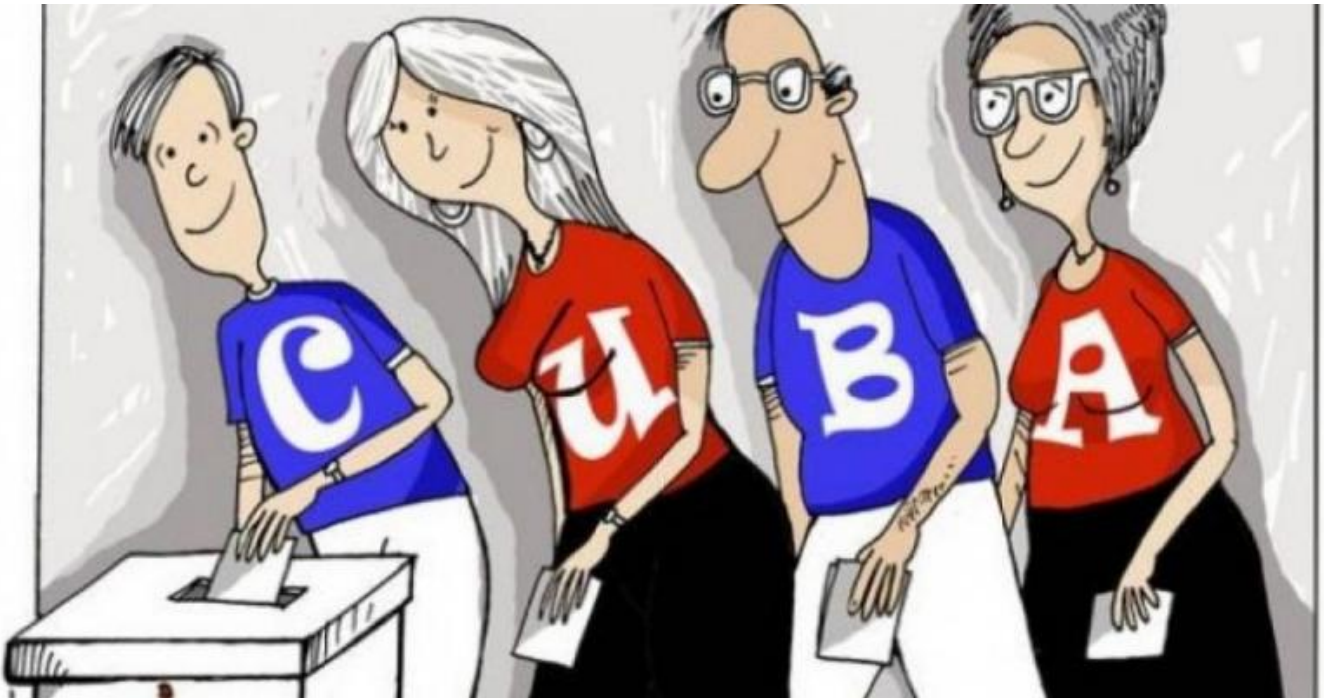


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**Election of Governors: Let's Talk about Socialist Democracy**

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This Saturday, January 18<sup>th</sup>, and by constitutional mandate, governors and vice-governors, and municipal mayors, main representatives of the Cuban State, will be elected throughout the country. They have the task of promoting and ensuring economic and social development in the territories.

José Luis Toledo Santander, president of the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Affairs of the National Assembly of People's Power during these days, however, the concept of socialist democracy has focused its attention on the social network debates in the Internet, also becoming the golden apple of discord, especially among those who seek to manipulate the decision of millions of Cubans in constitutional referendum.

Talking to José Luis Toledo Santander, president of the Committee on constitutional and legal affairs of the National Assembly of People's Power, he considers that the issue of democracy always implies contradictions, opposing opinions.

Toledo recalled a few definitions that the philosopher and jurisconsult, Norberto Bobbio, well-known in the Western world as one of the fathers of democracy, states that democracy should be considered as a simple method that can lead to the implementation of several social orders, not like the content of a particular social or economic order which is presented as the best. Hence giving coverage, possibilities, to the existence of socio-economic systems that can be democratic and don't necessarily have to be governed by a factor or a certain structure.

He also recalls that to speak about democracy requires that those who have the right to participate in decision-making are, in exchange, the majority of the people who constitute their people. Therefore - said Bobbio - "it can be spoken of democracy only there where collective decisions are taken with the principle of majority and in which most citizen participate in those collective decisions, directly or indirectly, through referendums or elections. These are two fundamental principles that can work as a point of analysis to understand the processes of decision-making and elections in Cuba where it's the people who participate directly or through their elected representatives. "

For the Cuban deputy, there's another very important concept established in 2012 by the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM): "Democracy is a universal value based on the freely expressed will of people to determine their own political, economic, social and cultural system and their full participation in all aspects of their lives."

Then what is going to happen this Saturday? Toledo summarizes it like this: "The representatives of the people, those chosen by the people, through free, direct and secret vote, to represent them as their delegates, will choose in a similar way, through free, direct and secret vote those who should be the governors from a proposal made by the president of the Republic. Is there or not major participation of the representatives of the people?"

"But undoubtedly, who best defined the Cuban socialist democracy was Fidel: It's a democracy that makes possible the most important and essential, which is the constant participation of the people in politics and the constant participation of the people in the main issues of their lives. It's a sufficient concept, to which little or nothing must be added," he concludes.

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