

# The Nonrenewal of Venezuela's RCTV

An interview with Venezuelan historian and political analyst Vladimir Acosta

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## The nonrenewal of RCTV license is a revolutionary act because it touches the core of world power

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The nonrenewal of RCTV license has caused widespread political repercussions both in Venezuela and worldwide. So far, it has sparked an unusual media stir that has given the right grounds to claim that the revolutionary government is a dictatorship where human rights are violated. Based on such claim, a huge campaign is being organized to request not only the renewal of RCTV license, but plainly and simply put the resignation of President Hugo Chávez.

To know all the details about what is at stake and what this decision entails, as well as the future perspectives on the issue, Argenpress' correspondent in Caracas, Marcelo Colussi, interviewed Vladimir Acosta, Venezuelan historian and political analyst, one of the sharpest observers of the current Bolivarian process.

**Argenpress:** *What is the present meaning of the nonrenewal of RCTV license in political, social, and cultural terms? What is all the fuss about, at the national and international levels?*

**xVladimir Acosta:** In the context of the profound changes implemented in Venezuela in recent years, changes in favor of the great majorities, two specific moments can be considered revolutionary: the process that allowed us to gain back control over our oil resources, and the current times we are living. The process that led to the control of Petróleos de Venezuela (PDVSA) as a State-owned company included two stages: the first was about supporting a new oil act and a new board within the company. The cost was a coup, back in 2002. The government was overthrown, but popular mobilization succeeded in restoring its power after two days thanks to the support of the constitutionalist sectors of the armed forces. The President, after taking power again, generously and perhaps naively reinstated the same board in PDVSA, and those people began to plot against the regime and organized the oil sabotage in December 2002-January 2003. Once the sabotage was successfully countered after a period of intense struggle, then and only then, in what is the second stage, the government was able to take effective control of a company that already belonged to the State, but was managed by an elite called meritocracy that worked in the interests of the US Imperialism. That was a revolutionary moment, because it implied taking control over the oil and the oil company that exploited the oil serving the heavy interests of

the Empire, and confronting the local elite that benefited at the expenses of the great majorities. That moment helped us radicalize an already existing process that originally emerged as a reaction to the aggressions of the right, and helped us advance on the fulfillment of a series of tasks related to social transformation. So the missions emerged with the purpose of bringing health, education, social security and decent living conditions to a majority that had been historically excluded. I.e., for the first time in national history, the oil revenues actually served the people. It was an undoubtedly revolutionary initiative that was accompanied by other equally important initiatives, like the implementation of exchange control regulations to stop the plundering of our country and the new taxes collected from the wealthy.

Right now a similar initiative is being discussed in terms of the progress of our revolution: turning a private TV channel, the property of which has been in the hands of a wealthy family for over 50 years, into a public service company. And we are not even talking about expropriation; no way, because this is a very legalistic revolution. In Venezuela, as in almost every country in the world, radio space belongs to the State, i.e., it belongs to the society. The State, as an expression of society, administers it. So, those who present themselves as owners of TV stations are not so, they are licensees. Licenses, as any person with a minimum knowledge of law, are granted for a specific time under specific conditions. Once that time is up if the authority who granted the license believes that the other party did not comply with the agreed conditions, the license is plainly and simply not renewed. That kind of decision does not mean that the authorities are against private property or that they are acting arbitrarily. That is what happened here with Radio Caracas Televisión -RCTV-, a channel that commercially exploited a frequency for 53 years and after all those years made people believe that a public good became a private good, an endlessly private good. It also made people believe that the company owns the channel. By manipulating the feelings and thoughts of the public, as the media do, it managed to put that image in most of the people's minds. But this frequency does not belong to any private company.

Now, the fact that the State does not renew the license of any frequency, be it radio or TV, is not uncommon, it happens all the time everywhere around the world. For different reasons, legally justified, the States, and this happens quite often, decide not to renew licenses. So, what is all the scandal around RCTV about? Why are the world press, the international media power and the right turning this fact into a struggle flag with such violence? We see a strictly Venezuelan problem on which Parliaments of different countries, international organizations, the Inter-American Press Society (SIP), Reporters without Borders, and all sorts of organizations all around make strong statements and adopt specific attitudes. It would seem as if the entire galaxy were pronouncing itself against the nonrenewal of the license of a private TV channel. Why? Because it is a revolutionary fact. And why is it a revolutionary fact? Because it touches the core of world power. Today, the world power is completely dependent on the media.

