The State of Cuba

Cuban Anarchist Reflections One Year After July 11th

Alfredo López Libertarian Workshop

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Contents

Introduction 3
Interview 3

Introduction

On July 11, a wave of anti-government protests shook Cuban reality at a national level. Initiated from the outskirts of the archipelago, such as San Antonio de los Baños, near Havana, and Palma Soriano in the province of Santiago, the protests spread to several cities and towns in less than 24 hours. Thousands of people, led by the most precarious sectors in Cuban society, took to the streets throughout the country. An event of these dimensions was unknown not only to the Cuban state — the last popular protest, known as the "Maleconazo", took place in 1994 — but to the Cuban popular classes themselves. These two irreconcilable enemies — the state and those dominated by the state — measured their forces in the context of a defining event. The response of the Cuban state was extremely violent — 1,848 arrests related to July 11 have been recorded. There can be no doubt about the historical nature of these events.

Resistance to state domination has never ceased in Cuba, a resistance marked by many complexities, a resistance that has taken many forms, both public and individual, a resistance that has also been co-opted by other powers and agendas. But a resistance that has always been, deep down, the expression of the classes, groups, and individuals dominated by the authoritarianism of the Cuban state, and that, therefore, has always been a legitimate resistance and, more than legitimate, has constituted the hope of one day organizing the final assault on the system of domination, putting into action a radical and truly revolutionary liberation. Popular struggles never fall into a void and their developments are never linear. This can be understood as their main strength, but also as their authentic historical form. We are convinced that the profound crisis facing Cuban society will continue to produce increased resistance. But for now, a year after the marker of July 11th, the act of reflection is imperative.

We have asked our Cuban comrades, members of the Alfredo López Libertarian Workshop and coordinators of the Abra Social Center, to share their ideas. These reflections are essential reading. These reflections, above all, put an end to the binary nature with which the correlation between state and opposition in Cuba is understood — an understanding that has constituted the historical interest of all the powers of domination involved. We have no doubt that these reflections will be appreciated by those who, with revolutionary honesty, recognize themselves as revolutionaries and organize for the social revolution.

Interview

Black Rose / Rosa Negra (BRRN): A year after the historic protests of July 11th, how do you see the situation in Cuba?

Member of Alfredo López Libertarian Workshop (ALLW): Well, there are several things that are part of the usual landscape of regional decay that we are experiencing here, as part of the decay of this world organized around commodities. There is a major depletion of basic resources, there is a food crisis that is growing rampant, an energy crisis, in short, a multidimensional crisis that for those of us who lived through the 1990s in Cuba is something that is not strange. But it is surprising what the Cuban State has learned about managing scarcity, in relation to population concentrations, areas of social conflict and poles of social inequality, especially with electricity cuts and the procurement of products in short supply in the midst of rampant scarcity. This

statist education is the product of 62 consecutive years in the exercise of total power over the social fabric of Cuba.

There are undoubtedly big differences compared to before July 11. There is a very interesting disbelief in the form and operational logic of the State, the discourse of the State and officialdom. There is now a healthy exhaustion of credibility in the official reality and in that sense it is a very interesting moment.

Along with this there is also a fairly deep breakdown of the social fabric of popular solidarity. Of course this is not absolute. There are also precious expressions of daily solidarity and mutual aid. And well, with the issue of the hundreds upon hundreds of people incarcerated, for the days of July 11th, a quite interesting, solid solidarity movement has been unleashed that transcends all ideology.

This has given rise to the important release from prison of people linked to July 11th, and at the same time as all this, the Cuban State is trying to rejuvenate its image as a benefactor/father of the community, which has permeated the popular imagination in Cuba and has created concrete realities around that image. But in general the current moment has made daily life extremely agonizing here. There is a very strong internal migratory process towards the big cities, there is a great despair related to how to cope with the day-to-day, growing difficulties and, in addition, the collective certainty that it is going to get worse is known and felt, but also that the oppressive boss that dominates Cuba is not an eternal sentence and that we are pushing it diffusely towards another dynamic. We must be attentive to expressions of reorganization in the popular social fabric, of re-articulation of that social fabric, because it really is the only viable option we have, not only as anarchists, but as social beings. In extremely fundamental moments like the ones we are experiencing in Cuba, the collective creative function of that mutual aid explored by Kropotkin becomes very transparent.

