
OPINION: The Light Man, the Light

By: Enrique Ubieta Gómez / Special for CubaSi
04/11/2024



At dusk on the second day, the lady went out onto the balcony of her apartment to bang on a pot. She insisted for a few minutes, but no one in the neighborhood supported her. The remote organizers of the expected counterrevolutionary “soft coup” were betting that a massive popular protest would take place. The abrupt fall of electrical services throughout the country had shaken Cubans, although in many provinces power cuts were already common. The lack of fuel, spare parts and financing forces the workers of the country's thermoelectric plants to do magic to repair the machinery as much as possible, and keep it running. The blockade strangles the economy, and social networks, managed from Miami, blame the government for poor management. The few attempts to create chaos in the capital were quickly controlled. The Cuban people suddenly understood the magnitude of the war they face. Almost in unison, a hurricane touched the crocodile's nose, and it slowly crawled along the northern coast of eastern Cuba. The miracle happened: instead of street protests, people organized themselves into chains of solidarity. No serious analyst of the contras could have foreseen this, because to do so they would have to believe in the people. Solidarity is not an attribute exclusive to Cubans, but it's an essential attribute of the Revolution. Those who mobilize when the Homeland needs it, whether they live in Cuba or not, those who go out to defend the lives of foreign and distant peoples, are children of the Revolution.

It's an paradox, but without light and without water, Cubans look in their shop windows for clothes, canned food, the money that is not abundant, and they give it away without further ado, without proof of good conduct, without photos for the press, because they do not seek any certificate; they give away not what they have left over, they share what they have. It does not matter if they are Christians or communists (or Christian communists); What counts in times like this is that they are Cubans. People shaped by the Revolution. Suddenly the electricity came back on in some urban centers, and while the counter spread fake news to provoke discontent, the people, calm, trusted. Sometimes, the fake news was terrifying: the dam's dike broke —they announced— and the desperate residents gathered their loved ones and fled the place. Someone testified: while some flee from the place, Chapman advances towards the dam. Why does the counterrevolution have to lie, to fabricate fake news? Isn't it proof of its double orphanhood: of arguments and ethics?

Everything falls like a waterfall, one event drags the other, the waterfall is inevitable. The Revolution is alive, it

beats in every donation, in every anonymous delivery; the war, now visible, cannot divide us. An admired journalist wrote: it's a new October Crisis that we are living. I don't know, that reference was too media-driven, too apocalyptic. There are no nuclear bombs at stake, although perhaps there are, the world is very small. It fits in the palm of God's hand. While in the Middle East, Israel, with the complicity of the United States, launches rockets on Palestine, Lebanon, Iran, and Syria. Nuclear weapons await the first madman, or desperate person, or fascist, who will activate them. Never carry a gun on the side if you don't intend to use it. What will happen next? I will not change the subject, Palestine is Cuba, or vice versa. Does anyone think that it can isolate itself, that it can draw a protective circle of ashes? The point I want to emphasize is that Cuba, that is, the Cuban Revolution, lives and faces an open war, and all Cubans are on the trenches, in that of the Homeland, or in that of the Invader.

The French-Iranian activist, filmmaker and cartoonist Marjane Satrapi, this year's winner of the Princess of Asturias Award for Communication and Humanities, used, I hope reluctantly, as a piece in the demonisation of Iran, even though she understands its gender demands, expressed an idea which I share in her acceptance speech: "I have long believed that the key to any human be able to live with dignity, to never suffer brutality or humiliation because of their sex, ethnicity or skin color, was education. But didn't Goebbels have a PhD in philosophy? Hadn't Dr Mengele taken the Hippocratic Oath? Are we wrong when we define education? Perhaps before educating our children to be economically and socially successful, we should teach them that true success lies above all in humanism."

Now that UNEAC Congress will take place in a few days, in particularly difficult circumstances for the country, and I would say, for the planet, at a time when fascism seems to be returning, raised even by its former Ukrainian and Jewish victims, among others, and by those who intend to use them again to reconquer territories or expel citizens from different countries because of their skin-colors, her words make more sense.

Knowledge does not save us. The bookish erudition that José Martí renounced and warned about does not save us. Cuban intellectuals have the obligation to get involved in the most fair causes, those of Cuba and of the world, to tread on the dust and mud of life, to bring together in a single beam of light truth, justice and beauty. Only the Homeland, which is “that portion of humanity that we see more closely and in which we were born,” according to Martí, saves us. The light of a city can go out or light up, but the small flame that appears in our eyes cannot die in us; that is the light within, the one that saves us. May the poet Sigfredo Ariel forgive me for the free interpretation of his verses (that’s what poetry is for):

These days will be imagined
by the gods and the adolescents who will ask for these days
for them. And the names and dates will be erased
and our blunders
and the light will remain, bro, the light
and nothing else.