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UU LEN BAS
CUBA-CRITICISM (FEATURE)
COMMUNIST YOUTH NEWSPAPER SHOWS CRITICAL CANDOR:
BY LIONEL MARTIN
HAVANA, OCT 4, REUTER - CUBANS HAVE A KNACK OF SUMMING UP THEIR POLITICAL FEELING IN CATCHY APHORISMS.
ONE OF THEM WHICH HAS BEEN HEARD OVER PAST MONTHS GOES, +THERE IS NOBODY WHO CAN OVERTHROW THE REVOLUTION BUT NEITHER IS THERE ANYBODY WHO CAN PUT THINGS STRAIGHT.+
THIS PITHY COMMENTARY ON TODAY'S CUBA OFTEN COMES FROM THE MOUTHS OF SUPPORTERS OF THE CUBAN REVOLUTION. THE APHORISM RECOGNIZES THE STRENGTH OF THE REVOLUTION BUT IT REFWCTS THE SKEPTICISM OF MANY CUBANS AS TO CORRECTING SOME OF THE MAJOR DEFICIENCIES OF THE ECONOMY AND THE REGIME IN GENERAL.
RECENTLY, SOLIDAD CRUZ, A COLUMNIST FOR THE OFFICUAL YOUTH NEWSPAPER, REPEATED THE APHORISM AND TRIED TO EXPLAIN WHY MANY CUBANS THINK THAT WAY.
CRUZ SAID +IT IS ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE TO HOLD A CONVERSATION IN WHICH COMMENTS ON THE INCOMPETENCE OF SOME OFFICIAL, UNNECESSARY DELAYS IN GETTING THINGS DONE AND UNDESERVED PRIVILEGE FAILS TO APPEAR.+
THE COLUMNIST NOTED THAT IF ONE ASKS THE PERSON MAKING THE CRITICISM IF HE IS DOING SOMEHHING TO CORRECT THE SITUATION, HE OFTEN REPLIES@PHHUU WITH ANOTHER APHORISM: +WHY SHOULD I LOOK FOR TROUBLE IF NOTHING IS GOING TO HAPPEN ANYWAY.+
SHE SAID THAT OFFICIAL SILENCE ON THESE PROBLEMS LEADS PEOPLE TO FORMULATE STILL ANOTHER APHORISM: +THE PEOPLE ON TOP DON'T KNOW WHAT IS HAPPENING OR THEY ARE NOT INTERESTED IN SOLVING THE PROBLEM.+
THE CUBAN WRITER, CHARGED THAT THERE IS A LACK OF COMBATIVITY ON THE PART OF REVOLUTIONARIES ON THE ONE HAND AND DEFICIENT INFORMATION FROM OFFICIALS ON THE OTHER. SHE SAID THAT THESE TWO FACTORS STAND IN THE WAY OF +A FRANK DIALOGUE ON THE REAL PROBLEMS...+
+IT IS THE HOUR TO SPEAK WITH FRANKNESS AND WITHOUT FEAR, THERE, WHERE THEY SHOULD HEAR US AND WHERE THEY CAN COLLECTIVELY FIND SOLUTIONS,+ CRUZ WROTE.
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A HAVANA UNIVERSITY PROFESSOR SAID THAT A FEW YEARS AGO IT WOULD HAVE BEEN CONSIDERED HERESY FOR ANY NEWSPAPER, LET ALONE THAT OF THE YOUNG COMMUNIST UNION, TO RECOGNIZE THAT THE MAN IN THE STREET WAS VOICING SUCH CYNICAL THOUGHTS. NOR, HE SAID, WOULD THE COLUMNIST HAVE BEEN ALLOWED TO ACCEPT THE VALIDITY OF MOST THE CRITICISMS MADE ABOUT BAD SERVICE AND BUREACRACY.

AT THAT TIME, HE SAID, THE MASS MEDIA PAINTED A ROSE-COLOURED PICTURE OF CUBAN SOCIETY, WITHOUT FLAWS AND CERTAINLY WITHOUT CORRUPTION. THE PUBLIC WAS FED A DAILY DIET OF +TRIUMPHALIST+ ARTICLES, THE PROFESSOR SAID, IN WHICH EVERY FACTORY AND FARM WAS OVERFULFILLING ITS PRODUCTION GOALS.

TODAY, THE JOURNALISTS GO INTO THE ENTERPRISES AND MINISTRIES AND WHAT THEY HAVE DISCOVERED IS THAT THE ENTIRE MANAGERIAL SYSTEM SUFFERED FROM A CHRONIC MALAISE, HE SAID.

A CUBAN JOURNALIST SAID THAT THE MASS MEDIA BEGAN TO BECOME MORE CRITICAL AFYTER CUBAN PRESIDENT FIDEL CASTRO INITIATED THE +RECTIFICATION DRIVE+ TWO YEARS AGO. THE DRIVE IS AIMED AT ROOTING OUT INEFFICIENCY, CORRUPTION, BUREACRACY AND PASSIVITY WHEREVER IT IS FOUND.

BY BEING MORE CRITICAL, THE MASS MEDIA IS FOLLOWING THE OFFICIAL POLICY LAID DOWN BY THE POLITBURO OF THE CUBAN COMMUNIST PARTY, HE SAID +THE GOVERNMENT WANTS US TO BE WHISTLE BLOWERS AND NOT JUST CHEER LEADDRS,+ HE SAID AND ADDED, +WE HAVE A GREEN LIGHT TO CONDEMN NEGLIGENCE, BUREACRACY, WASTE, OFFICIAL INSENSITIVITY TO THE NEEDS OF WORKERS AND THE PUBLIC, CORRUPTION AND THE HUNDREDS OF OTHER SHORTCOMINGS THAT EVERY CUBAN LIVES WITH DAILY.+

IN ORDER TO ENSURE MORE EFFECTIVE CRITICISM, HE SAID, JOURNALISTS ARE BEING REEVALUATED. +THOSE WHO DO NOT SEEM CAPABLE OF DOING INVESTIGATIVE REPORTING AND OF BEING CRITICAL WHEN REQUIRED ARE BEING REMOVED FROM THEIR JOBS,+ HE SAID.

THE LIMITS OF PUBLIC CRITICISM IN CUBA ARE STILL GUIDED BY CASTRO'S DICTIM OF A QUARTER OF A CENTURY AGO: +ANYTHING WITHIN THE REVOLUTION, NOTHING OUTSIDE THE REVOLUTION.+ THE CUBAN MASS MEDIA WHICH IS RUN BY THE GOVERNMENT, DOES NOT PRINT ANY CRITICIMS OF THE BASIC PRINCIPLES OF CUBA'S SOCIALIST SOCIETY, ITS FOREIGN POLICY OR ITS TOP LEADERSHIP.

ASIDE FROM THOSE STRICTURES, HOWEVER, CRITICISM IS THE ORDER OF THE DAY IN CUBA.
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