BRRN: In an analysis of objective and subjective causes of the protests one year later: What has changed? What has remained?

ALLW: I'm going to start with what I think has remained. There has remained a growing erosion of the capabilities of a minimally organized life. The destruction of the popular, peasant, rural world in Cuba has continued. State centralization has remained, the militarization of society, the presence of the political police has been reinforced. The absence of collective options has remained in the face of the state and economic crisis, and in the face of all the existing authoritarianism in Cuba.

What has changed: In the first place, I think that the relationship between people has changed, the mass relationship between people and the state, that is. There is a growing denaturalization of the state or the government, of the rulers, of the political police, and a very significant denaturalization of everything related to authoritarian normality in Cuba. And well, in the face of all this, of course, the state has deployed all the repressive and police machinery, betting on prison as a solution. On the other hand, there is the issue of reclaiming the community face of the state, that is, there is a whole set of actions that the state has carried out, actions of pure propaganda, of arranging, let's say, a communitarian face, a face of attention to the most disadvantaged populations, to the growing peripheral populations that are concentrated in the country's large cities. There is also an improvement, in detail, of the work with centers of resistance, of dissidence.

There is a repressive face that has become much harsher, much more ruthless, and along with all this continues, although less so now, the question of ignorance about what is happening with the prison system in Cuba. There is a growing familiarity among the people with the issue of

prisons in Cuba, the issue of political prisoners. This, of course, entails a great family/personal tragedy, but at the same time an awareness among broad sectors of society about the repressive, authoritarian, police nature of the entire government machinery in Cuba. And in that sense everything remains the same, the official reality remains the same, but underneath there is a very large current of delegitimization of the entire state machinery, and an inability of the state to offer a response to the accumulation of all the social demands.

And in this sense, in the midst of all the disaster, in the midst of all the catastrophe that is taking place, a collapse of the entire state machinery is in sight, so let's see what will happen. This collapse is clearly going to be profoundly violent, profoundly regressive, but that denaturalization is already underway, it is already happening, and this denaturalization of authoritarianism and statism in Cuba will have no other way out than, at a minimum, transformation and exhaustion. This is a crisis of the state as we know it in Cuba today.

BRRN: How has the Cuban state reacted to the situation created by July 11th and how do you see the role of the state at the present time?

The only thing the Cuban state has available right now is repression, fear, the centralized administration of fear. It also has in its favor the immense inexperience of Cuban society in terms of learning how to react, learning how to organize itself in the face of all the authoritarianism and all the existing despotism. It also has in its favor a constant and permanent exodus of Cuban youth, that is a fairly large factor of conservatism. The state also has in its favor all the economic resources and the money that comes in through this emigration, and has learned to live by bleeding the country demographically. It is such a laboratory case, of how a state devours a society. The state also has 60 years of experience administering repression, practicing social atomization. But it must be said that this is happening in a context of a growing critical awareness regarding the state itself in Cuba, and the function of the basic institutions of the state in terms of maintaining repression, social control, verticalism, and in that sense the state is making it very difficult for it to manage the credibility of its own existence. So this is a very interesting moment.

BRRN: The July 11th protests owe their relevance, in part, to the decisive participation of the Cuban working class. Although we know that this is a point of debate, we wanted to know 1) Your opinion 2) What impact has the protest had on the Cuban working class?

ALLW: In my opinion, it should be specified that, indeed, there is a leading role for the Cuban working class, but it is the unemployed, precarious working class, the world of small cities and the peasant world that has been urbanized in the most precarious way possible, and also with a very scarce awareness of themselves as being working class.

It is quite complicated if we define that it was the working class that was the protagonist of these events. There really was no classical trade union organization, no union organization, no territorial organization linked to work. It was fundamentally the urban population, from the informal urbanization process that is occurring throughout the country. Undoubtedly it is a world derived from work, the world of workerism, but above all a world marked by precariousness, by unemployment, by the lack of perspective of coming together as a worker. At this time in Cuba, and I think in many other places, being a wage worker with a job that provides a fixed salary already places you practically in the condition of the middle class rather than in the condition of a worker.

