There aren’t any Races, There can be No Racism

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Certain manifestations of racism linger in the Cuban society, although the legal machinery condemns them. Deep down, they remain in some rooted prejudices… which need to be fought back relentlessly.

There is an ongoing debate on the existence of human races. It’s the general opinion that is inadequate to speak of "race" when we refer to the dissimilar human groups. They believe that among men there’s a single race, the rest is social construction. Others defend the use of the term when specifying purely biological differences, like skin color and facial characteristic.

Pass beyond the purely scientific environment; something should be clear (although some are not convinced yet): there are no groups or superior "race." Skin color is not indicator of intelligence, sensibility, talent, common sense or identification with certain moral values.

Those attempting to demonstrate "specific aptitudes of each race", lay their foundation on historical and cultural deformations. If worldwide there are more white professionals rather than black professionals, for example, it’s not because blacks are less capable; but because it was always harder for them to gain access to studies… due to economic differences, as well as for political overtly discriminatory.

That "aftereffect" is not pinned on black people, rather on those who oppressed them.

The different development levels of the first civilizations imposed a “Darwinian” relationship to the brink of perversion: the strongest imposes over the weakest; far from the solidary and fraternal spirit that’s supposedly exclusive to the human species, because it comes from the conscience.

The world has changed, at least from its point of view. Nations condemn in their laws any manifestation of racism, regardless the discriminatory attitudes still showing on some people and even in sectors. Although at this point it’s difficult anyone defends them openly.

There is racism up to a point "involuntary", "unconscious", "cultural" which although "politically incorrect", is tolerated many times in public. The unjustified aggressions of white policemen to black men in the United States could be an extreme example. The xenophobia also has frankly racist roots.

But there are other more personal manifestations, less into society. But equally damaging the human dignity. In Cuba too.

Trabajadores newspaper published the complaint of a black student, mistreated and discriminated against by a taxi driver (best known as Almendron). "That’s why I don’t like to pick blacks in my car! ". He defended his right to act like that. As the events took place in a private car, one could even thinking that nobody is forced to pick certain people in his car.

But the case is that the private car in question offered its service. And even if it didn’t. The Constitution of the Republic is clear on this regard: skin color discrimination is forbidden. Racist expressions in public spaces are punishable.

The fact that they take place in close spaces, make them less illegitimate.

Some time ago people were surprised by an ad on a website that requested personnel for a business… and it specified that they would not accept black people.

It happens. It’s hard to tell the extent of occurrence, with greater or minor subtlety, in several new businesses. But uploading it on a website is really something shameless. And it’s absolutely illegal!

The existence of such attitudes in a country that eliminated all discriminatory expressions more than fifty years ago for skin color in laws, institutions, and public life shows the strength of the prejudices… and the need to fight them.

Institutions by law are already doing it. Most of the population too, by their conscience. But we can (we must) do more.

We are not establishing artificial policies of equality; or promoting the black over the white just because he is black. The latter also implies a racist positioning. To each his own, regardless their skin color. We must guarantee the same opportunities for everyone. That also includes standing against historical injustices that still echoes nowadays.

Social communication and art also have a saying in that sense. Speaking about the issue cannot keep being a taboo, because within society that sees itself as fair and inclusive discriminatory attitudes cannot be overlooked.

The suffering of a single person, humiliated or minimized by their skin color is incompatible with the country we deserve.

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