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The attempt to attribute a political motive to the theft of talent from Cuban sports by describing this international crime as an anti-communist exodus adds cynicism and cruelty to a criminal abuse poor countries have faced from time immemorial.

Why do they claim that Cuban players escape Communism to go play in the Major Leagues in the United States, when the new Cuban sports and immigration policies allow these athletes to play as professionals in any country in the world?

The Cubainformación website, based in Spain and directed by Basque journalist José Manzaneda, recently explained how the singular theft of Cuban baseball talent works.

The ascent to the majors for applicants in the United States is basically through college teams. It starts with the system known as "drafting" which is a register where applicants enroll. This register regulates the contract and wage relationships governing the links of the players to the teams and unions. Four years later, the players can leave the "draft". Some (if they stand out with exceptional skills in the sport) become "free agents" who can negotiate big contracts by themselves.

As a rule, Latin American players (excluding Cubans), are formed in schools that US teams have created have all over Latin America. Being just kids, they sign contracts with the clubs which invest in their training and are tied to the terms of the economic conditions that will govern their future in U.S. professional baseball.

The U.S. Treasury Department prohibits Cuban baseball players from signing with an American club if they maintain residence on the island and/or have links with the Instituto Cubano de

Deportes Educación Física y Recreación (INDER) [Cuban Sports Institute].

The Cuban Adjustment Act, enacted by the United States in 1966 to promote the theft of talent in all fields and to feed the propaganda campaign against Cuba, states that any Cuban who reaches U.S. territory by any means, even if as a result human trafficking, automatically gets a work permit and residence. But this law alone is not enough for the theft of great Cuban baseball stars in the terms required by major traffickers.

The mechanism in place for baseball big business to get a Cuban baseball star to play in the Major Leagues usually begins with a trip of the player to another country. This country cannot be the United States or Canada, because in any of these two countries he would have the obligation to integrate into the "drafting" system, which would reduce his economic prospects.

Residing in Haiti, the Dominican Republic or Mexico, as a supposed "free agent," a representative of the baseball player negotiates on his behalf with the "scout" of the interested team. The main corporate media complement this cynical game by publishing news of alleged "escapes" or "getaways" as if the freedom of contract and player movement were restricted by Cuba and not by the United States.

The rules currently in place in Cuba provide that when a foreign team or baseball sports organization is interested in acquiring the services of a Cuban baseball player, it should settle the terms through the Cuban Baseball Federation. This has been done by organizations from other countries which already have Cuban athletes and technicians on their payrolls.

However none of the thirty U.S. Major League baseball teams has used this route; and the very small number of Cuban baseball players in their ranks had to place themselves in the hands of the internationally illegal human traffickers with its cohort of "coyotes" and gangsters.

Cuban baseball, as Cuban sports in general, is based on dignity, honesty and decency. It is undoubtedly at a disadvantage compared to the squalor which characterizes commercial relations applied to sports. Cuba has tried to circumvent these disadvantages, though not always successfully.

Some of the prohibitions with which Cuba has tried to protect the purity of its sports have proved unsustainable in a globalized world. There, with rules and procedures imposed by large capitalist consortia, and so the island has been forced to replace them with others more consistent with international trends, provided these changes do not violate the principles which characterize the political and social system the Cuban people are building.

Nothing should prevent Cuba and the United States to expand their collaboration in the field of baseball, a big favorite sport among the public in both countries. And there are many things that can be settled without wars, drones, or bombs.