

On Reconciliation

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By Librado Linares García

By necessity, the transition to democracy must first involve the reconciliation of the different expressions of the Cuban nation. Fifty years of arbitrary rule and repression have destroyed the minimum degree of consensus that living in a society presupposes. We face generational, doctrinal and, above all, strategic differences about how to overcome the impasse in which we find ourselves.

The regime in power, independently of the fact that it benefited from the cold war and certain beliefs and attitudes that prevailed during that process, is the creation of Fidel Castro. To recover a minimum consensus about what constitutes the Cuban nation, we must reconcile among ourselves and *within* ourselves, while excluding those who personify the model that we need to overcome.

Neither revolution nor reform is advisable for our cause, but rather transition. By this I mean a clean break with the past, while maintaining those institutions that can help us bridge two such distinct stages in our history. The natural tendency of a scenario led by a variety of actors with different visions would be political and social instability. Only a well-reasoned, non-vengeful reconciliation and a depoliticized armed forces to safeguard order will assure the creation and consolidation of a new national project. Also essential are the successful actions of the prodemocracy movement, that is, its transformation into an effective counterweight to the existing regime, if we are to be sure that the latter does not live on in the future.

My advocacy of reconciliation is clear, but the form that reconciliation will take will be decided by public debate, a process in which all social actors should participate.

I am hopeful, and—why not?—certain that the need for self-realization and love for Cuba will clear the way for a transition that will not be as traumatic as some predict, for I believe in the capacity for reconciliation of all human beings, and of Cubans in particular.

Fraternally,
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Librado Linares was one of the 75 nonviolent opponents arrested in mid-March 2003 and sentenced to 20 years in prison in early April.