
EDITORIAL: All the men's colors

By: CubaSí Editorial Staff
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Cuba celebrated on March 21st the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination with evident accomplishments: since 1959, the Revolution faced and dismantled —with the government's commitment and a legal framework— all expressions of racism, which were still institutionalized and rooted in behaviors assumed normally by part of the citizenship.

First, rights were enforced. Justice was made. Afterwards, an educational and public awareness work was carried out. But there is still much to be done. Although the issue has been solved to a large extent at the structural level, there are still signs of racism in the social environment.

Whenever a discriminatory act goes unpunished in any area of life; whenever people assume as “cultural trait” any expression of racism, more or less visible, there will be further work to be done to accomplish the fullest respect to the rights of men and women, which are not dependent on the color of our skin to belonging to a specific race (which is not, in any case, a concept validated by science; it is rather a social construction at best).

Recently, the government adopted a national program aimed at eliminating prejudice and behaviors with clear or disguised racist signs still existent in our society. There are far-reaching expressions cemented for centuries by the impact of slavery, exploitation, inequities, and a marked “racialization” in interpersonal relationships.

Although they are “politically incorrect,” such expressions are greatly naturalized in some less formal spaces. And they do affect our daily life. Some were shocked at the appearance in social networks of job advertisements in the private sector where black people were explicitly banned from applying. The law is clear in this regard: you cannot discriminate people. Discrimination in the field of employment is a felony. The law must be enforced. And here, the old saying: ignorance of the law is no defense would make sense.

But there are less explicit expressions which are also worrisome because they are harder to find and eradicate. And we may find solutions in public education, the shaping of human values...Actions with which the family, the school, and mass media must be hundred percent committed.

Law and education, that seems to be the equation. Humanism must prevail.

The fact that the color of the skin is a stigma to many, and pretext to foster hatred...is one of the worst attacks against human dignity. The struggle against this scourge is everyone's responsibility.

On April 16th, 1893, José Martí published an article in the newspaper **Patria** where he stated: *"(...) when you say 'men', you have already imbued them with all their rights. Negroes, because they are black, are not inferior or superior to any other men. Whites who say 'my race' commit the sin of redundancy; so do Negroes who say the same. Everything that divides men, everything that specified, separates or pens them in, is a sin against humanity."*

José Martí is still showing the way to all of us.

Translated by Sergio A. Paneque Díaz / CubaSí Translation Staff
