

The Bolivian Revolution and Cuba's Conduct

Sometimes I have thought that I would not have to write the following day and that I could rather use part of the time to read and study, as I have often done. But, the significant events of the past few weeks related to the world economy and politics, and the developments in Bolivia have prevented me from doing so.

At 10:41 hours, I communicated with Dausá. I wanted to have details on the health of Evo and the other Bolivian leaders who are today in the third day of a hunger strike. He woke up well although weaker from the lack of food. Those accompanying him in the hunger strike are also enduring the situation; they asked the ambassador for books on Martí, Che Guevara and the Revolution. Today, our ambassador worked on the request and sent them such books as 'Martí's Life and Work,' 'Socialism and Man in Cuba' and other materials.

It is a known fact that the electoral register was recognized by various international organizations, the OAS and the European Union included, which have no sympathies for the left. These used their specialized services to make analysis and determine that the electoral register was one of the most serious in the continent.

Despite all that, authorities from the legislative assemblies in five of the nine departments of Bolivia --that is, in Beni, Pando, Potosí, La Paz and Tarija--challenged the electoral register in obvious complicity with the opposition.

In Bolivia, the strongest Party in Parliament is the MAS (Movimiento al Socialismo) led by Evo Morales, with 72 seats of a total of 130 in the House of Representatives. It is, thus, the most powerful Party in Bolivia. The rest of the seats are divided among PODEMOS (Poder Democrático Social), the second stronger political force made up by the old loyalists of General Hugo Banzer, and the MNR (Movimiento Nacional Revolucionario). PODEMOS stands for the Bolivian oligarchy. Its leader, at the moment, is Jorge Quiroga who became a president of Bolivia shortly before the death of Banzer, since he had been the latter's vicepresident.

The MNR is the third political force. It is headed by Representative Mirtha Quevedo. It has a smaller number of members in the parliament who oppose the MAS.

Unidad Nacional is the other opposing force in the Bolivian Parliament.

As far as Cuba is concerned, the main political organizations of the opposition are not characterized by their hostility.

Recently, after the constitutional referendum in January, a numerous Bolivian delegation visited our country in response to an invitation from our Party's America Division. The delegation was made up by Carlos Both and Roberto Ruiz, both senators from PODEMOS; Cesar Navarro, a very positive man who follows Evo; Mario Justiniano, a representative from the MNR, who is critical of Evo; Hugo Moldiz, editor of the weekly La Época, an excellent writer and a very good friend of Cuba; and Guido Rivero, the executive secretary of the so-called Fundación Boliviana para la Democracia Multipartidista, which made the arrangements for the trip from March 11 through 15. They were looked after by the comrades from our Party's International Relations Department.

It has been precisely to promote unity and cooperation among all of the political forces for the development of Bolivia that President Evo Morales has done everything within his power to foster

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collaboration while avoiding extremist positions that could damage the revolutionary process. How can anyone speak of extremism when the Bolivian leader consulted with the voters if the size of properties should be 10 or 5 thousand hectares? For the first time in the history of Bolivia, Evo has built a significant hard currency reserve which now allows him to face up to the grave international financial crisis; in less than three years he has eradicated illiteracy in Spanish, Aymara and Quechua; he has made it possible for the entire poor population to enjoy a safe minimum income; he is recovering the energy sources and conquering for Bolivia the admiration of the world.

Our people are contributing to his efforts with their experience in the areas of healthcare and education. Thousands of our compatriots are making their selfless contribution there.

Our physicians have offered 24,618,833 consultations and performed 35,390 general surgeries. They have saved 20,102 lives.

The number of patients who have had eye surgeries as part of Mission Miracle is 386,597; of these, 25,198 are Brazilian, 24,240 Argentinean, 17,008 Peruvians and 309 Paraguayan.

At the same time, close to 5 thousand Bolivian youths are pursuing a Medical career in Cuba.

That is our modest contribution to the fraternal Bolivian people, the poorest and most exploited in Latin America.

Fidel Castro Ruz

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