When the political electoral system that we call democracy, but actually is not democratic -the representative system to elect authorities in which the poor end up voting for the rich, and the exploited end up voting for the exploiters-, when the system needs electors, it manipulates and deceives them. In the past, when there was no democracy parody, when the poor did not have the right to vote, there was no need to manipulate them. In modern societies, when the great majorities have access to the electoral process and to elect the same rich people in a game of purported democracy, that is where the need to manipulate them emerges. Then, the groups in power must manipulate, domesticate the masses,

deceive them, dissolve their brains, bombard them with banal images so that they are unable to think, so that become mindless. And the media are the key to all that manipulation. Take the media out of the equation, particularly TV, something that has acquired a decisive importance in today's world and the system would collapse. It would collapse because people would start using their own heads if there were no constant invasion from commercial TV, if there were no constant pressure to prevent us from thinking, if our brains were not repeatedly washed to accept the values embedded in indoctrination shows like series, movies, deceitful news shows and low-quality programs that prevent us from seeing reality as it is. Therefore the media and TV above all, are crucial to the continuity of an exploitation system.

Venezuela is giving an example to the world. Sacred interests of the private companies are being touched. There is no need to defend freedom of speech or any of those claims vociferated around. What this particular company loses is, among other things, a big share of profit. It was recently made public that only because of the drop in advertising-derived sales it will stop receiving an approximate amount of 200 million dollars. They are not defending freedom of speech to all and sundry; they are defending the interests at stake. If there is an ideology being defended here, that is the ideology of money, the ideology of power reserved for a small group, i.e., the elite. That is what is at stake. Thus, transforming a channel exploited by a wealthy private company, linked to the US Imperialism and a bitter enemy of the revolutionary changes being implemented in the country, transforming that channel into a public service, democratic and participatory channel in favor of the majorities, that is a measure that the right cannot tolerate. Transforming the channel that only serves its own interest and manipulates people and makes them numb into a channel to serve the people is a revolutionary measure. And not only in favor of Venezuela, but a terrible example for other nations, according to the international right. SIP said it very clearly in recent days: they are worried because the Venezuelan example could be followed in other Latin American countries, such as Ecuador or Bolivia, nations that are also implementing changes.

Hopefully the example will spread and be replicated. Hopefully we will see many cases where private TV channels are turned into public channels to serve the majorities, public channels that defend our cultural values and bring us closer to our own history. We are all familiar with the American history and values, but we know nothing about ourselves. Their TV is universal, it is everywhere around the world and they force us to consume their values, their lifestyle. That is how they control us. We do not know anything about our roots, our own values, our cultures. Through TV, mostly American TV, we have been forced to adopt a culture based on values that are foreign to us. Of course we can make our own TV based on our traditions, meeting our own needs. We can make cultural TV that is not opposed to good quality and entertainment. That is a myth disseminated by tacky TV: the myth that fun and entertainment cannot go hand in hand with high-level culture. We can and we must make good and catchy, enjoyable TV. There is Telesur, for example. That is a different communication model: Latin American TV, made by Latin Americans, able to help us see each other and discover each other as we are, not as third-category Americans. We, Latin Americans, do not know each other because of the cultural invasion. A Venezuelan knows much more about the US than about Paraguay, Argentina or Brazil; he or she knows about stereotypes, which is precisely what commercial media broadcasts. Knowing each other in a different way is indispensable to function as brothers and sisters, people united in a true bloc, sharing common goals. And sharing a common enemy too. That is what the Empire does not want, that is why they bombard us with trash TV that can do nothing but confuse us.

