

THE LIVING AND THE DEAD

You may be thinking that your little boat is making its way upstream, but if the current is stronger, you will be going backwards.

Make no shameful concessions to the empire's ideology; I have said this and today, I say it again.

Nobody shall ever read from my humble pen any opportunistic praise that would besmirch his or her behaviour.

It is for this reason that I resolutely support the decision by the Party and the Council of State to replace the Minister of Education.

It is well known that, throughout my whole life, since I had a revolutionary conscience, I have dedicated myself, first and foremost, to the subject of education, ever since the Literacy Campaign up to the universalization of higher education. Despite the economic blockade and aggression, we have managed to attain a privileged and unique position in the world in this field.

The man in charge of this responsibility, Luis Ignacio Gómez Guriérrez, was truly exhausted. He had lost energy and revolutionary conscience. He should not have made the last speeches and refer to future meetings with the educators of the hemisphere and the world, extolling a body of work that was the authentic product of numerous revolutionary cadres, and not a personal accomplishment as he would have the guests believe.

I am really sorry if any of our self-sacrificing teachers interpret this as an unfair statement.

I should point out that in the course of ten years he travelled abroad more than 70 times. During the last three years he did so at a rate of one trip per month, always under the excuse of promoting international cooperation with Cuba. For this and other elements of judgement, we can no longer trust him; to be more exact: we do not trust him at all.

Who is to replace him? This was the other part of the problem. It had to be done, and quickly. We searched through many possibilities. A list of fifteen of the best was drawn up; two had shown remarkable progress in that field:

Ena Elsa Velázquez Cobiella, PhD in Educational Sciences, currently the rector of the Frank País Higher Pedagogical Institute in Santiago de Cuba. She graduated in 1980, accumulated teaching experience in a wide variety of educational responsibilities, with distinction; she is 52 and at the triumph of the Revolution, in her hometown, the capital of the former Oriente Province, she had just turned two years old.

Cira Piñeiro Alonso holds a Summa Cum Laude Bachelor's Degree in Psychology, Provincial Director of Education in Granma Province, with 16 years of experience in various teaching capacities. Her success as head of education in Granma has been acknowledged by the entire country. She is 39 years old.

Both comrades, because of their merits and achievements, were proposed by the candidacy committee and elected as deputies to the National Assembly.

Both of them shall be instated in the Ministry of Education: Ena Elsa as Minister and Cira Piñeiro as assistant to the Minister and future cadre in the position to which she is appointed. They shall be

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replaced in their current tasks by professionals plucked from our inexhaustible reservoir of teachers and revolutionaries.

In this special and important case, besides my personal assessment, I was fully consulted and informed.

When I had the privilege of also being consulted on the eve of the election of the Council of State, I did not hesitate in proposing that prestigious military leaders –who brought our heroic people glory and moral authority– such as Leopoldo Cintras Frías and Álvaro López Miera, who are mature, modest, brimming with experience and energy, younger than the military officer who is one of the strongest and most threatening candidates for the leadership of the empire, should be proposed to the National Assembly as candidates for membership in the Council of State. I know other cadres, quite a bit younger than they are, highly qualified, with excellent training and not very publicized, people whom we must consider.

I don't like in the least to offend anyone, but I cannot hesitate in explaining the facts with absolute clarity in order to protect the work of the generations who have contributed their sweat, sacrifice and, in several instances, even their health and their lives to the Revolution.

I hope that my compatriots understand that the forced work imposed on me by nature at this stage of my life obliges me, both to friends and adversaries, to express my thinking straightforward and with the irrefutable moral evidence within my reach. Therefore, I shoulder full responsibility for this decision, whatever the reactions and consequences may be.

The enemy libels will accuse me of applying psychological terror from a position of moral authority. It is absolutely nothing of the kind for those who are conscious of the fact that true psychological and physical terror –with endless human and moral suffering for our people– would come from the return of imperial domination in Cuba. In such a sad case, the cause would not be a lack of literacy or culture, but a lack of conscience.

I shall never resign myself to the idea of anyone aspiring to power out of selfishness, complacency, vanity and the supposed indispensability of a human being.

I shall express my modest opinion while I can and need to do so.

Together, the living and the dead shall fight on!

Fidel Castro Ruz

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