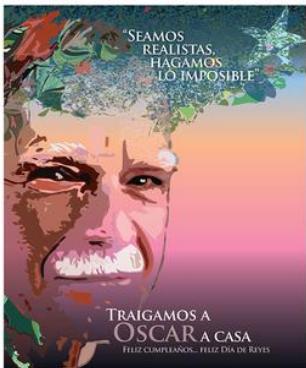


Oscar López Rivera: Circumstances of an Incarceration

Escrito por Noel Colón Martínez / MINH
Jueves, 07 de Febrero de 2013 00:21 -



The unjust incarceration of our dear friend and compañero Oscar López Rivera will have lasted for 31 years as of 2012.

As with Don Pedro, he was accused of seditious conspiracy, which is a type of catchall where a lot of acts and circumstances are put together to justify a long sentence. Since it has to do with an accusation for alleged acts committed to challenge state power, the state acts as if it were the aggressor seeking vengeance against the offender who has challenged it and denied its legitimacy. If circumstances point to the fact that many people are also challenging in some fashion its legitimacy and power, then the conspiracy is to mercilessly punish the accused, because he represents the advance stage of a far broader and far more dangerous threat. That's how I measure the circumstances that brought the judges to impose absurd sentences on all the Puerto Rican patriots who, in the decade of the 80's of the last century, on various occasions, challenged the legitimacy of the alleged power and authority of the United States over our nation.

In the decade of the 80's the contradictions between the capitalist and socialist worlds heightened. In the case of the United States, it saw its national interests threatened in many and various places. The Soviet Union's support for those who confronted U.S. power at times when nuclear proliferation had not resolved the problem, observed in the Cuban missile crisis in 1962, put the United States on permanent national security alert. Cuba, 90 miles from Florida, had decided to continue making good on the history of solidarity with those who struggled for the independence of Puerto Rico and, through this solidarity, Puerto Rico became a permanent accusation against colonialism put into practice in the very United Nations. Soviet and Cuban support made it possible for us to take to the most diverse stages the just cause of our freedom.

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Two years before Oscar was sentenced, in Mexico, with the decisive support of Cuba and the Soviet Union, there was a second conference in solidarity with our struggle for independence which emphasized the anger of our allies, who listened to and helped our struggle.

At the time, the struggle within Puerto Rico and in the United States appeared with a new vigor. The Puerto Rican Socialist Party was considered by the United States as an ally of subversion due to its close ties with the victorious Cuban Revolution, and there, six years before Oscar was sentenced, the most successful international conference in solidarity with our struggle was held. In the diaspora appeared a new political militancy that the United States characterized as terrorist and persecuted with the viciousness demonstrated by the accusations against the group that accompanied Oscar to federal prison.

In 1980, Carlos Romero Barceló was re-elected governor of Puerto Rico, a man who very broad sectors of our country have held responsible for the assassinations of Cerro Maravilla and for the entire conspiracy of the police of Puerto Rico with the local office of the FBI, dedicated to carrying out or covering up several assassinations of militants of the independence movement, and in the case of Chagui Mari Pesquera, for the purpose of punishing the militancy of Juan Mari Brás.

In 1980, Ronald Reagan became president of the United States, a conservative anti-communist who became the author of a policy destined to combat progressive forces throughout the world, but especially in Central America. Those emerging forces in our region fought fiercely against autocratic, dictatorial regimes that not only seized political power from the people but subjected the region to profound repression, exploitation and poverty. Amnesty International reported that in 1981 in Guatemala, over 100,000 Guatemalans had been assassinated by official and paramilitary forces. To contain those liberation struggles, the contras were created to detain popular forces in Nicaragua, Honduras, San Salvador and Guatemala. The CIA agreed to create alliances with important collaborating drug traffickers to hide from Congress an unauthorized act and at the same time silence the popular Central American offensive, which finally managed to take over when the Central American states decided to put an end to wars induced from the outside, and in Contadora took the destiny of their countries into their own hands.

These abuses and injustices were a lesson for Latin America. From these innumerable abuses and violations of the peoples of our America has emerged the new democratic revolution with its emphasis placed on recuperating that which the United States impeded for so many dozens of years without consideration for the methods or the social and human consequences. Oscar López Rivera is today living proof of this policy, which internally within the U.S. has not been revised or corrected; Oscar has been a worthy fighter for the freedom of his country, an anti-imperialist, an anti-colonial fighter who gives honor to the principles that guided the General Assembly of the United Nations in approving Resolution 1514 (XV) en 1960, 21 years before he was convicted of fighting to put an end to colonialism, which is precisely what is set forth in said Resolution.

The year 2012 commenced with important activities to coalesce a campaign to finally achieve Oscar's release. Aside from whatever effort is carried out on other levels, Oscar's return to his

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country cannot and should not come without achieving the broadest support for his release from his people acting above and beyond their political affiliations. Now we speak in humanitarian terms. Oscar will have served 31 years in prison. I am not aware of any political prisoner held in custody for a longer period of time. Although the crimes committed by the United States in its so-called war against terrorism will be severely judged by history (Abu Ghraib, Guantánamo, Iraq, Afghanistan), that country has announced that it will significantly reduce its armed forces, because its decline is evident. For imperialism to take such action is much more difficult than to recognize the injustice of this long and unusual captivity.

It is possible that the United States may arrive at the conclusion that the vengeful acts it has committed against so many Puerto Rican fighters, and which are demonstrated by the arbitrary sentences, were dictated by historical situations that no longer exist. That is what President Clinton understood at the time. The new president still doesn't seem to have understood it, or he feels weaker in the face of a deeply rooted racist opposition such that he will readily lend himself to disemboweling at any moment that mix of fear, prejudice and power that has led to so many and such mistaken historical decisions by the U.S.

It is up to us to present Oscar as he is: exceptional proof of the crimes of imperialism, and from that perspective achieve the rectification that Oscar and our struggle deserve. The good will that is being felt in Puerto Rico, outside of our struggles, is indicative of an understanding that the arbitrariness of a judicial sentence should not necessarily lead to a total dehumanization. We must all be disposed to contribute in accord with our efforts so that this year will be the end of his imprisonment, and we can have our friend and compañero sharing with his family in our country.