In Venezuela, we have said it, enormous changes and profound transformations are taking place. In that sense, education is crucial. The system preserves itself, partially, through an ever-present repression. Even if it is not evident all the time, in critical situations it manifests to its fullest: there is always a Pinochet crouching somewhere. Repression is always present. But the system also preserves itself day by day through a non-physical kind of repression based on three pillars: the Church, education, and the media. The Church is for the youngest, it serves to instill in them, from an early age, a series of ideas that spoil the possibility of having a critical nature from the very first years. Then comes elementary school, where they become highly ideologized. Education always means ideologization, the introduction to certain values. Education is not possible without ideology. And the education we are used to helps introduce ideas of competition, selfishness, consumerism, racism, i.e., all the values of a capitalist society grounded on such principles. Finally, you have the media, but especially TV. It turns out that the Church remains as part of our childhood; many grownups even contradict religious teachings: the Pope prohibits the use of condoms, and people use them; the Pope prohibits divorce but people get divorced; the Pope prohibits pre-marital sex and sex out of wedlock, but people do not listen to him. But they are still catholic. So the power of the Church is not that big. Education, on the other hand, goes halfway, because not everyone has access to all education levels in the capitalist system. Many, many people hardly finish elementary school, maybe a few manage to move on to high-school, and even fewer make it to college. Now, the media reaches everybody, absolutely everybody. The media reaches the youngest, it reaches teenagers and grownups, the elderly, the illiterate, the educated: so it has become the fundamental and focal point of power. Nobody can match the media in terms of its penetration: certainly not the Church and not formal education. It even competes with and beats schools most successfully: if we want to create a new citizen with new values, with a new ideology, whatever is accomplished during the day, the TV dismantles at night. That is why it is necessary, in order to create a new citizen, to develop a different kind of TV, a public service TV. A terrible element of the system and one that we must fight as strongly as possible: the media cannot be private. A corporation should not have all the resources at hand to manipulate the heads of millions of people in favor of its own sectorial interests while disguising them as collective interests. The media does not have to belong entirely to the State either, because a similar situation could be reproduced. They have to be social property. Their tremendous weight demands that they be administered and managed by society. The citizens have to supervise communication. Even more: the citizens have to make communication. Here, in the western area of Caracas, we have a community TV channel called Catia TV. I love their slogan: "Do not watch TV. Make it". That is what we ought to do, that is the model we must move towards. We need to create a new communications initiative.

**Argenpress:** *The revolution has been developing communication alternatives for some time; actually, it has media of its own, still at a disadvantage compared to private media, but it does have them. What course should this new communication policy take? Will the new channel, TVes, be the model to follow? How to consider everything done so far? How to develop a new proposal to counteract the offer of commercial media and modify the opinion matrix they create for Venezuela and the public opinion worldwide?*

**Vladimir Acosta:** The media directly related to the revolutionary process face the terrible resistance of media monopolies, and are trying to move towards a participatory model, a model of participatory democracy. That is pretty much clear in all alternative media. And it yields, of course, a new approach. These alternative media are the healthiest thing that can happen to any society, otherwise the State would monopolize the whole communication

spectrum, and that is not the kind of model we want. We need social service media. The State ought to fund community and alternative media. We must prevent the private sector to manage alternative media, because it will turn them into small businesses. We need the active participation and critical attitude of the people to prevent that State support ends up meaning some sort of subjugation tool. A new public service channel, which is the purpose of the new channel, cannot be a State bulletin or devote 24 hours a day to broadcast political issues in favor of the State policy. In a way, it should be the least political possible, which does not mean that it is not interested in political affairs. We must aim at a new TV that helps develop new cultural values, that helps us know ourselves, be critical of ourselves, learn from one another. Of course that has a political character, but not a partisan character. It is a way to create a new citizenship and new citizens who are accountable and critical. In developing such new vision we must make the process pleasant, we must make sure people are entertained and they like what they are watching, because those new values are in no way at odds with concepts like fun and entertainment. Now, there is a myth: the myth that everything serious and important is boring.

We have developed a good number of alternative media in the TV field, where people are learning how to make their own TV, like Catia TV, the case we just mentioned, plus a series of community channels well under way: TV Petare, Ávila TV, etc. Technology has become simplified and anyone can rapidly learn to use a camera or edit. I mean, people are not afraid anymore of doing things that years ago seemed impossible. TV has to be made by all of us, and we must demythologize the idea that only a select group of initiated owners of inaccessible technology can make TV.

It is true that the new channel, TVes, raises hopes, perhaps too many hopes. But it is OK. That is the way to go. That is precisely what it is all about: when thinking about changes, about revolution, about transforming what we already have, we must be optimistic and bet that change is possible. We must invest passionately in those changes. Who cared about Telesur a year ago? Nobody. How were we to stand up to CNN? It seemed unthinkable. And there is Telesur now, developing top-quality TV and growing, taking over the CIA programs that we get from US stations. It can be done; it must be done, without a doubt.

