

[My meeting with Zelaya](#)

Some have asked what happened to the meeting with Zelaya that the Commander mentioned in yesterday's reflection on Wednesday, March 4th.

We met. I had no other alternative. I found the time.

I am obliged to say as much as I can in few words, or not to say anything, and that's something I cannot always do.

I have just finished speaking about Juan Bosch, in a very compact summary, about the expedition against Trujillo, the dramatic episodes involving Dominican revolutionaries, complaining that the real story has not been yet written.

Early today I received another letter from the Cuban Television Information System journalist Daily Sánchez Lemus who would like to write the real story about José Ramón Mejía del Castillo, Pichirilo. She asks me for information that Guillermo Cabrera Álvarez, the great maestro of Cuban journalism, got from me, regarding the man who was one of the boldest Dominicans, among the revolutionaries, in the struggle against the Yankee invaders.

I will write to Daily to tell her what I know about him.

So as not to go on so long with this reflection, I shall telegraphically answer the question about the meeting with the Honduran President.

He is very young. "I can be president of Honduras for only 4 years of my life. I belong to the Liberal Party; my country is very conservative, starting with the very party of which I am a member". I write his words almost verbatim, just as I heard them. Any error is solely my responsibility.

That doesn't provide the leader of a country even with a second, in the quest for the Efficient State, something every society needs today more than ever, I declared.

He is surely a good man, with a healthy dose of tradition and amazing talent. His voice from the podium sounds like thunder; in personal conversation, it is discrete and has a familiar tone.

His social class descends from the first Spaniards who settled in the heart of the ancient Mayan civilization. As in all the other territories conquered with their horses and steel swords, they took possession of the land.

The families passed on their properties from one to another throughout the centuries. When the hour of independence arrived in Ibero-America, they constituted the oligarchies which were the masters of the new independent countries.

In Central America, the course of history was decided by the fledgling Yankee imperialism which tried to directly take over their territories.

Extraordinary historical figures sprang out of the struggle in defense of sovereignty.

Francisco Morazán, a Central American legend, was Honduran in origin and became the President of the region's states. He governed for 10 years. Zelaya defines him as a man of the people, who couldn't study at the university but who, endowed with exceptional intelligence, symbolized the struggle of his peoples.

-Among these states was Costa Rica. There, however, he was betrayed by the longest established right wing that implemented a coup and murdered Morazán. Zelaya promised to send me books recounting the story of this remarkable Central American hero.

Like others in his social class, Zelaya was educated in Catholic schools. In my case, under very different conditions, it was the de La Salle and Jesuit Orders that looked after my education; in his case, he was sent to Salesian Order schools.

Coming from a family of noble descent, he received a Catholic education and this forms the basis of his feelings today. Like Hugo Chávez, he found the source of inspiration nourishing his sense of justice in the ideas of Jesus Christ; he cannot be accused of being either a Marxist or a Communist.

Nevertheless, he tells me: "When I traveled to Cuba for the first time, I had just begun my term in office, they treated me as if I was the worst of enemies. They wouldn't forgive me that I had asked Cuba to pardon Honduras for having been the country where the invaders had been trained. The United States government thought I should be destroyed for that behavior".

For Zelaya, "the capitalist system is the most repugnant conception of justice that human beings can harbor".

I asked him how large Honduras is. "About 112,000 square kilometers", he replied. My comment was that Cuba is almost exactly the same size.

Of that, how much is covered with pine forests? He calculated: "50,000", he told me. How many pine trees per hectare? "A thousand pine trees". How many cubic meters per pine tree? "One and a half, on a conservative estimate". Therefore they produce around 1500 cubic meters per hectare. How much is that worth? "Two hundred pesos, more or less"; that means that you receive just 300 million dollars per year. That wouldn't even be enough to cover expenses. Why do you have to export bulk raw material? At the beginning of the last century, they would export houses in parts, at a high cost. My father bought one of these houses for the family to live in.

Zelaya is a man who profoundly suffers from the abuses of the empire.

"We are coffee producers. The crop grows year after year". How much of that coffee do you process? "Not even 10%", he replied. "That's a real outrage!" I tell him; afterwards they charge ten times as much for roasted coffee."

At one moment during the conversation, he told me that they are subsidizing their agriculture and then selling grain at a cheaper price, reducing the incomes of the Honduran farmers who were losing markets. He quoted the example of the corn that was used by the Mayas as their main food staple. Today, not even the peasant sector can live off this crop.

By his thinking, one could notice his deep aversion to the United States economic system.

Suddenly, he remembers the culture of the Mayan people with pride. He tells me that the length of years in that culture was more exact than the years used by western Christianity. "Nowadays the world uses the decimal system; the Mayas had a system based on twenty, twice as exact". Truly, it was the first time in my life that I had heard about that detail, the advantage of using two plus zero instead of one plus zero. I promised myself that I would find out a little more about the subject.

At that moment, Zelaya expressed his enthusiasm about the fact that Honduras possessed a site such as Copán which preserved the remains of Mayan culture with greater purity, its symbols cut in stone, sculpted with incredible artistry. At that instant, what prevailed in him was his statesman's mentality which thinks in economic terms. "Half a million tourists are now visiting Honduras every year. Many Americans are coming, interested in the culture and in the authenticity of those historical relics".

Suddenly, he spoke more quietly and confessed to me: "Unfortunately, the Mayas knew nothing about metal; they lived in the Stone Age, and that is why we were conquered", he sadly said.

I was unaware of the fact that on July 19, 1980, while I was speaking to a crowd of Nicaraguans and Central Americans in Sandino Square, a young 17 year old Honduran and future president of Honduras was there among them.

That is what the man I met with is like.



Fidel Castro Ruz

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