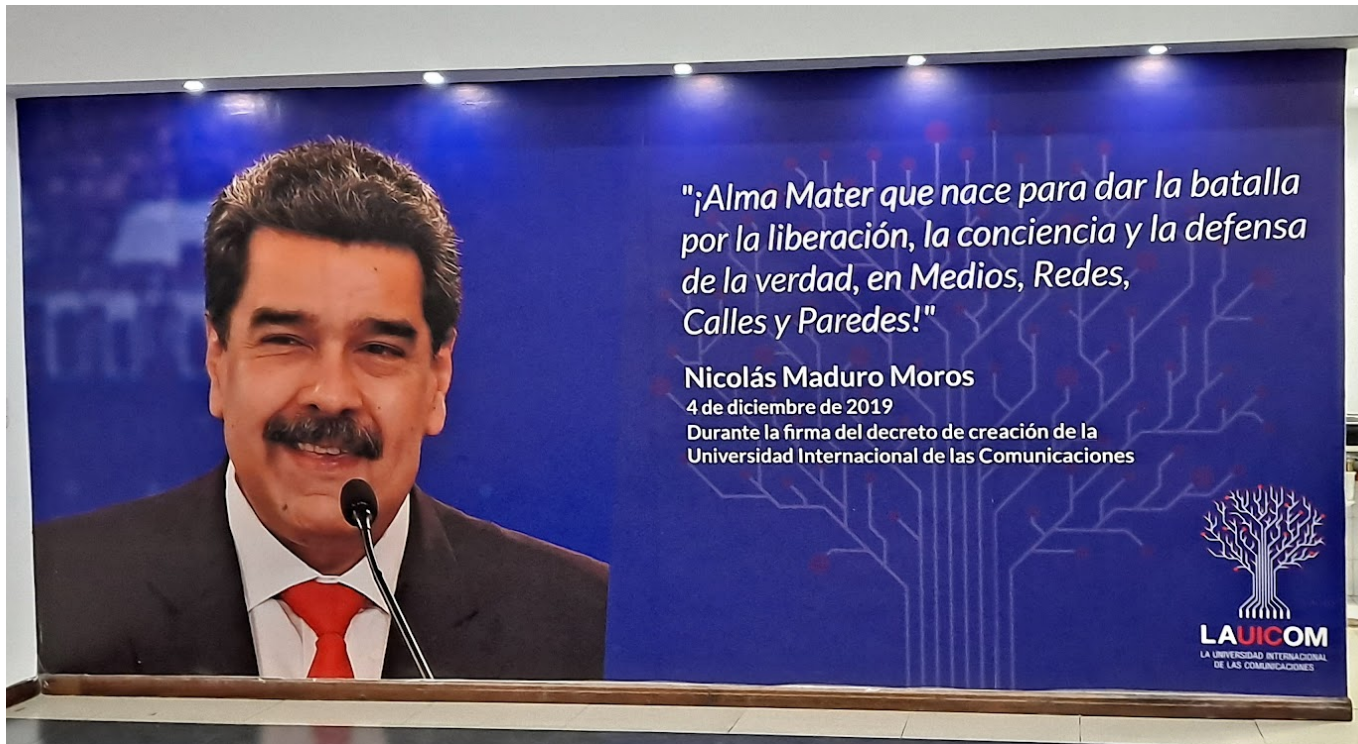
Erika Farías Peña, the National Director of the FFM and member of the National Directorate of PSUV, spoke to us later that night about her own journey under FFM. Here she is standing next to a photo of a younger version of herself on the left-hand side of Chávez. The backdrop behind her reads, **EL FRENTE FRANCISCO DE MIRANDA SE CONSAGRA EN LA TERCERA ETAPA DE LA REVOLUCIÓN.**



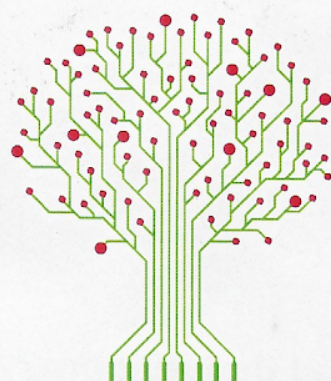
I hope this scan of my certificate makes you vicariously feel like a militant!
Now go *be* a good militant, and earn your own!



Day Seven: **COMMUNICATING FOR LIBERATION**



If the field of communication and public relations in the United States is in service of protecting capital, then the field of communication and public relations in Venezuela and specifically at La Universidad Internacional de las Comunicaciones (UICOM) is in service of defending the Bolivarian Revolution. Information warfare is as important as the ideological battle that enwraps the revolution. Similar to Cuba, Venezuela is punctured by American propaganda that intends to deceive Venezuelans amidst an economic crisis that suffocates their sense of critical judgment. Every single day of our brigade, we made time to debunk the American Dream to Venezuelans, because they are constantly misled by misinformation intended to undermine the Venezuelan dream. When we visited UICOM, we saw how the institution is taking it upon themselves to give students the tools to inform and educate the masses of today. Content is king, and their course offerings were impressive in incorporating state-of-the-art communications tools. The State is all-in on this effort, and Nicolás Maduro has a pretty hip Instagram.