So in that sense, to say that the protagonists on July 11 were of a working-class character, well, all these details would have to be made. On the other hand, there is the reference point of the

social struggles of workers around the world. This reference point, that of the Cuban emigration itself in the United States, which becomes a model to aspire to, a model to follow, and is above all a model of vindicated consumer, a consumer who finally manages to access a whole world of consumption postponed for decades, so it becomes complicated in that sense to talk about the working class. It becomes difficult to associate July 11 with a worker, proletarian iconography, because it really is not very easy to find it that way, visually.

Of course, at a theoretical level it can be said that an event like that of July 11th was carried out by the working class. At the level, let's say, of a sociological, analytical analysis, of class behavior and all that, of course, yes, but it is not something that can be found visibly and easily in the behaviors, in the type of subject that protested on July 11. It is rather in the precarious world, the world of generalized poverty, the world of unemployment, the world of a lack of meaning in everyday life, where I think there is also the possibility of understanding the subject of July 11th.

BRRN: Hundreds of people were detained in the state's repressive response to July 11. What is the status of political prisoners and how do you see the nature of the campaign to free them?

ALLW: The events of July 11, and the mass incarcerations that have occurred, have brought to the forefront of social conflict in Cuba the condition of political prisoners — the condition of political prisoners for hundreds of young people who had never had a formal link with what is called politics. In this sense, the Cuban state can no longer manage the idea that there are no political prisoners in Cuba, that there is no political opposition in Cuba, that there are only common prisoners, people who simply violate the laws in Cuba, that discourse was blown up. There is a whole politically motivated prison population tied to July 11 that is quite significant, not so much because of the numbers but because of the way everything was made public.

It must be said, of course, that there is an immense prison population in Cuba, with very few statistics on it, but it is known and is something that is perceived on a daily basis, the massive presence of prisons in Cuba, the prison population in Cuba, the prison industry in Cuba. And all this has been brought to the forefront by the solidarity movement that has emerged from the hundreds of people imprisoned for the events of July 11. And well, the movement that has been organized around that is a movement that has transcended all ideologies, has transcended specific political orientations, and has generated an anti-prison sensibility, we could say — specifically with respect to these people, not regarding prison as such, as an institution. There is very little discussion about the prison issue in Cuba today, there is very little discussion about the anti-authoritarian alternative to the question of punishment. But well, it's a very interesting moment, it's a moment in which these things have become totally natural, and in that there has been a lot of progress compared to a year or two years ago, and well, that is something that must be taken advantage of.

Undoubtedly, the leading role, let's say ideological, of the entire anti-prison movement is a generic liberal discourse. But this is open and available to other readings, and to other interventions. And in that sense, well, everything that has been unleashed is extremely painful, but at the same time it is very interesting in terms of not only input of ideas, but also as an organizational practice, of how to organize solidarity, and that has become an ordinary practical matter.

BRRN: Do you think that July 11th had an impact on the correlation of political forces on the island? Who are the main actors right now? What distinguishes these actors in the political and ideological field?

ALLW: I think that, more than talking about political forces, we should talk about ungrouped social forces, ungrouped social forces against highly organized police forces, and basically, the correlation of forces between the political police and Cuban society. Of course, within Cuban society there is a small network of tendencies, of tensions, and July 11 undoubtedly removed that correlation of social forces, although I think it was basically in favor of the political police. The political police have managed to dismantle all the organized and public expressions of opposition in the country, they have managed to dismantle the San Isidro Movement, they have managed to dismantle the Archipelago, they have managed to dismantle the UNPACU opposition, and well in that sense, on a physical, visible level, the political police have triumphed along the entire line. What they have not succeeded in is recomposing the situation and the conditions that gave rise to July 11. On the other hand, there is the movement Patria y Vida, which has had a notorious media presence, international, etc.

