

Cuba demands U.S. for \$121 billion

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In 2000, Roberto Conde Silverio was the national president of the Federation of High School Students (FEEM) and was part of the plaintiffs, on behalf of all Cubans, for the economic damage of the US blockade.

What were the antecedents of the lawsuit of the Cuban people against U.S. for the economic damages?

Before the lawsuit for economic damages, we filed the lawsuit for human damages, in which several witnesses were able to state their affectations from the physical and moral point of view. Later, the National Assembly of People's Power (ANPP) approved a proclamation that, according to the 1948 Geneva Convention, declared the blockade as an act of genocide, and it was then that the organizations, led by the Federation of Cuban Women (FMC), the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution (CDR) and the Confederation of Cuban Workers (CTC) reached an agreement and presented the ANPP the idea of demanding. This idea was accepted by the then president of the National Assembly of People's Power, Ricardo Alarcón de Quesada, and there started a juridical, legal, real and objective lawsuit through the Ministry of Justice, in which we became plaintiffs on behalf all the Cuban people, and with more than enough, clear and convincing arguments, the suit was brought before the economic room of the City of Havana's Provincial Court. This happened in the early 2000.

What did the FEEM have to demand?

The Federation of High School Students, as part of the people of Cuba, had many reasons, and not only specific issues of our generation. As Cuban people, we were interested in being able to denounce the economic and genocidal blockade of the US government imposed on our country, because it is a real affectation, not only to High Education centers, but to the health of FEEM students and their relatives as

well, and it cannot be said that we suffered, but that we still suffer, because this act continues with impunity.

What did this lawsuit mean for the people of Cuba?

The people of Cuba is a fighting people, who has always been trained to fight, in the military, political and economic fields. Perhaps, we did not venture into the legal field with much experience, but after the lawsuits of the Cuban people against the government of the United States for human damages, after the presentation of the proclamation that was approved by our entire people, filing a suit for economic damages encouraged our desire, will and fighting spirit to denounce what was affecting us at that time.

I stress: 20 years have passed and it is still the same cause; several administrations have passed, but the objective remains the same, which is no other than making our people suffer economic limitations, so it may get upset, confronts the main leaders, does not recognize Socialism as an only political system to achieve prosperity. That's why, it is necessary to explain that Socialism is not synonymous with setback, but with progress, spiritual growth, professional development and particular achievements. Unquestionably, with a blockade of this type, with laws like Helms-Burton, our job worsens, our road gets longer and our goals are sometimes unattainable, because they need a funding. But our people know the country where they live, know their Revolution, know who their leaders are and constantly express their decision to stand by this system and this Revolution.

From your point of view, what does this lawsuit mean for the current generations?

This lawsuit has full validity; firstly, because nobody has vouched for it, nobody has paid for it. At that time, the economic damages amounted to \$121 billion; right now, that figure has doubled or tripled. The U.S. government is the one that should respond to the Cuban people for the moral and economic damage.

We cannot stop demanding. Many people were born after that moment, many people were born after that lawsuit was drafted, but all have the same level of affectation as those who lived the early years of the Revolution. The people of Cuba is only one, and it has always been willing to study its history, and this is an important chapter of our history, which we must study in depth. This is lawsuit is both legal and historical. Whoever reads the content of this lawsuit makes a quick review throughout the passages of these years, in which the country was really limited, and it remains the same in the present day. Therefore, it has full validity, and the invitation would be to redraft it and to continue demanding a response.

Translated by Jorge Mesa Benjamin / CubaSi Translation Staff