LAUICOM

LA UNIVERSIDAD INTERNACIONAL
DE LAS COMUNICACIONES

La Universidad Internacional de las Comunicaciones (LAUICOM) surgió como una propuesta en las conclusiones del Congreso Internacional de la Comunicación del Foro de Sao Paulo

Está orientado a profundizar la soberanía e independencia comunicacional y tecnológica de los pueblos para formar profesionales e investigadores con sensibilidad social y visión integradora que conduzcan a las nuevas formas de producción vinculadas a la atención de las principales demandas formativas de los pueblos.

DIPLOMADO EN COMUNICACIÓN POLÍTICA

Tiene como objetivo formar productores integrales para la comunicación política. Impulsar y consolidar una red de articulación y acción comunicacional nacional e internacionalmente, con capacidad y criterio para la formación, investigación, producción y discusión sistemática de contenidos que apunten a la liberación del pensamiento.

MÓDULO I

Participación protagónica en la producción de contenidos

MÓDULO II

Gestión Avanzada de Redes

MÓDULO III

Agitación Política y Comunicación de Calle

MÓDULO IV

Liderazgo para la Nueva Época

CURSOS Y TALLERES

- | | | | | | |
|----|---|----|--|----|---|
| 01 | Noticias para la paz | 10 | Comunicación de calle | 20 | Sonido |
| 02 | Radiotransmedia | 11 | Diseño | 21 | Narrativa gráfica (Cómics) |
| 03 | Posicionamiento de marca en internet | 12 | Fotografía | 22 | Haz vídeos como un profesional con tu teléfono |
| 04 | Periodismo con perspectiva de género | 13 | Guión documental | 23 | Iluminación |
| 05 | Análisis del discurso | 14 | Locución | 24 | Idea del guión cinematográfico |
| 06 | Comunicación para la Nueva Época | 15 | Manejo de avanzado de redes / Creación de contenidos virales | 25 | Corresponsalía de guerra y periodismo en situación de conflicto |
| 07 | ¿Cómo hacer mi video en Tik Tok, Facebook, Twitter, Telegram y Reels? | 16 | Operaciones de defensa psicológicas | | |
| 08 | Agitación Política | 17 | Pensando en keywords-SEO | | |
| 09 | Blockchain y Criptoeconomía | 18 | Post-producción | | |
| | | 19 | Producción audiovisual en dispositivos móviles | | |



A mini-museum dedicated to the coup on April 11, 2002, when the ideological and gunfire exchange between Chavistas and opposition snipers yielded blood and pro-coup propaganda.





Left: the opposition headlines attempt to force a premature defeat on Chávez.

Bottom right: this pivotal front page rings the bell on the final round of the coup to take place in Miraflores—and perhaps helps overstay the failing effort.

Bottom left: Chávez is finally free after people march on the palace on April 13th demanding his return. Here is a cardboard cutout of the scene of him arriving back to the palace, gesturing with a fist to the public while surrounded by supporters. Visitors can pose and spiritually take part in restoring him to power.

"Todo 11 tiene su 13."

