

The Pride of Our Democracy

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They were all waiting anxiously. Students and professors gathered early to welcome the visitors. Some have previously met them in person. Others felt curious to know, via their biographies, the most important aspects of their careers.

Finally, they arrived. The school theater hosts the most significant event of all: the exchange of viewpoints.

There is some shyness at first. But the newcomers break the ice. They are not here as a matter of forms. They are here to remove the perception of a simple photo on a wall. They want to be known not only because of their merits —written in a piece of paper—, but also as common people, no matter the importance of what they do.

Soon the ambiance gets pleasantly informal. They talk now about future goals. Young people want to know everything: their work, the electoral process, the reason why they are not from the municipality, and how many times have they been nominated before.

Answers are given one after another. And questions raises from the other side about future careers, functioning of the school hours, and students' knowledge on

the electoral process, and the number of times they have voted before. It was a crystal-clear chat where there was no “they” or “we”, but “all.”

The words “delegate”, “congressmen”, “political system” are now common to all and assume greater significance. Everything is understood as gestures, smiles, and watchful eyes show. It does not only generate interests, but also a profound conviction of voting as a right and duty.

When the meeting seems to come to an end, a new question raises. “Boys and girls, if you are nominated one day, are you going to accept?”

Some look to each other with surprise. No words to say yet. Doubts are written in some faces. And some says “even though we are 16 years old, we are still too young, and being delegate entails great responsibility.”

Nonetheless, to everyone’s surprise, a young face requested the floor. He has already fulfilled such mission and feels the need to share his experience:

“He is right. It is tough. But it is a school to be better women and men. If you were nominated to represent citizens, then do not hesitate. Take it with courage. You only need three things to reach the goal: will, effort, and human sensibility. And there you have a delegate in Cuba.”

The audience faces show light, a light of a simple and irrefutable truth. The ovation is a sign.

This is not a fictional story. I was there and I am pretty sure there have been other meetings similar to this one. The exchange of our congressmen with citizens is far from what we are used to watch all over the world in electoral campaigns.

This is not about delegates looking for aberrant populism. It is about delegates looking to be closer to citizens without obstacles. No one swaps promises for votes. This is a meeting point to share, talk as equals. There is no discrimination in Cuba. There is only one common cause: to defend the Revolution. This is, no doubt, the true face of what we call with pride Socialist Democracy.

**Translated by Sergio A. Paneque Diaz / CubaSi Translation Staff**

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