

The Aquatics

Category: Creeds and Religions

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Written by redpinar

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The aquatic ones of Viñales are a small community that exists in the Sierra del Infierno, one of the most beautiful natural viewpoints of the Viñales Valley, and that is characterized by its belief to cure diseases with water.

There are not many bibliographical references on Viñales Aquatics that allow us to clarify with all justice the reality of a true history that has become a legend with exaggerations and misrepresentations that contribute very little to the purpose of the authorities to continue incorporating these people into the revolutionary process. Essential characteristics that define them:

The cure of illnesses with water.

Non-participation in teaching through schools.

Non-use of medical sciences.

Non-intervention in politics and mass organizations proposed by the revolutionary project.

The Story of Antoñica Izquierdo:

To understand the reality of this phenomenon it is essential to refer to the case of Antoñica Izquierdo between 1936 and 1939 in the area where she lived with all her family when her 2 year old son began to have very high fevers (at the time they called the feverish state of the people) and since she did not have the resources to do so to take him to the doctor in the midst of her logical desperation she seemed to have a divine revelation with the image of the Virgin Mary on January 8, 1936 that recommended her to bathe the child with the water of the nearest stream and when she did the boy improved thus performing the miracle that would turn her into a celebrity.

In another apparition of the Virgin she knew then that she was designated to cure the unhappy ones but that she could not charge nor do it for interest, as well as, that neither could use medicines (only with the water), not to have vices, not to participate in the political life of the country and to refuse to the education of that time because the system only taught to exploit the other men.

Antoñica belonged to a family with traditions of healers and was recognized among the best in this area favoring this detail to the situation that would be created in the following weeks where thousands of people came to concentrate in search of the miracles attributed to her.

As a result of her sermons Antoñica Izquierdo became a natural leader, among the peasants fundamentally, promoting with her words that the land should be given to the peasants because they were the ones who worked it, as well as, she was also a supporter of passive resistance to the abuses committed then by the governments of the time and a sign of that influence is the fact that she was able to collect hundreds of electoral cards to prevent them from being given to any politician. This is why it began to be considered a serious threat to those who

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had traditionally benefited from the ignorance of the poorest and humblest in society.

She was confined in the Mazorra Hospital until May 1936, when she was discharged and forced to move to the Isabel Maria area where she continued to preach until 1938 and coinciding again with another election period when she was again arrested on charges of falsehood, incitement to rebellion, disorderly conduct and non-compliance with her duties to the electoral census, She was interned for the second time in Mazorra on December 18, 1938, certifying the doctors that she suffered from paranoia and died there on March 1, 1945 without ever being told that they were injecting medicines since her first admission to accelerate her logical alteration by the phenomenon in which the peasant woman from the Cayos de San Felipe was involved.

Aquatics before 1959

Antoñica Izquierdo, from her way of seeing life, assumed a position of rebellion by not accepting the political mechanisms of her time and preaching among the peasants who followed her that they should not participate in the elections, an issue that multiplied in the Aquatics of Viñales, Pedro Blanco, who took advantage of the fact that the Guajiros were illiterate to make them believe that if they signed some documents they would be owners of their lands and in reality what he was giving them to sign was the eviction order.

This happened in 1943 when 14 families had to leave the area where they lived after their humble houses were burned and they were released some zebu bulls that assaulted anyone.

With a bit of luck they managed to settle in the lands of Juan Rivera who was the owner of the lands of Cuajani in the area known as La Penitencia in the Sierra del Infierno de Viñales, with the condition of delivering a quarter of the harvests.

The Aquatics and the Triumph of the Revolution

They began, so to speak, to be a cause for concern concerning their belief not to go to the doctor to cure diseases by faith in water, this being the main contradiction between Aquatics and the Revolution. This situation of not going to the doctor worsened every time there was a case where the children or mothers died in the middle of childbirth helped only by the prayers they made and the water, as well as, the child who suffered from a generalized pyodermitis and as a consequence of the water baths that his parents gave him then acquired a bronchopneumonia that caused his death, For this reason, on several occasions, it was necessary for the health authorities accompanied by policemen to take the sick by force and provide them with the corresponding medical treatment, a matter that has not been repeated for several years, fortunately, knowing of several cases of people with this belief that in secret from the rest of the group, certain

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ailments have been consulted with doctors of their absolute trust. With regard to the manifest rejection of teaching by teachers, there are details that cannot be attributed to their belief, since they were mistakes made by people who had this mission to reach them to teach them to read and write, leaving a bitter memory that is still present in the memory of the oldest in the area.

A very significant aspect is manifested among the aquatics by the interest that their children learn and for them the Municipal Government appointed an itinerant teacher with precise orientations to respect each and every one of the existing customs and habits in the families where it corresponds to him to work.

Compliance with the Agrarian Reform laws that also benefited the aquatics was undoubtedly one of the aspects that had greater impact on the change in mentality that these people had on the policy that until that date had been rejected, which is why they joined in their own way as members of a Cooperative of Credits and Services in Vineyards and are dedicated to the cultivation of tobacco and malanga fundamentally fulfilling their plans to deliver to the state according to the commitments they themselves make at the beginning of each year as this established.

They do not carry out any proselytizing action, nor do they force their children to have the same belief, which is based on respect for others and free individual expression.

The place where they live despite the name it has (Sierra del Infierno) is one of the most beautiful natural viewpoints of the Valley of Viñales and according to the aquatic themselves the care of the environment where they live is fundamental because their belief is very close to nature.

Most of them express without hypocrisy of any kind that they feel very grateful to the Revolutionary Government that has respected all their beliefs with the exception of the refusal to go to the doctor to cure the diseases they suffer.

Aquatics Today

At the beginning of 2002 there were about 42 people living in what is known as the aquatic community in Viñales, of whom 23 are women and 19 are men.

They continue to cultivate tobacco, malanga and other products for family subsistence, to which are added the benefits they receive from the visits of tourists interested in learning about their customs.

In the area where they live, including the Cuajani Valley, electrification has not yet been possible and the water continues to be loaded in pipes pulled by oxen, but in the mountain where the aquatics live this matter is not a cause for concern because they themselves built a rustic system of aqueduct based on the use of a spring that is at the highest point of the mountain and by hoses with tubes was possible to ensure that each house received this benefit. While by decision of the Municipal Government they were given a solar

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panel with a recorder and a television for the 9 families who still live in this area with the aim of facilitating a certain level of access to information about what is happening in Cuba and the world to avoid in this way that they receive distorted news.

This solar panel and the remaining equipment were placed in the house of Felix Rodriguez (deceased) in recognition of his condition as a natural and traditional leader of the aquatic, because along with his brother Julian was the initiator of the group, when the doctors in Havana ruled that one of his son had no cure for lack of lungs and then decided to take him to Antoñica to attend him, making the miracle desired by the whole family.

Taken from Ecured