We are in clear disadvantage, undoubtedly. The commercial TV whose license was not renewed existed for 53 years, and that means something. There is technological development that must be acknowledged, and a recently created channel, like TVes, has a long way to go. Ideologically speaking, RCTV was trash TV, but its technical quality must be taken after by our new proposal. There are, of course, weak spots in the communication field as part of the process our country is involved in, weak spots that will be corrected. The kind of communication managed by the big commercial TV corporations is skilled in perfectly manipulating the emotions of the people. They toy with their feelings, which is why they are so powerful in terms of penetrating and influencing masses. Interestingly enough, all the huge media, all of them around the world, are against the Venezuelan process, because they all belong to the same mafia in power, the same groups of globalized owners. But I repeat: the media enemy is a big enema, and one of the important failures of our revolution still is communication.

The TV provided by the revolution is still faulty. We know that efforts are being done, but it is still deficient. Both State-owned channels need improvement. Channel 8, the State's showcase, needs improvement. And Vive TV, a much more open, popular and community-oriented channel, needs to improve its quality.

To a certain extent, a big part of what people think, people who are dissociated, ill, is what they get from channels like the one whose licenses was not renewed and like Globovisión. The latter is, plainly and simple put, a CIA channel. And this is not a cliché. There is evident data to prove it; it can be demonstrated with figures and documents, e.g., the research carried out by Eva Golinger. We know, based on such data, that there are journalists paid by the US, that there are international connections, we know that they do what the Department of State tells them to do. All that media strategy manages to keep a sector of the Venezuelan population dissociated, and that is not a small sector. Luckily, the number decreases day by day. In any case, the degree of penetration and dissociation as a product of trash TV is not minor. It is so important that there is a proposal to create social missions, like Barrio Adentro or Misión Robinson, to take care of all the population that ended up ill. Except those cases, with all the errors and all the necessary critics, we have been able to dismantle the media lie and nowadays people are much more aware of the fact that commercial TV basically lies, that it does not convey the revealed truth. Twenty years ago, manipulation was much more blatant, more macabre; people lived to watch those tasteless shows, cheap clowns and schmaltzy manipulation, the worst kind of sensationalism. But that has changed. Really, the great majority of the Venezuelan people have become more politically mature thanks to the revolutions, and the media is not as relevant as it was years ago. In other words, we could say that here we stand for ourselves. Outside is a different story. The problem is that a great deal of the social struggles around the world are handled and conditioned through an international public opinion. That is why a communication policy from Venezuela to the rest of the world is so important.

The US government has always done it, and it is doing it now more than ever before, in a world increasingly communicated by global technology, when it wants to crush an inconvenient government, when it wants to invade another country, it fabricates an international media campaign to lay out the conditions necessary to its politics and policy. Be it Saddam Hussein's weapons of mass destruction or his complicity with Al Qaeda, connections with any guerrilla movement, accusations of drug trafficking, etc., it all serves the purpose of manipulating media lies that allow the US to advance its hegemonic project. Unfortunately, the power of TV has turned most of the human population into sheep, into idiots. We have come to a point where people actually believe that everything vomited on TV is true. Even if we know that a great part of what is being shown on TV is trash, we have the right to watch TV, why not? But the sad thing is that one has to end up watching what the big media corporations impose and that we have no say in whatever is shown. Most of the people do not know this; they have not developed a critical point of view of their own. Therefore, they believe everything they watch and listen to, they lack the necessary tools to face up to so many lies. They do not even suspect about being lied to and manipulated. Moreover, TV is so effective because it is extraordinary. If this invention were to serve education, culture and true entertainment, humanity would be different. Unfortunately, it is in the hands of powerful and profit-oriented mafia groups, and so the impact of TV is a negative one that acts against the progress of the masses. Something that could be positive ended up being terribly negative.

But, as I was saying, we stand up for ourselves and have dismantled all that trash information they want to put in our heads. Anyhow, the version going around outside of the country is not favorable at all to the process we are going through inside the country. So far, Venezuelans supporting the revolutionary process have not been capable of facing the whole thing. It is not a matter of matching that kind of power, it is way too strong. We defeated it here, inside the country, but we also have to create a flow of information on

Venezuela that can be disseminated worldwide and for the international public opinion to have another version of the lie that mainstream media is constantly promoting. All of the right-wing press, i.e., the owners of huge media and the ones who manage SIP in the Americas, disseminate lies about Venezuela. How can we counteract such thing? The revolution would have to address the generation of alternative information as one of its key tasks to counteract those lies, those stories that damage the reputation of our internal process. Something is being done, of course, but much more should be done. All in all, governments do it, and rightly so. I mean the right to disseminate worldwide information on what is being done, to raise awareness on what the country is, to play a role in the information going around the world, contributing to the opinion held on one's own country.

