
Gretel's New Challenge

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Jaimanitas is a Havana community that has many things: at convenience, it goes from a humble fishermen's village to a residential tourist area. A beach. A river that gives it its name. A history about the aboriginals who inhabited it. A polyclinic and two schools. Workers.

Military. Christians. A corner for religious offerings. An artist who turns houses into works of art. A player from Industriales (baseball team). A growing influx of people from the east. A movie that is closed, venue of the 75th concert by Silvio Rodriguez throughout the neighborhoods. A memory of Fidel made a biohealthy gym. And from now on, Jaimanitas also has a 24-year-old delegate.

Gretel Fuentes Nieto is my age. We studied together at the little school of the neighborhood. We live relatively close. We travel through different roads that converge, maybe, in the attachment to the suburb that has seen us grow up.

This Sunday, during the election runoff, she was elected by 1,172 citizens (54,5 percent of the total votes). And I will have to get used to the fact that she will represent me for a period.

I acknowledge that I didn't know whether I was benefiting her with my vote or not.

To what extent is it positive for a young lawyer to venture into the world of politics? Will she have enough maturity to confront the situations of such a dissimilar community? Especially, will she have the perseverance to insist again and again, to make people's voice heard in institutions that often turn a deaf ear?

But there was something clear that helped me decide, and although she was not my first option, I wrote an x next to her first name in the runoff. Gretel claims that being a delegate is an honor for her. And since I am a deep supporter of Marti, there comes to my mind the phrase that "homeland is an altar, not a pedestal", and I figure out that she knows (because she has seen it throughout her 24 years) the responsibility that her decision entails. Then I feel that, in the face of such courage, I should admire her.

Without falling into the foolishness to assert that everything depends on her, she is, undoubtedly, who in first place has the power to mediate between citizens and the authorities linked to the community. Then it's based on her capacity to handle daily solutions, on how she is able to cope with continuous tasks, on the empathy and complicity she manages to achieve among electors; the effectiveness of her period as a constituency delegate.

Having a young person willing to represent us substantially speaks about the political and historical awareness of a generation that was born deprived, among many other things, of the past prior to the Revolution and its early years of euphoria. Even so, that generation starts to lighten the burden carried by the previous ones, empowering themselves and being protagonists of the staggered process that characterizes an irreversibly socialist society.

Translated by Jorge Mesa Benjamin / Cubasi Translation Staff
