

[WE ARE AND WE SHOULD BE SOCIALISTS](#)

Last October 2nd we discussed the international price of our fuel consumption. I am under the impression that its significance attracted the attention of many leaders and cadres.

There is a general debate about the percentage of the population with access to electricity and other common services in modern life. This may vary from 40% or lower to 60% or a bit higher. It depends on the access to hydroelectric resources and other elements.

Before January 1st, 1959, almost half of the Cuban people had no access to electricity. Today, with a population twice the size and a wide access to that energy, its consumption has increased several times over.

In our country, as in a large part of the world --except for the super-rich nations-- that electricity is brought to the people by air using electricity pylons, posts, transformers and other means, many of which were turned down by the strong winds of hurricanes Gustav and Ike throughout the island.

An article in Granma signed by Maria Julia Mayoral outlines the devastation of the power grid by both natural phenomena. But, she adds that while the hurricanes were crossing the power generators provided electricity to "966 bakeries, 207 food processing centers, 372 radio stations, 193 hospitals, 496 policlinics, 635 water-pumping stations, 138 senior citizens homes, among other basic facilities."

"This means that...it was necessary to take down hundreds of emergency equipment located in production and services centers to set them up quickly in places unconnected to the National Energy Service. This was made possible by the coordinated action of the dismantling brigades of various state institutions and transportation companies with the support of local authorities. The means provisionally moved will be returned to their original centers as soon as the situation is back to normal."

The words that I have literally taken from the original text show the devotion of Party and Government cadres, both national and local, to finding solutions.

The heading of the article written by Maria Julia reads: A Fortune is Spent to Bring Light to the People.

- I think this is the right time to recall that the power generators were set up with the following purposes:
- To secure crucial services such as healthcare or food preservation under any circumstances;
- To secure such industrial productions as bread, milk and others;
- To secure steel smelting whose interruption would seriously damage the industry;
- To guarantee defense services and public information which are indispensable at all times, such as the weather bureaus and their radars that follow the hurricanes' path;
- To ensure the progressive generation of electricity with minimum consumption, much more efficiently than the available thermal plants.

Having said this, we should remember that the power generators are of different sizes, from those with small engines that can produce 40 KW/h or less up to those generating over 1,000 KW/h. Sometimes it

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becomes necessary to put together several of these engines, for example, in a hospital with advanced technological equipment and an indispensable air conditioning system which are high energy consumers.

These engines operate with diesel and their efficiency grows as their capacity for electricity generation increases to a certain point. They require a certain type of grease, a stock of spare parts, maintenance, etc.

A growing number of power generators are made up by uninterrupted energy-producing engines which use another fuel.

The ideal thing would be for each of the abovementioned production or services units to receive electricity from the National Energy System. This is produced with more efficient equipment working on fuel oil, which is less expensive than diesel, obtained from oil refining, a fuel increasingly used for transportation of passengers and cargo, tractors and other farming equipment.

If for whatever reasons the power generators that operate with diesel are used to produce electricity for houses and placed under a 20 hours operation regime this can have a negative impact. This equipment has been intended for emergencies and, under Cuba's present development, to operate for a limited number of peak hours.

Among the hydrocarbon consuming generators nothing compares with the sets of power generators that operate on fuel oil, even if the investment is more costly. Due to their weight and complexity, they cannot be moved from one place to another at will. In this sense, it is second only to the combined cycle plants that use gas, previously cleaned of sulfur and other contaminants.

We should be mindful that no cadre forgets the advisability of not wasting a minute to return all the diesel consuming engines to their specific function in the neighboring provinces and municipalities as soon as the emergency is over. There is a serious deficit of that fuel; the country spends too much and it has been necessary to reduce the demanded allocations.

I insist that the production and distribution of food and construction materials are absolutely prioritized at the moment. We are not a developed capitalist country in a crisis, one whose leaders go insane looking for solutions amidst a depression, inflation, a lack of markets and unemployment; we are and we should be socialists.

Fidel Castro Ruz

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