

Twenty thousand and one different torches for José Martí

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Havana, January 27 (RHC)-- Most of the lit torches that will descend tonight, down the steps of the University of Havana, and those that will cross other streets in the country, were prepared by children and their mothers and fathers. In these torches lies the metaphor of much of what we are as a nation.

There they wait to be lit: there are long ones, small ones, delicate ones, consistent ones, reinforced ones, some with a lot of shine and even colored paper around the stick, those that appeared with a plastic handle, those made of iron cans, those made of aluminum, those that were attached with one or two nails and a wire, those with just a screw, those that have already lost their "head" at the first shake, those made of any stick from the most common and oldest plant in the nearest park.

Those that were made in a hurry, those that had been waiting for days in a corner to be delivered, those that turned out better than had been thought, because a torch, truth be told, is not made or raised every night.

Right now there are more than 20,000 torches in an open corner of the University of Havana, and many more in other places, and none of them are alike. Paradoxically, tonight, they will all be almost the same.

Eduardo Galeano, in one of his most remembered and repeated short stories, spoke of humanity as a sea of little fires. The nights of January 27th, in Havana and in many parts of Cuba, could be confused with that, but it would not be exact. It is better to speak of a river, of a torrent that breaks out unpredictably in our winters, with possible meanings that no one would dare to confine.

It is not the same to speak of fires as torches. The former almost always persist before, during and after the flame. There will be torches that will light up before time and will go out faster, torches that will then remain halfway, relegated to the curb, torches that insist on lighting up again, torches that come closer to offer their fire and kiss, one with the other, until both are lit equally.

There will be people who will come down without a torch, because the liturgy of this pilgrimage implies more than –literally– the fire.

The torch march, that of the twenty thousand and one different torches, is for many things at the same time: to talk with curious people, to demonstrate the incalculable and revolutionary power of beauty, to see each other again, to sing, to think about how that song and that fire are transformed the next day into more well-being, more rights, more equality, more justice, more creation, less loneliness, less sadness, more strength, more courage, more head, more clean, open and sincere chest, less trash, literally and metaphorically speaking, more struggle, more Martí and more Homeland.

The march is to return your sight and make a shiver run through you at the image of the fire that comes, that is, from the multiplicity of people and torches that sustain it from the darkness; Or perhaps just to pass by and find an abandoned, still smoking, torch that had been carved by a child, pick it up from the curb and try, like a madman, to get it to light again, in an exercise quite similar to the mundane, precious, powerful and life-saving act of a kiss.

(Source: Granma)

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