

“The Cuban Five” and The US Sponsored Terrorist Campaign Directed Against Cuba

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The Comité Fabio Di Celmo pour les 5 de la Table de concertation de solidarité Québec-Cuba (The Fabio Di Celmo Committee for the Five of the Concertation Table of Quebec-Cuba Solidarity) has been organizing picket lines in front of the US Consulate in downtown Montreal the second Thursday of every month for more than three years. At times this action has been accompanied by the handing in of petitions to the Consular officials in order to be transmitted to the US Ambassador in Ottawa. Also part of the activity is monthly press releases which at times have been taken up by the media. Neither rain, cold nor snowstorms have stopped the militants from this monthly activity. During these past years important Quebec trade unions, federal Deputies from Quebec in the Canadian parliament, innumerable personalities and well-known cultural figures have added their voice to this demand put forward by the Comité Fabio Di Celmo.

The second Thursday of this month of September falls on September 9 when the picket line is being held as part of the world-wide movement on the occasion of the twelfth anniversary of the imprisonment of René González, Antonio Guerrero, Gerardo Hernández, Ramón Labañino and Fernando González. They were arrested twelve years ago on September 12, sentenced unjustly to long prison terms and held in terrible penitentiary conditions. For what reason? They infiltrated terrorist organizations in the south of Florida operating against Cubans and installations on Cuban soil. The goal of the Five was to provide this information to the Cuban government in order that the latter informs Washington so that it takes action against terrorism. The cruel conditions of confinement include the fact that Rene and Gerardo have been deprived for close to twelve years by the US authorities to see their respective wives Olga Salanueva and Adriana Pérez.

September 4 is the thirteenth anniversary of the assassination in Havana of Fabio Di Celmo who was a victim of a terrorist campaign organized against Cuba by among others by Luis Posada Carriles. He is the same individual responsible for blowing a plane up in mid-air over the coast of Barbados killing 73 people aboard on October 6, thirty-five years ago.

On this occasion of the three bitter anniversaries, I held an interview on September 7 with Fabio Di Celmo's brother, Livio Di Celmo (who lives in Montreal). Reminiscing about his brother, Livio said that "Fabio became Canadian Resident in 1976 when he was 11 years old. In order for him to continue his studies in Italy for a while he would spend summers in Montreal and winters in Italy. At around the age of 18 he was living more in Canada than Italy and just before his death he also spent many months in Cuba. Fabio liked Canada for its diversity and loved Montreal because of the green spaces, social tranquillity and its multicultural profile."

I asked him: "What are your feelings on the thirteenth anniversary of the assassination of your brother and the twelfth anniversary of the imprisonment of the Cuban 5?" Livio answered: "I came to realize that at one point, when we seek justice, the concept of time becomes obsolete because human affairs are evolving in their own timeframe and as the truth comes out more and more people somehow enlighten themselves and contribute to accelerate events which eventually render justice for past deeds. Fabio's death and the imprisonment of the Five are so closely connected that I can tell you that if the worldwide solidarity movement manages to free the Five, then somehow justice will have been rendered to Fabio as well. At one point Luis Posada Carriles and company which are a by-product of the evil imperialist USA will eventually be dealt with by divine justice in which I greatly believe."

Autumn brings out the fact that there are several families involved in seeking justice.

There are the families of the Cuban Five, who in the course of the common struggle have virtually forged themselves into one family as part of the entire Cuban family composed of the over-whelming vast majority of Cuban people. The Cuban Five themselves, despite the complete lack of contact between them as part of the on-going psychological personal torture, have become one family of five brothers. For those thousands of us who are carrying out correspondence with them, while their letters reflect their respective distinct personalities and talents, one gets the impression that we are in contact with the same person. They are all inspired by the same motivation to resist all the pressures; they are all driven by the insatiable desire to be true to their families and their people. At the same time they all exhibit that remarkably unique feature of the Cuban society and government: concern for the future not only of their country but also of humanity, over and above their own individual well-being.

And there is the family of Fabio Di Celmo: his brother in Montreal, his father in Cuba and other family members in Italy. They demand justice. Their political proximity to the Cuban Five and their families is such that despite the aggravation and frustration that Fabio Di Celmo's family have been going through for over thirteen years, Livio believes that the freedom of the Five in itself will render justice to Fabio even before (and if) Carriles is tried and convicted for his crimes including the murder of his brother.

The families of the Barbados incident will have been seeking justice for thirty-four years by next month. Nothing can bring back those seventy-three people whose families have had to spend every day of thirty-four years living with the abominable fact that the confessed responsible person is walking the streets of Miami for many years. The Barbados' family committee members can be seen side by side with the families of the Cuban Five in Cuba on many occasions.

Livio's selfless words and other similar declarations by all those involved directly, indicate something that augers very well for the continuation of the struggle. Over the years the different families have, so to speak, virtually converged into one family composed of the relatives of the Five, of the Barbados victims and of the Fabio Di Celmo casualty in Havana, united as brothers and sisters, mothers and fathers, sons and daughters and so on, all demanding that justice be done, not tomorrow, but now.

President Obama holds in his constitutional power the right to free the Cuban Five and open the juridical doors for Carriles and others to be tried and convicted for their crimes. As

Obama's first term moves towards a close, does he want to have these flagrant violations of justice be part of his heritage? Or does he want to be remembered by the extended family of individuals and peoples of the world as someone who had stood up to the pressures of the extreme right-wing in the US?

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