

CUBAN CIVIL SOCIETY OPEN SPACE

AN ETHICAL PATH FOR CUBAN CIVIL SOCIETY.

HAVANA, FEBRUARY 25TH, 2015

Convivencia Project acknowledges the far-reaching importance of this declaration of principles or Code of Ethics for the present and the future of Cuba. For the first time a project emerges to rebuild us by our participation in virtues and values. This proposal has been agreed by a large number of independent Cuban civil society representatives. Convivencia Magazine is proud to publish it hoping and wishing that many Cubans are able to read it and that it be a light which inspires the ethical and spiritual rebuilding of the whole Cuban nation. This stroke of light proposed to the citizens' consciences was approved and published on the 25th of February, 2015, on the occasion of the 162nd anniversary of Father Varela's death. He was the first person who taught us how to think. We invite readers to reproduce, distribute, study and discuss this "ethical path" which was reached jointly by persons coming from the most diverse political, philosophical and religious trends who have taken part in the ambit of Cuban Civil Society Open Space, in the process of study and enrichment of these matrixes of ethics with the purpose of contributing to the construction of a future for Cuba. A future settled on the deepest humanism.

Editorial Board.

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As part of Cuban independent civil society we believe that every moral choice is strictly personal and not transferable with no imposition. We also acknowledge that citizens socialize and become a part of communities which have received humus previously settled and made up of values and virtues well known as the community ethos and its nature can be family, national or international. When we agree about an ethical path we are giving up a dogmatic morality which can be prohibitive, frivolous and licentious. We choose a dialogic ethics opposite to an authoritarian morality; an ethics which links freedom and responsibility intrinsically. We propose to educate ourselves in order to accept the following ethical path in our principles and attitudes. This path has the roots of the best Cuban cultural heritage.

1. We acknowledge that the human person is the protagonist of his own history. Likewise the person should be the beginning, the center and the end of every institution and historical process. The human person is not a means and cannot be an object in the hands of others therefore he should not be manipulated for scientific, social, political or economic experiments. We believe that all human beings are equal before the law and diverse due to their personal capacities and options.

2. We should promote consistency between what we believe, what we say and what we do. Every personal, civic and political engagement should be indissolubly backed up by an ethical behaviour without which, every act by an individual or a community loses value or meaning.

3. Cuba, that is, the Nation, understood as the community of all its citizens in the Island and in the Diaspora, its happiness, its freedom, its progress and its common good are the inspiration and the end of every civic and political act, eradicating spurious interests. We consider that the meaning and the end of our ethical commitment to Cuba is the construction of a pacific, fruitful and prosperous social

coexistence in our Country, rather than a simple coexistence among the different ones or the adversaries.

4. We choose pacific methods and the search for non violent solutions to the national and international conflicts and to our interpersonal relations. We choose the absolute respect for the human life and we declare ourselves to be against all kind of violence and against death penalty.

5. Discrepancy on opinions and political debate should not allow personal or group attacks, damaging remarks that degrade others or defamation.

6. We believe that owning things, knowing things and having power are meant to serve. We think that without agile and honest institutions there is no possible governance. We are certain there is no progress or articulation or primacy of civil society governance as a valid interlocutor if there is no citizens' sovereignty. Corruption, lie and excessive interest for material things are the main enemies of civility in today's world; therefore, as part of Cuban independent civil society, we reject such evils and we choose transparency, service to the truth and supremacy of spiritual values. We look for an ethics of minima agreed by consensus. We differentiate the processes of dialogue and negotiation so we believe that an ethics of minima should emerge from a dialogue that leads to consensus whereas specific agreements should emerge from negotiations; these agreements should be observed and implemented by the parties.

8. A civic ethics of consensual minima is already an achievement of pluralist humankind. Its basis is the full and supreme dignity of the human person and it is attained by knowledge, education, and defence of all Rights for all, proclaimed at the Universal Declaration of Human Rights agreed by the United Nations in 1948. We absolutely associate ourselves with that Declaration which is an inspiration and an ethical program for us.

9. We adhere to the three fundamental values that summarized the best desires of mankind: freedom, equality and fraternity and their corresponding rights. The rights called "of first generation" emphasise the value of freedom: these are the civil and political rights; the second generation rights emphasise the value of equality: these are the economic, social and cultural rights as well as the third generation rights which emphasise the value of universal fraternity as the ecological right to a sound balance of the environment and the right to world peace.

10. Consequently, we wish to choose inclusion and democratic participation, moral authority but not authoritarianism; proposals but not recipes; the ideas rather than the person who states them; the programs and not only the leaders; unity in diversity but not uniformity; rational convictions but not fanaticism; the decriminalization of discrepancy but not intolerance; decentralization and subsidiarity should replace centralism and totalitarianism. Ethics should outweigh technology and science. Engagement should overcome indifference. We choose ethics in politics and in economy, in national coexistence and in international relations.

11. This ethical commitment should be fulfilled in proactive acts in order to cure the anthropological damage and beat civic and political illiteracy through a systematic work of empowerment by citizens. Since we reject every moralistic imposition we believe that education is the only valid path. That is why we direct our efforts toward an education which can free us from ourselves and from all alienation thus contributing to the ethical and civic education of all Cubans, inspired on Human Rights and their corresponding Civic Duties.

12. Civic activists and politicians or intellectuals should not be the moralizers of society. The fact of

being elected to represent others does not confer moral authority but political engagement submitted to the scrutiny and the will of citizens. We believe in representativeness as a service to society. This representativeness should be the result of the people's election and it should have a limit of time and alternation. Civic ethics should be performed by every person and the community should educate, promote and look after the *humus* of the Nation's ethics open to the universal and based on the great values of truth, freedom, justice and love.

As we adopt this ethical path we wish to identify its roots in the ethics of our founding fathers. The teachings of our Apostle remember us that:

“It is love that makes us see; through love we see; it is love that sees.”

We believe in civic friendship and reconciliation which should be the result of fairness. Master José de la Luz y Caballero named it: “the sun of the moral world”.

In short, we share Father Varela's conviction which teaches us: “There is no fatherland without virtue. There is no virtue with ruthlessness”.

***Havana, February 25th, 2015
On the 162nd Anniversary of Father Varela's Death.***