This last tendency has shown a lack of proposals regarding daily life in Cuba, deferring the whole issue to the departure of the government, to the end of the regime and the reestablishment of normal capitalism. And, on the other hand, there are tiny tendencies, of the anti-capitalist left, of independent criticism, that have achieved a certain visibility and their own configuration outside the dynamics of official Marxism in Cuba.

In this sense, July 11 was a catalyst for perceiving Cuban society in depth and especially all that great mass of marginalized people condemned to lives of misery, in the outskirts of the big cities, and it has put the issue of the existing repressive and prison apparatus in Cuba front and center along with the magnitude and profound arbitrariness of that apparatus. On a physical level, it has revealed the correlation of forces favorable to the political police, but at the level of circulation of ideas, dispositions and will, the political police know that they have very little room to maneuver beyond massive repression, which one senses will be the next step in what is to come in Cuba. In this sense, it is necessary to be prepared in terms of creating infrastructure, space, support networks, because a much harsher repression is coming, already militarized, not only in terms of the surgical work of the political police, but in the form of massive, public repression.

BRRN: Near future: what lines of development in terms of social struggles can be discerned in Cuba?

ALLW: As for lines of immediate development of social struggles in Cuba, I have believed for quite some time that it is necessary to continue working and insist more on the question of daily organization of an alternative life, a dissident life, a rebellious life against the established order in Cuba, more than just organizing actions, let's say, of protest, which are also important, actions of rejection of the state. We must also work on the creation of daily infrastructure , in all areas, in order to create a social fabric that not only verbally dissents from the system, but also lives outside the system. We have to rethink the issue of organization, an issue that, with July 11, has become a top priority.

In other words, all forms of public dissent regarding the system were largely disarticulated also by organizational innocence and lack of experience as to how to achieve organization, lack of debate as to how to achieve an alternative response to the system. And it is an opposition that has been organized only around the question of demanding rights, making claims against the State and well, it was clearly seen that it is very easy for the system to break this up, with a highly concentrated and hyper-visible leadership of certain personalities, like Luis Manuel Otero, this person from the Archipelago, Yunior García, this man from UNPACU.

We have to work as anarchists to create infrastructure and organization that does not depend on personalities, that does not depend on figures, that does not depend on public faces, but rather organizes itself based on infrastructure, based on ways of living, ways of living together, ways of surviving that in themselves contain alternatives to the chaos we are experiencing. This does not imply confronting the police machinery all the time, that is, just as important as confronting the police machinery is also the creation of alternative forms. This is a question that is the order of the day everywhere. We are facing hyper-organized, hyper-structured, repressive, police, and social control machinery with many resources. In this sense, we must move forward and we must work on proposals that have come precisely from our anarchist camp, in rethinking the notions of organization, the notions of structure, the notions of revolutionary practice in relation to everyday life. In this sense, organizational forms that are porous to the entire hyper centralized structure of control must be considered and placed at the center of the tension. We have to look for more ways, we have to search, we have to experiment, we have to dialogue, we have to exercise ways of daily confrontational organization that allow us to overcome all the control barriers, all the barriers of the police algorithm.

So, I think that this is a line that we must continue working on in order to get out of this morass and gain experience from what has happened this year. There is an accumulation of very important experiences and no conclusions are being drawn from there and so in that sense, well, this July 11 may be a good time to think about that, to think about the situation of failure in which the social movement finds itself in right now in Cuba to then rethink other views, other readings, and other practices.

BRRN: What has been the trajectory of the Alfredo López Libertarian Workshop and the Abra Social Center in the period of this last year? Is there an increase in anarchist thought and organization in Cuba?

ALLW: The Alfredo López Libertarian Workshop and the Abra Social Center, at the juncture of July 11, before and after: it must be said that some time before this defining moment of July 11, we had already gone through the situation of shutting down the country, the city, due to the pandemic, which affected our dynamics here in a very harsh and direct way. Keep in mind that a few months before the closure of the country was declared, we were working on the 5th Libertarian Spring Day that had been a very interesting space for navigating an anti-authoritarian anarchist perspective, a space for dialogue, for meeting, for practices at one time of the year and that had been working quite effectively. We had to paralyze it, and that also led to a paralysis of sociability here in the space. This is also related to the legal fragility that we have right now here in Cuba.

