

«Blacks are vulnerable and ostracized by the political system»



Derou Georges Blezon,
Président of
MouReDiN. Photo :
Voix d'Exils

The Movement for the Respect and Dignity of Blacks (MoureDiN) is a non-profit organization based in Lausanne, Switzerland, since 2006. It defends cohabitation with respect to the freedoms and rights between foreigners and natives living in Switzerland. It also aims at orientate and help young people through projects created and supported by community partners such as ACOR SOS Racism and the International League against Racism and Anti-Semitism (LICRA). These projects focus on raising awareness and encouraging young blacks and foreigners to integrate local society and to organize their professional future. Derou Blézon George, President of MoureDiN, answers questions from Voix d'Exils.

Voix d'Exils: When and why did you create MoureDiN ?

Derou Georges Blézon: MoureDiN was created on 1 August 2006, after a police intervention in my then house in Lausanne. Young people who sought my advice would visit my house. Some were undocumented like me, others were young people with B or C permit while others were asylum seekers. Police conflated us all, since among them there were drug dealers. One of them was arrested in a way that I felt inadmissible due to the violence the police employed. This outrage provoked anger and frustration. We decided, with ACOR SOS-Racism and Point

d'appui to create a political movement: the Movement for the Respect and Dignity of Black (MoureDiN). Why a political movement? Because the behavior of individuals vis-à-vis blacks is nothing but a purely political behavior.

What is the main mission of your organization ?

Its main mission is to convey a message of living together, regardless of skin color and avoid generalising. If we look closely, we see that the state is more racist than the population. That is why, in such a situation, it was high time to form an association worth the name.

What are the concrete actions and activities of your organization ?

We have a legal adviser, a social counsellor and guidance in terms of employment and professional training. Advice for rejected asylum seekers. This is made possible due to our good relations with our partner associations.

Who are those concerned ?

Blacks are our priority, because they are very vulnerable and ostracized by the host society and political system. For the simple reason that they are the most visible minority and least defended. In fact, blacks have almost always menial jobs, such as: cleaners, helpers in the kitchen, painters and mechanics ... The precariousness of their economic, social and administrative situation has many direct impact on the lives of parents and their children. Children, who want to continue their studies – which is not possible in most cases because they are abandoned so soon on the streets for lack of parental control – face a journey without end.

Where are you most active ?

The movement is currently based in Lausanne, but it has international ambition. Taking into consideration the multitude

of associations or human rights leagues in Europe, (MoureDiN itself being a partner), MoureDiN is looking forward to expanding its network and the scope of its actions in the years to come all over Europe. But for now, we have operated mostly in the french-speaking part of Switzerland.

How does your association works ?

We have 15 active members and we are working with community partners such as ACOR SOS Racism, the International League against Racism and Anti-Semitism (LICRA), the Forum of Foreigners Lausanne (FEEL), Point d'Appui, The Protestant Social Centre (CSP) FRAT-CSP and political parties such as the Greens and the Union Unia of which I am a member.

In 2008, you launched the project « Young MoureDiN 2008 » and 2009 « What value my permit / my nationality ? » Since then, nothing, silence ... Why ?

In reality this is not an absolute silence, these two projects have been facing several administrative problems hence the silence. The « Young MoureDiN 2008 » project was supported by the Canton of Vaud and the Swiss Confederation. Our goal was to help early school dropouts, to bring them back to reason, and help them go back to school. First, there was the silence of our youth that the project was aimed at, and then we discovered that the guidance service in Switzerland, in which young people are assigned, was not quite what we thought, in the sense that it is an area of blockage and storage for young blacks and foreigners.

Today, what is your assessment of your work and what future for MoureDiN?

From 2006 to 2013 the record was neither negative nor positive. We are in a time of turbulence. To ensure a permanent office which responds to the concerns of early school leavers and parents in difficulty, given the complexity of the problem, we need about 30,000 francs of funds. But, we

are calm about the future of MoureDiN. If, for some time, we have disappeared from the political and administrative stage, it is a preparatory step back, because currently members of the movement and I are in training. Most members of the movement are young people who grew up in Switzerland, who have the C permit or Swiss passport. They are currently preparing for exams. We aimed to be a grass-roots movement. In 2006 a Black March was held for the first time in Switzerland which counted 250 protesters, also with the support of many partners such as the Communist Party and ACOR SOS Racism. In this Black March, there were not only dealers, dropouts or the unemployed, but also blacks and foreigners who are employed and successful in Switzerland.

What is your message to the foreign population ?

Referring to my former president Laurent Gbagbo, who said: « A good ambassador is each individual who represents his country in another country? » In other words, it is your behavior that incites respect for your country. We foreigners have different channels to reach Switzerland and Europe, for instance through clandestine means, that I myself borrowed, through asylum and other forms. And I think the way we behave individually shows who we are and where we come from. We come with our cultures and mentalities, but once here, we are called to integrate, to coexist. I do not say « become white, » but we must be responsible for our lives doing our best to make sense of things. Do not do in the host country what you would not do in your country.

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