

“BEYOND THE RHETORIC”

Harry C. Alford

Just what is a Hispanic?

It is a nouveau term cultivated from the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Prior to that Mexican Americans demanded to be listed as Caucasian on government applications, etc. When affirmative action started to kick in and “protected classes” began to formulate their leadership abandoned the claim as Caucasian and demanded distinction as a protected class also. Thus, the broad term “minority” started to include Mexican Americans and others who no longer saw the advantage in being separated from Blacks and Asians. Eventually, the term Hispanic began to be included among minority ethnicities.

Basically, Hispanic is in no way a race of people. It is a conglomerate of cultures who share a bond via speaking Spanish or Portuguese. It is a combination of Caucasian, Black and Native American plus a little Asian in places like Brazil (where there are 4 million Japanese Brazilians), Peru and other Latin American places. Also included are direct descendents of Spain and Portugal – many of whose ancestors sponsored and profited from the slave trade business and slave operated plantations. Imagine heirs to slave traders and slave owners being automatically allowed to participate in affirmative action programs like they suffered from slavery and Jim Crow effects. The fact is they prospered from it.

Another oddity is that Spanish is spoken and written in only certain parts of Spain. There are other dominant languages. I went to Barcelona and tried my Spanish while ordering breakfast. The waitress said, “We can do English or my language, Catalan (mixture of Spanish, French and a touch of Italian)”. I was so embarrassed not recognizing the language of the land I was visiting.

During the Jim Crow days of the South and various northern venues like Indiana, Ohio, downstate Illinois, etc. separate facilities were for “whites” and “colored” aka Blacks or Negroes. People such as Mexican Americans and other Latino ethnicities walked through the “whites” door. They were not reduced to the inferior facilities we Blacks had. General Colin Powell describes it brilliantly in his first autobiography “Soldier” when he goes into a restaurant

in Columbus, GA and orders a take out. The waitress says, "Say you are a Puerto Rican and I can serve you. If you don't; I can't serve Blacks." He left.

South of the US border there are well over 100 million Blacks who can claim they are Hispanic. The largest populated nation of Blacks is Brazil with 76.8 million (second only to Nigeria). It is followed by Columbia – 11 million; Panama – 4 million; Cuba – 3.9 million; Dominican Republic – 3.2 million; Venezuela – 3.1 million; Peru – 1.1 million; Mexico – 1 million (there are 9 million Mexicans who don't know they are Black) and Puerto Rico – 715,000. This will be awesome once their civil rights movements start to kick in and they demand economic equity. They are on the lowest rung of the "ladder" when you evaluate every economic and educational factor of these nations. The time has come for them to be mad and start demanding their share of power.

Like in Mexico many of the Caucasian Hispanics don't know they have Black blood in their veins. Someone did a DNA sampling of blood collected by a Buenos Aires, Argentina hospital and found that 10% of the patients have Black lineage and didn't know it. How many have passed over but now can be truly identified.

Many of the non-Blacks and non-Caucasians from Latin America are of Native American descent. For some reason they, especially Mexican Americans, have not claimed this. Native American status would give them far more protection and opportunities than saying they are "Hispanic". I believe they need to rethink this. Also, many Mexican Americans can claim their heritage on this land prior to there being a United States in California, Texas, Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, Nevada and Utah. A friend of my brother has a documented land grant given to his ancestors by the government of Mexico for 300 hectares (about 600 acres). The grant became null and void after our land grab of the Southwest in 1848. That land sits on what is now Wilshire Boulevard in Santa Monica, CA. My goodness, now that is a reason to demand reparations.

Hispanics from the Caribbean are basically void of Native American blood as they were decimated by the early European settlers. Cubans, Puerto Ricans and Dominicans who have European blood are basically descendents of French settlers from Haiti who fled to their lands after the great slave revolt of Haiti ran the French army out. Cuba alone received 200,000 French settlers fleeing the revolting Blacks seeking big payback. Also, many French settlers left Louisiana and resettled on these islands after the Louisiana Purchase.

The next time you hear about Hispanic population please remember that a good portion of that is us. Don't be alarmed; we are the largest minority race in the United States by far.

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