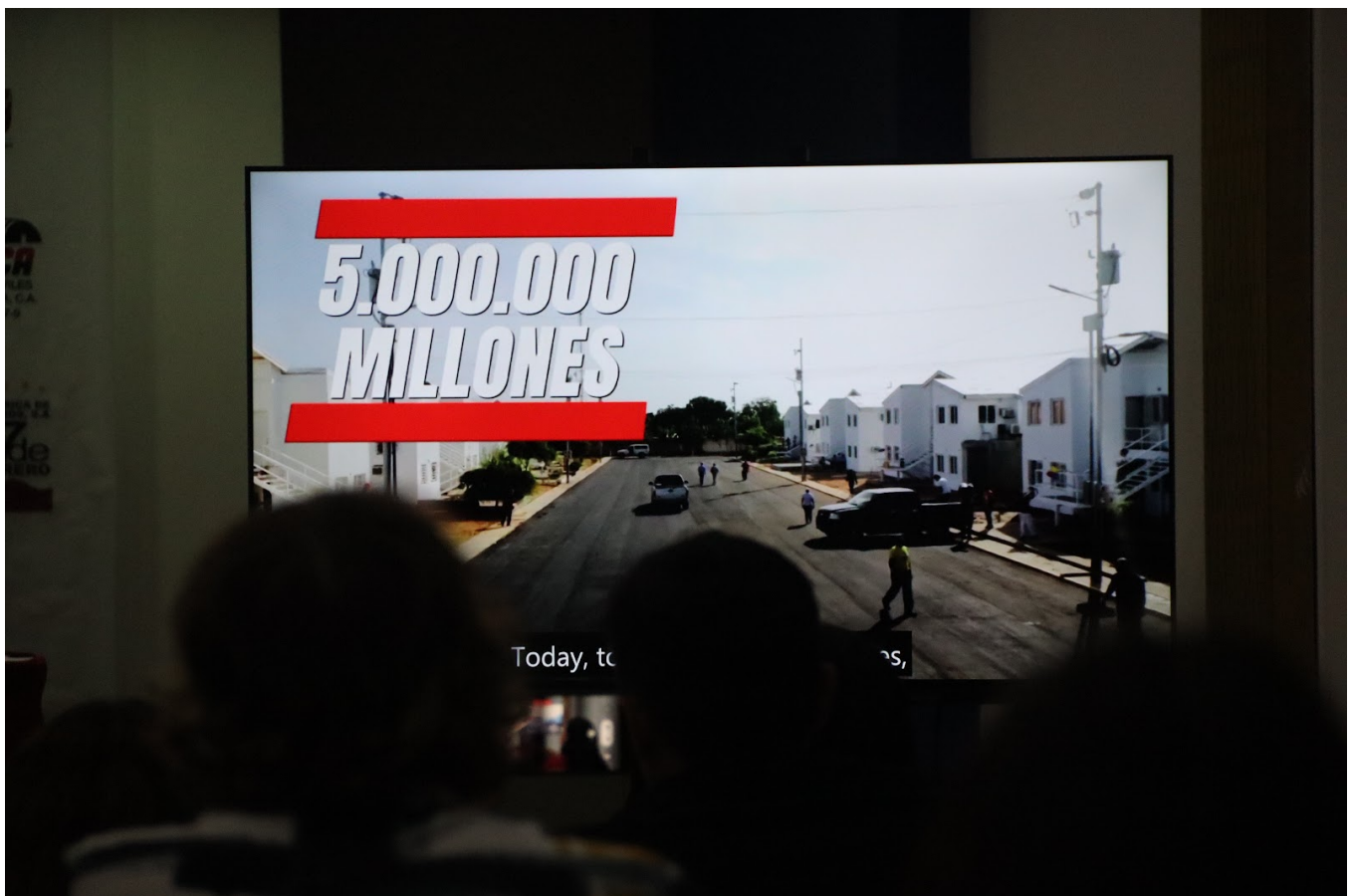


Next thing you know, we're ushered into a lecture hall where we get escorted to the front of the room to standing applause for the Americans who are here to talk about the failures of the American Dream and the struggle of tenant organizing...





Ministerio del Poder Popular para el Hábitat y Vivienda. (@minhvi_oficial)



There is no shortage of Bolivarian aesthetics



There is no shortage of Bolivarian aesthetics



Distrito Capital is where all of the diplomatic offices and Bolívar monuments are, like this wall with a polarizing quote (top) and Bolívar Square (right). Do not sit at the base of the statue like Hamsa did.





Esquina Caliente is where you can get all your hot takes and coffee from the comandantas who sit, hang out, and remain loyal to the Chavista cause!



Haters will say it's authoritarian.
Chavistas will say—
high discipline, high morale.



Day Eight:

CREATING THE CONDITIONS



As Venezuela's Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs for North America and President of the Simon Bolivar Institute Carlos Ron said, the socialist movement in Venezuela was going through ups and downs—and then Chávez came on the scene. What's always implied in between the lines of this telling of history is that Venezuelans **created the conditions** for someone like Chávez to grow up hungry to liberate his country. That is why Simón Bolívar accompanies every image, likeness, and accomplishment of his, even in his death, because there would be no Chávez without Bolívar. Similarly, Chávez created the conditions for the comunas to gain power and lead the Bolivarian revolutionary process, through explicit endorsement and legislative measures. With the baton and entrusted power, the comunas will create the conditions for a new socialism. We must begin to create these same conditions in Los Angeles, given what we learned in our brigade.







On the way to San Agustín, a formerly downtrodden parish re-embracing its African roots in the midst of community revitalization and a cultural renaissance.







I'd like to thank Elizabeth, Ofelia, Leonardo, Ashley, Laura, Marcelo, Diego, Luis, Rome, Melyna, everyone at the Escuela Nacional Robinsoniana, all of the comrades on the brigade, and all of the Venezuelan comrades who opened up their spaces to let us walk among them.

It is crucial that we send our LA comrades in the process of militant formation to Venezuela every year, to learn from a much more advanced socialist project navigating contradictions that we will undoubtedly experience in the future. I am eager to fundraise for next year's brigade, as well as to materially support the Venezuelan people during this time of crushing U.S. sanctions and in larger amounts every year.

Write to us at ktown@latenantsunion.org.

