

Imagine Cuba

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Imagine living in the world's most literate nation—a nation where health care is free and universal, and of the highest quality by world standards.

Imagine that, in this nation, education (also free and universal) is not only considered a human right, but it is also higher in quality than that of the wealthiest, most super industrialized country the world has ever known.

Imagine that this nation actively seeks—from social to governmental dimensions—to correct and eradicate racism, and racist proclivities, so as to ensure a truer, more democratic inclusion for all.

Imagine its dedication to gender equality and women's rights: more than forty percent of its parliament is female; more than sixty percent of its university positions are occupied by women; and all its women receive maternity leave for eighteen weeks with full pay.

Imagine that this nation prizes unity and community so greatly that many desire to participate in local government because they genuinely want to ensure social solidity and welfare, and because they want to keep unemployment low.

Imagine a million people celebrating International Workers' Day (May 1st) every year in honor of the working class' coordination of political power.

Imagine living in a radical democracy where virtually everyone votes in political elections that

require neither party allegiance nor money in order for candidates to be elected to publically serve.

Imagine living in the only country to achieve sustainable development. What about homelessness and poverty? This nation is singular in its dedication to keeping homelessness nonexistent and to also ending poverty however it can. This nation also trains tens of thousands of medical doctors (and medical personnel) from all over the world, providing them with schooling that is accredited by the most rigorous medical board from the world's most developed country. In fact, just imagine that doctors are this nation's major export. Then, imagine a rich sports culture where not money governs sports but the love of the game. Imagine living in a nation whose poets and musicians enchant and lull the world.

Can you imagine it? Admittedly, is difficult to do so. Such a country seems farfetched at best. Yet, this is no make-believe utopia. This is Cuba.

One of the most disgusting habits of today's imperium is that it continues to wave its rotten carrot in front of the faces of more than three hundred million Americans, swearing all the while that no alternative system to its own even warrants fathoming. Imagine that! America is the wealthiest nation on earth, and Cuba, one of the poorest, is even hard to conceive of despite the fact that it is real! Yet, maintaining domestic control of several hundred million Americans might prove very hard to do without unapologetically inveigling the public every single day on any number of issues. Think about how long this travesty that revolves around international and economic insecurity has kept power inside in its white house, guarded by its black gates. Then again, think about what might happen if too many people—too many Americans—really began participating democratically. If this seems scary to imagine, this alternate, democratic reality, then just imagine how badly it must scare the powers that be. It must scare them shit-less.

Of course, to compare the United States of America to Cuba is to compare apples and oranges. Nevertheless, the US appears fairly dull when one weighs the dissimilarities extant between it and its nearby Caribbean neighbor. While Cuba busies itself spreading literacy to some of the most remote and poorest countries in the world, Americans themselves are not yet as literate as Cubans. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) ranked Cuba sixteenth in its Education for All Development Index—the highest in Latin America; the US ranked twenty-fifth. Even Cuba's goodwill embarrasses the US: Cuba mobilized 1,500 medical workers to aid Haiti after its 2010 earthquake catastrophe. The Cubans had reportedly vaccinated 400,000 people, treating more than 225,000 people. The US reportedly treated little more than eight hundred. Speaking of healthcare and treatment, the lowest HIV prevalence rates in the Americas are found in Cuba—not America. Another medical statistic shows that Cuba also has a lower infant mortality rate than the US does. The list, sadly, goes on.

For blue- and red-blooded Americans who might yet claim to love their democracy and freedom, it is a good idea to consider whether or not they truly live in the democracy to which they allude when proselytizing about their little "city on a hill" to future generations. Not only can one imagine the many unprecedented political strides that Cuba has nurtured with its progressive socialism (under an aggressive, US-sponsored embargo), but one can also empirically evince it. Moreover, it leaves the American system looking rather suspect.

Yet, the story need not end with facts and statistics stagnating the way they are—or worse. Long, long ago, Jean-Jacques Rousseau presented the political philosophy that a people, ruling through their collective will, constituted the autonomous sovereign within the state. Even in a

constitutional government such as the US has, the people are the sovereign which rules through a corpus of law. Not only sovereignty, but also the consequences of anarchy—it must not be forgotten—are socially generated within a state. So, America has laws and people, but perhaps not the kinds of democratic freedoms that disturb their overseers with night terrors. But, for the thinking American, working toward the kind of democracy that Cuba has must outweigh the consequences that come with making it a reality. Perhaps all the American sovereign needs to do is accept that it is time for a little anarchy. Not to worry; the sovereign will define the consequences of it. Then, America need not contend with Cuba for rankings, but it can work alongside it to foment democracy around the world in a way that arouses not terrorism, but inclusion and freedom.

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