

Points of View of the New Black (II)

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How is the New Black differentiated from the old black and the other black man of his time? Well, he can be distinguished in the same way that the New White can be distinguished from the other whites: he can be differentiated, specifically from the surviving liberator of 1898, by his less romantic and more rational interpretation of the economic and sociologic failure of our liberal democracy. He can be differentiated by his mental tuning of socialist waves that currently vibrate in the universal atmosphere. He is also different in the displacement of his political trust toward a regime socialized “in the Cuban way.”

The true revolutionaries who are still loyal to the old segregationist ideal have not been persuaded to believe that it is impossible for the current regime of our republic to guarantee equality of economic and social opportunities to us without it first being subjected to a series of modifications so substantial that, in fact, would change its organic essence.

The New Black and the New White want a regime that cannot endure unless it's based on equality of opportunity; a regime in which the economic and social protection by the State cannot be disregarded without annihilating the state system, just as liberal democracy cannot disregard suffrage without causing its death; a regime where the guarantee of those enjoyments does not depend on the benevolence of the rulers (a utopian quality), but on those commanding the State organization.

The Cuban person, white or black, of the old political school of thought still reacts with painful and resentful pessimism against our rulers, our society and our politicians. This is due to a lack of suitability to which, in the last instance, they are not responsible for. One would have to accuse the regime itself for the deficiency. The New Black and the New White abstain from asking the servants of the inept regime for impossible feats. They are encouraged though, to implant a state system that would rectify and complete the liberal democratic system.

Now then, if the New Black and the New White have the same vision of the future, where does the mental autonomy of the New Black come into play? It comes into play because we don't see ourselves in the future, but in the present which is smeared with Cuban negro-phobia. This Cuban negro-phobia can be distinguished from the North American negro-phobia in that over there it's ostensible and violent, while the one here is shameful, euphemistic and passive. The black person is insulted, isolated and lynched over there. Here, their economic and social rights are stolen, they are reduced to nothing and they are left to starve.

By the way, when the Cuban New Black is presented with the idea of extending the people of color by mixing them with the white race and when this is done with scientific emphasis and a natural, biological solution; he smiles and returns it with a conditional response which almost always nips the dialogue in the bud. "I accept," the New Black responds, "as long as the white male and the black male contribute with equal freedom to the racial mixing, unless we're still in the days of slavery of the rural barracks and the urban bedroom." The fact is that the decorum of the black race's masculinity cannot voluntarily admit to any other theory.

It is true that the Afro-Cuban suffers an economic and social belittlement similar to that of the worker, farmer and woman; that is, the belittlement of those we call "elements of the revolution." It is a similar but not identical belittlement because it ends up being aggravated for the black person by slavery prejudice, which is manifested in Cuba today, more against color of skin than against race. Aside from struggling with all the old abuses which oppress all of the other revolutionary elements, the black worker; the black farmer; the black woman; the black middle class; carry

the specific burden of racial prejudice. It is what we have coined the "Plus Pain" of the black person.

Today the black person has specific problems to find and study for himself within the broad national problem. He has problems to solve in his own mind with special attention to aspects of causation, to then use them to collaborate with the New White.

Other points of view

A black or colored race with mental, sentimental or acting unity is nonexistent, as is a white race with such conditions. The majority of the new blacks are leftists, but those who sympathize with Fascism or Nazism are not lacking. It's an error or slander to pretend that Afro-Cubans are all rightists, all leftists, all centrists, or all indifferent. The pseudo-revolutionaries against Machado committed this error or sin when they accused the black race of sympathizing with Machado or having a revolutionary indifference.

The lines of revolution against the Gerardo Machado regime had an amount of blacks proportional to the scarce amount of white revolutionaries prior to August 12, 1933. Certainly, more blacks were seen within the ranks of officials than within the revolutionaries, but there were an infinitely larger amount of white Machado supporters than rebels. The anathema that the eminent Enrique José Varona¹ directed toward the black man when he was already on his death bed, lacks objective accuracy of justice and consideration toward the Afro-Cuban. Even ABC² has indirectly recognized it and history will prove it some day.

Another criterion of the New Black. Racial sub-prejudice between blacks and mulattos as it acutely exists in certain Cuban regions (and in the entire Republic, with more



Carnival Comparsa in Havana [1919?]

or less indulgence), may be sad, but it does not imply a spiritual inferiority unique to the Afro-Cuban. Such an absurd sub-prejudice will disappear the day that being (or appearing to be), white does not imply an advantage in our country. One must have an exceptionally firm personality in order to resist the temptation to escape the limitations that the predominant prejudice inflicts on the dark skinned Cuban by becoming “whiter.” This is a temptation which has been carefully cultivated in the black man by the white man. It establishes a considerable difference with the North American white person, who labels anybody with a drop of African blood in their veins as black, regardless of how white and blond they seem, and banishes him to the black world as soon as he comes to that realization.

When it comes to the black person’s inferiority complex, there is a historical explanation in slavery and in the current Afro-Cuban eco-

nomie and social lack of self-defense. Such a “defect” is extinguished with greater speed than one would normally expect. This inferiority complex of the black man is parallel to the white man’s feeling of inferiority toward everything that is North American since we introduced the Republic, and which he felt toward all that was European in colonial times.

