

Regarding the Fact of Being Black

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Mother Nature wanted us human beings to be differentiated by the amount of melanin in our epidermis. Perhaps it is because I'm black, or as a result of my social status of being a rebellious citizen that I have felt the racist attitude of our oppressors with great severity, of those who for half a century defend the political system in force in Cuba.



The most common argument which summarizes what these people feel is: "I don't understand how a black person can be against the Revolution, because it is thanks to it that he/she was able to study and become somebody in life." Their words express a mixture of surprise and a lot of anger when they are face to face with somebody who proudly and in unison fits the description of being both antagonist and black.

Let's take a look at History and pay attention to what the landowner Carlos Manuel de Céspedes did when he liberated his slaves when the war for Cuba's independence started. Céspedes awarded them emancipation, inviting them to back him up in the war that was approaching in those days. Many his-

torians agree that the already rebellious lawyer said: "Whoever wants to follow me, do so. Godspeed to whoever does not."

It is at this point that I always stop to ask myself: Did Cespedes need all of his slaves? Why didn't he force them to follow him?

I think he definitely needed them, but the Eastern patriot was a politician who did not indebt people for life; those black men would have escaped slavery to enter an even worse fate. They would have entered the slavery of those who cannot think, have an opinion and carry themselves freely. That is the reason why Cespedes did not force them to follow him. To him they were already his equals; they possessed the right to think, express and conduct themselves as such.

I believe that the *Real Academia de la Lengua Española* (Royal Academy of the Spanish Language) would not condemn me if I identified the attitudes and expressions of those who oppress black dissidents in Cuba as blackmailers. Blackmail is the most adequate nomenclature in cases such as these when a social segment is systematically reminded that they owe something; that they are somehow indebted to those who were once the catalysts of social change. Since this is the way it happens in my enslaved country, I believe that we're in the presence of a tributary society.

Are we blacks so equal then in the eyes of the Castro regime? In my modest, rebellious and wild opinion, the answer is no. We have been and are an ethnic group which has been socially pressured to not complain because we owe favors to others. This is where the truth comes out again, because we have never been considered to be a part of the supposed equality. This perception is made obvious when we demonstrate political dissent.

We Afro-Cubans are made to believe that we live in equality until the instant in which we dare to criticize the social model in force.



In that moment, we are reminded that we have dark skin and, therefore, we are fourth or fifth category Cubans.

These Castro-racists have become, without realizing it, in disciples of the French sociologist and ethnologist Lucien Levy Bruhl, with his theory of the Determinism of the Primitive Minds. It seems that their own and independent opinion of a black person is somewhat savage and uncivilized.

Courtesy of the Cubanet agency