I insist: things are being done. For example, there is the Pedro Gual Institute for Foreign Affairs, but a big chunk of the State structure is still in the hands of the right and its old practices. There is a whole political culture instilled into public officers. We are still tied to the past to a great extent. We are struggling to leave the past behind, but too often we do so using instruments and methodologies from the very past we want to leave behind. Much, perhaps too much of that bourgeois thought from the past is still part of us today, in the middle of our revolution.

**Argenpress:** *That leads us to a question related to the construction of socialism in Venezuela today, but a question that may also apply to any process of change. How to address the work to be done with all those groups still dominated by the past? How can we change a mindset that belongs to the past but is not totally dead by the time the new mindset is not totally born yet? Right now there are student protests in Venezuela -without doubt, students manipulated by pressure groups- against an allegedly lack of freedom of speech. What should the revolution do with those confused middle class sectors, numbed in most part by the TV we want to combat?*

**Vladimir Acosta:** It must be understood that here, in Venezuela, power was obtained via elections. We know that elections are never revolutionary moments; they are cosmetic change mechanisms that the system allows every certain time. And if a leftist president leaks into the system, the world powers immediately overthrow him or her, as it happened in Chile with Salvador Allende. That, in any case, could generate a conflictive situation that may or may not lead to a revolutionary process. In Chile, without doubt, it led to a terrible counterrevolution. But Venezuela is different. Here, as Chávez explains quoting Trotsky, the lashes of the right radicalized the process. So, something that emerged as a hazy, lukewarm process, not clearly leftist, responded to the attacks of the aristocracy and turned to increasingly revolutionary positions. The laws that were passed, the authorizing laws, the oil laws, the water law, they all sparked the reaction of the aristocracy, and then we had the coup, the oil strike, the employers strike. Exactly what is now going on with the TV channel. The process is radicalizing itself, but most of the power still remains in the hands of the past. The education is still in the hands of the past with its curricula and ideological perspective from the past. Justice is also in the hands of the past. The economy is in the hands of the past. Most of the media -about 80% of the spectrum- is still in the hands of the past: private, commercial media. So, beyond the disgusting complaints made by private media skating that this is a dictatorship and that the president, as a tyrant, controls all the power, beyond that lie disseminated by the media, the government is barely controlling some sectors in the State apparatus, but the weight of the past still controls almost every aspect of national life.

The government, legalist as it is, makes clever moves towards the transformation within the legal framework that comes from the past. All of the public administration was inherited from the past, which is why each step of the process of change entails terrible efforts. That is also why the missions had to be created, because the ministries were not good enough to drive changes, because changes were being boycotted and hindered right from within the structure of the State. But it is precisely because of such heavy load inherited, a load that the government does not want to or cannot get rid of, that each change takes so much effort. That is why the process is slow; sometimes so slow that it becomes exasperating. Nevertheless, changes are being implemented, there is no doubt about it, even if they are so hard to implement.

Fortunately, Venezuela is an oil country, and the money coming from the oil industry can help the process of change. If we did not have that and there were not much to distribute, the transformation process would have already given way to a violent counterrevolution or a generalized civil war. And besides these groups of dissociated people, who on top of it all magnify their claims through the tabloids but are actually not as numerous, the Venezuelan society is at peace. The revolution is being made in relative peace.

In a process of change like the one we are currently immersed in, we know that the great majority is being benefited, and the wealthiest sectors, always the minority, i.e., the oligarchy, lose prominence. The thing is that in Venezuela we have an extended oligarchy. We have a very strong middle class, deeply rooted in its middle-class culture through the mass media. The result is that one of the most rebellious sectors of the whole process is, precisely, the middle class. The middle class is like a bag full of remnants; its contents are not so clear: everything tending to the center of the political spectrum is considered middle class. It is quite dissociated, its role models are the wealthy, the business people. It wants to imitate them, but it does not reach the category of an aristocracy. On the other hand, it distances itself from the popular sectors, because it fears the social escalation of eternally alienated groups, groups the middle class feels superior to. The whole thing goes hand in hand with terrible racism, because in Latin America skin color turns darker as you go down the social scale. I mean, those sectors look upwards to imitate and look downwards to despise. That middle class is poisoned, because the dark-skinned who used to be their porters at the airports are now sharing the airplane seats with them. Our middle class is deeply ignorant. Yes, some of them may hold masters degrees and PhDs from overseas universities, but that does not mean anything: out of their technical ground they are ignorant and uneducated. That entire people, dissociated and manipulated by the message conveyed by the low-quality media, like the one whose license has not been renewed, are poisoned against the revolution, because now they see that the disadvantaged sectors also have benefits, and they find that scary. But that is where their ignorance and lack of education lie, for the revolution has also benefited the middle class, for example putting an end to indexed mortgage credits that suffocated them in the past. This government is providing employment sources all over, it is fostering technological development, i.e., it is also offering opportunities for the middle class. And the proof is that airports are full, restaurants are full of middle class people, but they are so manipulated that they viscerally hate the Chávez administration, many times not knowing why. And what is the reason for that? The reason is that they blindly repeat what they hear on TV: we live in a dictatorship, there is no freedom of speech and we live in fierce communism. And that is something they can say anywhere and anytime, and nothing happens to them.