Paris! London! This is where this inferiority complex of the white man (and of those who pass as white), ends up being more dramatic in their desire to make the black man disappear. Dramatic, because even when the day comes that we all end up having a more or less whitened skin, the Cuban soul will always be mulatto. An example can be found in the same way that Mexico’s soul will always be Indian (native). It is dramatic because the Nordic man of the United States knows that Cuba is a country sown in the black zone of the Caribbean, and will not consider us to be

equal until he loses his superiority complex. History fully excuses, or at least also explains, this inferiority complex of the white Cuban.

Another subtle and delicate issue. There are those who somewhat disqualify the Afro-Cuban for not shielding himself with an affirmation of black racism. That school of thought states that it would be best for Cuba, if the black man were blacker and the white man were whiter. I would prefer to allow nature and the instinct of human sociability to freely carry out their labor of biological fusion and spiritual affinity without obstacles or artificial stimulation. Racial affirmation of the North American black person, racist cohesion of the Chinese, Jewish, etc., serve as examples of this theory. That's a mistake. It's an illusion to consider that the African American person advances more because he lives isolated and deals primarily with himself. Simply by reading their newspapers and books one can know how damaging this mandatory racial confinement is to them and how much more progress they would make if they were not discriminated against so horribly. We do not tend to imagine this in Cuba.

Finally, the New Black feels the responsibility of his guiding mission and wants to achieve it without boastings or with leadership that is anachronistic or incongruent with his autonomic mentality. He wants to achieve it through indoctrination of the Afro-Cuban masses, with the purpose of preparing them for the possible change in regime that is expected to come.

Until we have a change in regime capable of stopping "de facto" exclusions and privileges, it would be best, even if it's only out of respect for the judicial field, to redact the article which more or less corresponds with the Constitution in this manner:

"All Cubans are equal before the Law. The Republic does not recognize group codes

or personal privileges, of sex, religion, race or color. The laws will establish sanctions against infractions of this principle, whether these are ostensible or surreptitious."

That which, after all, is intended to not ask for privileges for the black man (as the sophism says), is also assumed to request that privileges against the black man do not continue to be practiced without punishment. Racial indifference is defended: no favors for being black, but in turn no prejudices for not being white.

Personally, I don't have any faith in a constitutional mandate that does not count with the back up of an active mobilization of the popular mentality and of a state organization which is congruent with the established principle. Experience warns us against fantasy.

The Convention

Currently, there is an existing Organizing Committee for a national convention of Cuban societies of the colored race. Notice that I do not say "a convention of the colored race" because, as I mentioned before, nobody can globally unite the colored race or the white race: it would be a socio-political impossibility.

That Committee, to which I don't belong but whose measures I sympathize with, wants to reunite the only social organizations which the colored race can count on. It seeks to assemble them to deliberate over the Cuban problem and the racial issue. My desire is to expose the Convention to ideas such as the ones I have had the honor of presenting to you tonight in order to make a majority judgment concrete and to proceed according to just decisions that can be reached. The old-fashioned (colonial) society types and the modern society types, which include culture, sports, etc., are included in the generic denomination of

“colored race societies.” They include all of the civil societies which act to protect our Association Law.

Perhaps this Convention will be the most transcendental and representative civic event which has been achieved by a considerable number of Afro-Cubans since approaching 1895, when the venerable Juan Gualberto Gómez organized that noted “Directorio Central de las Sociedades de la Raza de Color” (Central Directory of the Colored Race Societies).

The Organizing Committee has a broad program prepared, which comprehends our country’s most fundamental problems and the solutions that seem fitting. That program is not tightly focused on the secondary issue of our interracial relations. The New Black poses the global solution to the Cuban problem to himself, with a state vision and a spirit of justice for all, white and black.

When the Convention has made a collective problem concrete (an expression of the

Afro-Cuban judgment relative to our national problems), I believe that its executive will confront this judgment with that of the “new whites”; with that of the current genuine revolutionaries; with the purpose of uniting both judgments and together; . Like the whites and blacks of segregation, the New Black and New White will undertake a new liberating crusade, that of social and economic justice for all of the inhabitants of our country.

And if by misfortune, the alluded Convention is not carried out or it falls through, another one will be organized. It must be organized because-it is a need of the new era.

The New Black needs to be listened to, talked about and discussed, if not already by the merit of his dialectics, at least as a result of his will to serve the country in the most fruitful possible way. He wants to be confirmed in his thesis, or to rectify it if necessary, but either way he wants to work, to serve.

NOTES

1. Enrique José Varona (1849-1933). Cuban philosopher and politician. After the Hispanic-Cuban-American war, he was Secretary of Education in the first intervening government. He carried out an important educational reform on the Island. He was president of the Conservative Party and became Vice President of the Cuban Republic in 1913.
2. Conservative political organization founded in 1931 by several Cuban intellectuals, which some historians have labeled as pro-fascist and/or terrorist. It was actively opposed to the Gerardo Machado regime.