At the same time, this connects us with the issue of concept, with the issue of ways of understanding the management of space. And we understand that if a space like this can contribute anything, it's that it serves as a meeting and coordination space for the different wills, affinities, people, groups, that crowd around here in the city, which are not many either. In this sense, Abra has not ceased to be a meeting space for coordination, training, exchange, and management of everyday life. And this has happened without any problem, in the sense that we understand the need and the possibility of creating daily infrastructure to be able to cope with this collapse that we are experiencing. But it is important to say that there are several comrades who have acquired public notoriety in Cuba whose inputs of ideas, of ways of understanding Cuban reality, have largely been established here. The Abra Social Center is one of the few meeting spaces

between people who cover a wide ideological-political spectrum and with whom we have had very interesting dialogues here.

We have coordinated mutual aid activities for the support of a colleague of ours who depends, due to his physical condition, on mutual aid and solidarity, and we have organized ourselves based on that. We are also involved in a medicine distribution campaign, something that has been extremely difficult because the state has sabotaged all the connections to receive medicines from outside Cuba, especially from the United States, but hey, we haven't stopped there either. We are talking about small but very concrete and papable expressions, through which we put into practice what we say, not only at a declarative level, but practicing it on a daily basis. And that solidarity and that mutual aid is the vector of organization. More than organizing a day of confrontation or a day of hatred against the system, which is also fine, it is important to have a space that is not burned out, a space that is not of immediate interest to the political police, although we do not let them get to the peephole, but it is necessary to generate practices that are not directly confrontational and yes, organizational. In that sense, that has been the place of the Abra Social Center, even more than the Alfredo López Libertarian Workshop, which is an organization that has suffered greatly from the attacks of isolation, from colleagues who have left the country, and really what has had more activity is the space and, of course, derived from the space, the anti-authoritarian perspective that those of us who are here put forward. Thus, we can say that we have managed to survive the entire catastrophe that has occurred after July 11, and all the destruction that has occurred in all visible organizational instances, we have managed to survive, we are here, but we must continue working and continue strengthening the legal status of the space, and we are moving in that direction.

BRRN: Historically, since the end of the 19th century, Cuban anarchists have had a distinct perspective not only from the ruling class but from other sectors of the Left. What contributions can anarchism offer at this time?

ALLW: This question refers to the Cuban context, obviously. Anarchism as a tendency of thought and practice has a very rich and silenced history in Cuba. This is something that Frank Fernández and a few other researchers and writers have insisted on. But I think that anarchism also has an iconography, legendary characters, with a very rich periodical collection that has yet to be studied in detail, with a very rich sociability and with a very rich public life. This wasn't very big either, I don't think this was very big either. Due to the way the Cuban Revolution dealt with anarchism in Cuba, literally erasing it from the map, there are certain mystifications around the subject, but its presence is significant, especially its ability to anchor itself with the mentality, with the popular imaginary in Cuba, in many places. And we are also talking about a sensibility that is very focused on the issue of the phenomenon of authority and its drift into authoritarianism.

I think that right now anarchism has a very important contribution to make in terms of raising awareness about forms of organization against oppression. That is to say, anarchism goes much further than almost all modern currents of thought in the sense that it looks at the question of the struggle for justice beyond the struggle itself, beyond focusing on the oppressor. Anarchism is also very attentive to the oppressive dynamics that occur in the fight against oppression. This seems to me to be a priceless treasure. Anarchism also pays a lot of attention, or at least important tendencies of thought pay a lot of attention to interpersonal dynamics, to the question of the social roles in which we find ourselves involved, as parents, as teachers, as older people, as people who live in urban environments, as people who have an accumulation of information that is not

necessarily knowledge, and all the hierarchies that are generated from those roles. In this sense, I believe that anarchism is very attentive to daily life. It is very attentive to the moments of daily events, and what potentialities these daily events have in terms of generating oppressive forms or liberating forms of social configuration.