Unfortunately, those sectors are cannon fodder used by the oligarchy and the empire. And



now, in these days, during the process of not renewing the license of this channel, some university students were manipulated and brought out in the street trying to make it all look like a popular rebellion against Chávez. That is the result of 20 years of neoliberalism: the universities were put in the hands of middle and high class sectors, absolutely depoliticized, manipulated, lacking awareness, suspicious of popular classes whom they fear and of a government that favors those historically poor people who have always been excluded and alienated. We are seeing that kind of dissociation here, where we have had a week of protests from these young people. They were put to march to have someone killed, the Right needs some martyr to show the World how this bloody dictatorship attacks defenseless people. In the times when the Right ruled there was repression and the list of dead students is endless. But now there is absolute freedom and democracy, and it is beyond that fabricated media show. After a week of allegedly big mobilizations, as they pretend it has been on TV, not a single person has been hurt. And some children were momentarily detained by the authorities so that they can go to their parents, because they were minors found in the demonstrations. I insist: there is not a single jailed or hurt student, while in Caracas 25 policemen were hurt, one of them is about to lose an eye. And that is not broadcasted on pro-coup TV. That is manipulation. Moreover, the way the manipulate images, the way the lie and always put things out of context to their benefit, they show huge demonstrations and police corps brutally repressing people. That is the kind of TV that we do not want. The kind of TV made by Globovisión here in Venezuela, and CNN in the US broadcasting to the whole world: a lying, manipulating, and sensationalist TV. A TV that instead of broadcasting truthful and objective information is only good for dissociating people.

What to do with all that? I am lucky not to be part of the government having to make that decision. I believe that President Chávez pointed out a very important thing: impunity must be over. That means that people not taking on responsibility for their acts cannot be tolerated, like those pro-coup TV channels. People have the right to say whatever they want on TV, even call people on to assassination -that is freedom of speech, just like we have here-, but then they have to take charge of what they have said. If there is a law penalizing people calling on to violent acts, and in this case assassination, any person publicly and nonchalantly making such statement on the media has to be held accountable against such law. Otherwise, impunity is being fostered. Decisions made according to the law in no way means restricting freedom of speech.

What I see is that the government's patience is endless. It was there through all sorts of aggressions, during the 63 days of the oil sabotage, during the days of the so-called coup d'état from Altamira Square, then during the coup d'état: the government never took reprisal against its adversaries. Its patience is proverbial, it knows how to wait and it does not act in haste. And during all those scenarios of destabilization, of profound media aggression, constitutional rights were never suspended. Quite the opposite. The last thing that can be said about this government is that it is dictatorial, that it violates freedom of speech in any way. One could think that it acts almost naively; but of course it does not, because that calm, that patience has always worked in its favor. The process, instead of falling apart, keeps gaining strength. All these pro-coup channels could have been closed down long ago, because the reasons to close them down were more than enough. But that did not happen, they worn themselves out. What is to be done, then, with that dissociated, manipulated, deceived middle class? Some of them will probably leave for Miami. And some of those will come back later, because in Miami they will get to work as supermarket cashiers, even if they have a university degree. Others might start to understand the

situation and will realize that the new changes are here to stay. And the rest will go mad, as it happens in every society: there is always some percentage of crazy people around, that is normal. Neoliberals discuss normal percentages of unemployed people; well, there also are normal percentages of crazy people. In such case a specific mission to take care of them will have to be devised. There are those who, half-jokingly, half-seriously, proposed it: the Loca Luz Caraballo Mission to take care of that group of dissociated fellows. But the majority of the people, the great majority, I believe they have opened their eyes and do not let themselves be manipulated by trash TV.

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