
My Chronicle on When the Army took the Streets of Cuba “Socialist Dictatorship?”

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After the havoc of hurricane Irma, another green hurricane brought hope: Revolutionary Armed Forces took the streets and together with the rest of the people cleaned the streets and made them beautiful again: this is Cuba.

Hope, they say, it's green, I've never been quite sure of that metaphor, I'd rather think of a multicolor hope or customized hope, but the neighbors from Pueblo Nuevo in the city of Matanzas, they seemed sure that after the havoc wrecked by Irma, another hurricane brought hope: the Cuban Revolutionary Armed Forces, took the streets and together with the people, they cleaned and restored the beauty of the streets: this is Cuba.

Most of them are very young, in the Military Service under the Central Army, they are different: the mulatto from Cardenas with the type of good dancer, the skinny guy from Sancti Spíritus who responds quick and concise: “here we are, ready until it's necessary”, the other talkative boy from Sancti Spiritus who tells me about the lesson of a retired officer, an old man who joined the group of volunteers to help them in whatever he could do and tried almost everything: “I was impressed”, he assured; I won't forget the “tiger” from Ciego de Ávila whose only thought was what would his former father-in-law would say when he saw him “see, what a good revolutionary, how hard-working this boy is, my daughter doesn't know what she missed!.”

Happy, with an energy and drive characteristic of those about to be twenty years old, they jump on and off the trucks, loaded trunks heavier than themselves, talked about baseball at breaks and still found time to launch a sneak peek to the pretty girls of Matanzas who handed them some water. The fact is that the people from the neighborhood brought forth all the sympathy, altruism and solidarity which characterizes Cuba while sweating, like the woman, sweeping next to the soldiers in uniform.

The neighbors have no way to say thank you and choose the best way: “they bring us some water, coffee, bring shovels, brooms to sweep, women have given us their full support, Cuban women are unique, they are the first ones to wonder if we need any help...”

Soldiers: “Colonel, you are going to be interviewed!” “Journalist talk to the Lieutenant Colonel Juan de Dios!”.
Officer: “Boys tuck your uniforms” “did you already have a break?” after many days of hard work, they address each other like parents to their children, they look after each other, respect each other, officers praise highly the effort that their troop has done; the soldiers feel proud of being useful.

A certainty was repeated on each officer or soldier we spoke, Lieutenant Colonel Juan de Dios, for example, he said: “I am not from Matanzas, but back in Villa Clara, from I am from, the hurricane hit too, my partners at the Armed Forces are doing their best there...”

The thinking made by Camilo Cienfuegos is present: in Cuba the Army is the people in uniform, that’s why the Armed Forces took the Cuban streets without rifles nor tanks, but with working tools, with the desire and will give back hope and turn that green into a beautiful reality, which is the socialist Cuba: “... they say that when the army intervenes things are a lot quicker and more effective, but it’s only because of that we are also part of the people...” says Juan de Dios and the Colonel Félix Hernández supports him: “we are but one person, we have always been and we will be just one...”

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