It is a tremendous treasure to have that legacy on hand and those practices in relationship with non-anarchists, who are not seen as ignorant or deprived people but as people with the potential to generate non-authoritarian ways of thinking and acting. So I think that anarchism is ready, at least in its way of operating in its perception of reality, for all the disasters that are coming our way and for all the despair that is coming our way. Because I believe that anarchism understands very well the profound psychological and social effects of the apotheosis of the state, the apotheosis of authoritarianism, the institutionalization of authoritarianism. This is why anarchism can make very important contributions at times when there is exhaustion, supposed exhaustion of the capacity of thought to account for the circumstances we are experiencing.

Anarchism also allows us to build bridges with all the other tendencies of thought that are going around, that still exist, that give reason for being. Anarchism allows us to understand them, allows us to analyze the logic of thought in these bodies of ideas and, at the same time, find affinity in the most dissimilar spaces, in the most dissimilar ways of perceiving reality, in the most dissimilar experiences of sociability. So, in that sense, anarchism allows one to transcend the very logic of "ism" and see oneself as an attitude in everyday life that does not need, let's say, a structure of tendency, although, of course, this is also perfectly possible and legitimate, and tendency organization is also necessary. But I think it can go further as well. It can be useful to a person in your environment, to any person without previous experience with an organizational tendency, and for that reason anarchism has an extraordinary plasticity for all the circumstances that we are experiencing, especially with the level of restructuring that we are experiencing. Anarchism has a fairly rich, significant answer. And that is the value that I see in the concepts and notions of anarchist practices at this time.

Right now in Cuba, as a result of the authoritarian apotheosis that we are experiencing and of all the exhaustion and demoralization of the so-called Socialist, revolutionary, anti-imperialist State, whatever it is called, that exhaustion and that slow but perceptible death of this entire framework of the Revolution of '59 has also swept away part of what is loved by leftist thought in Cuba. These are the people who have been formed in their revolutionary sensibilities through the State that today is dying, and that has led to a growing vacuum that has been filled by liberalism, has been filled above all by neoliberalism, anarcho-capitalism in recent months, official patriotic chauvinism. In that sense, anarchism, at least as we understand it, has not suffered those attacks. On the contrary, it has been gaining a very small presence, it has been gaining a certifiable credibility, that it is not something crazy, irrational, that it is not something out of this world, but that it is a small reality, but very concrete, logical, with direction.

That has been the contribution of the Alfredo López Libertarian Workshop. We are four crazy people here, four cats plowing in the arid sea of Cuba, but above all we have achieved respect, above all we have achieved the privilege of being heard, of being taken into account in our considerations, our proposals, our practices. This is something, it seems to us, that speaks to the relevance of anarchism in Cuba today, to the fact that we are few but that we are listened to, taken into account by many tendencies of thought in Cuba today, and for several years . This speaks to something interesting, not only something naive, not only something curious —the more benevolent terms with which the dominant Cuban political culture tends to construct its

representation of anarchism— but also of something that has earned a certain respectability, both at the level of the people and at the level of tendency, as a way of thinking.

I believe that anarchism will continue to have a modest future in Cuba and that it can make a contribution as long as it transcends all these personalist, media-driven, self-representational logics that dissident movements have had in Cuba in recent years, times, months, and, above all, that anarchism becomes a virus, a germ that has no face, that has no name, but above all an assumed logic, that many people assume anti-authoritarian logics in their way of thinking, acting, relating, facing authority. I believe that this could be the great victory of anarchism, or at least a small victory that would allow the battle to continue. This is something common everywhere. Of course the acronyms, the names, the defined tendencies are important for structuring and for organization among comrades, but, confronting society, I think that the most important thing is to offer a logic for structuring daily life, a way of structuring relationships, a way of managing daily life, a way of grouping, beyond names, beyond acronyms, beyond figures, beyond models.

I believe that the best of anarchism can come by way of organizing daily logic and through how each person behaves, and that everything else would flow from there, everything else would come: the history of the tendency, the history of struggle, the history of the figures, but the first thing is a way of being, a mode of projecting oneself. I believe that this has been a great small victory that we have had here in the space that we have organized in Cuba.

