

John Lee Anderson - Excerpt: Letter from Caracas - Slumlord

The New Yorker. Jan., 28, 2013. What has Hugo Chávez wrought in Venezuela? By Jon Lee Anderson.

LETTER FROM CARACAS about the Tower of David, which is the world's tallest slum, and the man who runs it, Alexander (El Niño) Daza. Hugo Chávez has said that he wants to remake Venezuela into "a sea of happiness and of real social justice and peace." His pronounced goal was to elevate the poor. In Caracas, the country's capital, the results of his fitful campaign are plain to see. For decades, as one of the world's most oil-rich nations, Venezuela had a growing middle class, with an impressively high standard of living. Hundreds of thousands of immigrants from the rest of Latin America and from Europe helped give Caracas a reputation as one of the region's most attractive and modern cities.

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