

Attacks on Buena Fé: Is this the kind of freedom you are offering me?

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The episode of violent attacks occurred at a hamburger restaurant in Barcelona against the members of the Cuban musical duet Buena Fe shows us the face of the future, the program of change, the quality of the leaders who are getting ready to free us all.

*"This sort of insensitive, intolerant, fascist mob is the one that has promised to "free" this country. Are they the ones who are supposed to bring prosperity to this people?" asked musician and deputy Arnaldo Rodríguez during the extraordinary session of the National Assembly of the People's Power, and he immediately answered back: "Nobody believes that story, compay."*

Buena Fe's tour in Spain has been making headlines in the Cuban media for days where the harassment, censorship, attacks and threats have been denounced, both against the musicians and their hosts

(families included). The outrage has been inevitable and explicit in the profiles on social networks of ordinary people who follow the work of Buena Fe on and off the island, even among people who are not fans of the group, but have an idea of freedom, which obviously, does not fit the canons of certain media.

El Toque, for example, in the face of the incident occurred at the Galileo Galilei hall, pointed out *"the right to boycott as a legitimate form of protest,"* while CiberCuba and Diario de Cuba pondered in their headlines the courage of Cuban emigrants to *"confront"* Buena Fé (musicians, neither politicians nor soldiers) in a Burger King.

On the one hand, they boast about having Cuba in their names but having no sense at all on what "having courage" means throughout the history of this nation. On the other hand, the reason for punishment: exercising the right to think, say and sing in dissonance with what the alleged spokesmen for "freedom" consider acceptable. In other words: you are free to say what I think, and if not, face the consequences.

All this show, in the best style of the new empire, triggers indignation and disgust, of course, but no surprise. At this point, we already know about the vileness, which now sprouts with a heavy package of foolishness, by definition; you plant the flag and embrace all consequences: that is war.

An asymmetric, unconventional war that did not start this week in Spain against Buena Fe. Cuban artists of all art manifestations have suffered it, in many different scenarios. The list is pretty long and begins with Van Van orchestra, the Cuban music flagship, which has been the target of that army that does not believe in *songo* or virtuosity.

Haila María Mompié and Annie Garcés, because the common struggle against gender violence, for some, is only valid if it is possible to blame

the Cuban government.

Paulito FG, Alexander Abreu, Pedrito Calvo, have also been targeted. The thing is not about standing for the right or the left, but standing for Cuba.

Raúl Torres and Arnaldo Rodríguez are deputies. They do not skimp on prohibited phrases such as "down with the blockade" or "Patria o Muerte (Homeland or Death!)", so they have signed their death sentence and a well-earned fanaticism of Otaola and etc.

It has been one battle after another. I am about to think, as a friend of mine says, "that it is a lie that out there, if you work a lot, you do well and you are happy. With so many people devoted to gossiping, I think neither work nor are happy." I say: could it be that this is precisely their job?

Just one more example: Tony Avila. I interviewed him years ago, when he had just landed from Miami. This was what he told then about a television program to which he was invited and the course of his tour from there:

*"They uttered insults, very strong offenses, which really lacerate, hurt... it was very unpleasant, but I felt calm and I am calm, because what I was accused of, which was hitting the Ladies in White, I never did it. Then, they showed a photo in which the alleged victim appears with a blow to the mouth in a lousy montage that they did, because not even I, an awful computer scientist, would do such a poor and crude montage, with a photo of me —I have it at home—, it is a photo of me in El Sauce, that at the end of a live concert I was greeting someone with my hands as if intertwined and they take me like this..."*

## **What impact did all that show have?**

*"Of course it fueled the hostility against me in the media and social networks, and against Cuba because the goal is, actually, to attack anyone coming from here, to attack Cuba and Cubans.*

*"Besides, all media started to attack and threaten me. A small group of people from the heart of the Cuban-American mafia in Miami even went directly to the house of the owner of The Place, which was the place where I sang the next day. They threatened to end his family, his business, to ruin it, they made very aggressive, hostile calls to his cell phone. The man was afraid, of course, it was about his family, about his life, and I was there for just a few days, and he canceled the concert without counting on us. Finally, he convinced himself not to give in to anyone's pressures and the concert was made, the venue was full, there were many friends he hadn't seen for years, people who he told me: we are here to support you, so you know that you are not alone here in Miami, that there are many people who love you. They were really important expressions of affection at that moment."*

## **And what happened with the rest of scheduled concerts in Miami and Puerto Rico?**

*The other performances in Miami were canceled due to similar reasons. We went to Puerto Rico with the hope that concerts would be made without problems, but the same thing happened, the owners of Yerbabuena also cancelled the concert, partly because of Ileana Ross's letter to US Department of State. They themselves declared that "if Ileana Ross is involved in this, it must be for something."*

End of quote. Any resemblance is not pure coincidence; it is another battle within the same war. And we have won again, by the way. Tony is still here, willing to contribute, through his music, with the changes that his house needs.

Today, our support goes to Buena Fé. Tomorrow, it may go to Buena Vista Social Club's diva Omara Portuondo, who is scheduled to perform in Spain and the mafia is already orchestrating "a legit boycott." I can be the next target. Or you may be next, who go there to boost your business or improve your family life standards. Or any doctor, who may be caring for patients in that nation. This the fascists' war.

So, as Esteban Lazo, President of the National Assembly stated, we are all supporting Buena Fé and every artist attacked, harassed. We are supporting them and any other Cuban individual who, from anywhere, love Cuba. And we will continue singing because we want to do so. That is the only freedom I know.

**Translated by Sergio A. Paneque Díaz / CubaSí Translation Staff**

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