BRRN: Do you think it's valid to engage with an intersectional analysis of race, gender, and class in the context of both July 11 and the development of social struggles in Cuba? From the specific perspective of contemporary Cuban Anarchism, what could be some possible premises of analysis at the intersection of the aforementioned categories?

ALLW: Of course, it is absolutely valid, in Cuba and everywhere, and well particularly in Cuba – a society deeply marked by the plantation dynamics of the 19th century, and also deeply marked by racialized imaginaries, a product of the plantation, and by the issue of gender subordination that has very interesting peculiarities in Cuba, but that also exist. In that sense, thinking about ways to approach it, ways of engaging with it, is an organic, consubstantial issue, to the point that, well, I don't know of much debate on the issue in our environment, and I don't think it's because people are ignoring it, but because that intersection is presupposed and the need to engage with that intersection is also presupposed. To me, in particular, the issue of gender and race is super important, and it reminds me of a Banksy graffiti where a boy appears with all this punk aesthetic, with the anarchist flag, wearing boots, etc, etc, ready to go to a demonstration, probably a violent one, and his mother is adjusting all the aesthetic scaffolding, she is fixing it. That image seems fundamental to me, in the sense that on July 11, and in general events like these massive uprisings show the importance of women, mothers, sisters, not only in direct confrontation —which took place, in fact there are many imprisoned girls, who are also black, mothers—but also in the sense that they are the ones who probably have a more solid and deeply felt awareness of the need for organizational infrastructure, daily infrastructure to overcome this struggle.

So, continuing with the question, gender and race issues are what make the issue of class more externally visible. Because a society like ours, where the state has articulated a discourse of social equality, of advancing the status of women in society, where there really has been very important advances — the right to abortion, economic equality in wages, a strong presence of women in institutions of power in Cuba, black, white, and mestizo women. In this context, the

question of class must be fine-tuned, connecting it to the daily experiences of people, especially from the point of view of gender and race. This is a very interesting terrain that we ourselves have had a hard time articulating as a result of this domestic economy in which we live, which is male dominated. Women have a lot of trouble getting involved in systematic activism, so they make contributions in an active rearguard that is practically made invisible. But they are there and have a super important presence in the organizational sense, in the logistical sense, in the sense of thinking about the struggle beyond the direct revolt against power. And it becomes a reservoir of denaturalization of all oppressions.

Right now I am in the city of Camagüey, which is probably the region of Cuba where there is the least African presence, and here it is very visible that the state has worked in great detail on the issue of Afro-descendant representation of men and women in institutions of power. It is something that can be noticed. The governor of the city, secretary of the communist party at the same time, is of African descent. The representative of the Nicolás Guillén Foundation here in the city of Camagüey is of African descent. There are also women of African descent in important positions. So you have to fine-tune the analysis and the circumstances in which that analysis will be carried out. Because the state is not stupid either with respect to these issues. Of course, undoubtedly, there are regions of Cuba where that articulation between race, class and gender is much more visible.

In the epicenters of the July 11 uprising, the peripheral, marginal urban areas, in the cities, those who take up daily leadership in the struggle and survival are the mothers, generally single mothers, grandmothers. So, managing to articulate and naturalize a critical, rebellious, and alternative discourse here becomes fundamental, because they are the heroines, not the heterosexual men. In that sense, the question of the articulation of race, class, and gender is a variable that, as I said at the beginning, is deeply integral to any movement that exists in Cuba, both the alternative movements and the representatives of the state. In the struggles that come in the future, this is an issue that will have to be articulated much more and we will need to make more visible the role of those black women, Afro-descendants, but also women who are not Afro-descendants, yet who live in general oppression, under male oppression. In fact, here in Cuba since the 1930s and 1940s, we have had thinkers and activists such as Agustín Alarcón, Juan Rene Betancourt or Salvador Garcia Aguero, who already in the late 1930s were speaking of plus-pain, that is, there is the pain of the exploited in general but there is the pain of the exploited black person, of the exploited woman, which denotes that it is an integral issue and not always recognized in Cuba by socialist, anti-capitalist and anti-oppression activists in general.

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