

PRISONERS OF COLOR

ISLAS WILL DEDICATE A PAGE IN EACH ISSUE TO THE AFRO-CUBANS SERVING TIME IN CUBA'S PENAL SYSTEM

In many countries people are detained for trying to exercise their rights of freedom of expression, association, assembly, or movement. Some are imprisoned because they or their families are involved in political or religious activities. Some are arrested because of their connection with political parties or national movements that oppose government policies. Trade union activity or participation in strikes or demonstrations are common causes for imprisonment. Often, people are imprisoned because they questioned their government or tried to publicize human rights violations in their own countries. Some are jailed on the pretext that they committed a crime, but it is in fact because they criticized the government. People who are imprisoned, detained or otherwise physically restricted because of their political, religious or other conscientiously-held beliefs or because of their ethnic origin, sex, color, or language and who have not used or advocated violence are considered to be prisoners of conscience.

Angel Moya Acosta

Angel Moya Acosta (1964) is serving a 20 year sentence in the Cuban jails. His first arrest took place on December 10, 1999, accused of summoning and organizing a civic ceremony during the anniversary of the signing of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which was declared in 1948. On December 4, 2000, he was imprisoned a second time for participating in a peaceful demonstration for the freedom of political prisoners. He was sentenced to a year of prison and ten years of exile from the City of Havana, where his wife and children live. The third time was on October 27, 2002, after distributing copies of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In all of these instances, he has been accused of contempt, resistance and instigation to commit a crime.

He was finally arrested on March 19, 2003, and sentenced to 20 years of prison, as part of the cause of the 75, when the Cuban



government imprisoned this number of opponents, defenders of human rights, librarians and independent journalists. Despite having surgery for a herniated disc, Angel Moya is confined to a cell, without having the most basic conditions that his state of health requires.

Angel Moya Acosta is president of the “Movimiento por la Libertad Democrática de Cuba.” (Movement for Cuba’s Democratic Freedom).

On March 16, 2005, from the Carlos J. Finlay Hospital in Havana, Angel Moya Acosta responds to the allegations made by the chancellor of the Cuban regime before the United Nations Human Rights Committee, which was gathered in Geneva.

*Carlos J. Finlay Hospital
March 19, 2005*

*To: Felipe Perez Roque
Foreign Minister of the Republic of Cuba*

From: Angel Moya Acosta, political prisoner and prisoner of conscience, currently recuperating from a herniated disc in the Carlos J. Finaly Hospital.

Sir:

On March 16, 2005 you read the following before the Human Rights Commission in Geneva and I cite:

“The Cuban people fervently believe in freedom, democracy and human rights.”

“There has not been in Cuba during the 46 years of the Revolution, nor is there now, not a single case of a disappeared person.”

“Let them present the name of single tortured person...a single one! Let them present the name of a single political prisoner humiliated by his captors.”

“In Cuba, the press, radio and television is the property of the people and serves its interests.”

End of quote.

Sir, I do not seek to remind you or inform you or even respond to what you have said. I am not a foreigner, I do not live abroad, I am Cuban and I live in Cuba with the only difference that I am in prison in this Island for political reasons and due to my convictions.

Sir, where are the victims of the March 13th tugboat who were fleeing Cuba on the night of July 13, 1994?

Who and how many died on that night?

You and I both know the answers, but I prefer that it be the family members of the victims who respond. And they will.

On May 13, 2003, the Chief of the Provincial Prison of Holguín forced

me to undress in his office in front of my jailers. Once I had done this he gave them the order to take me to the punishment cells. The jailers placed me in a dark cell, infested with mosquitoes, dirty, with no water. They took away the mattress, blanket and towel, and for three days I had to sleep on a board with no protection whatsoever. Again, I point out that while I was taken to the cell I was naked, bare-foot, handcuffed and in plain view of both prisoners and guards.

Sir, how do you classify these actions by jailers which I have been a victim of? Are these practices by the jailers an example of proper treatment?

No sir, they are not an example of good treatment. These measures are an example of cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment.

In Cuba the press, radio and television do not belong to the people as you say. They are owned and controlled by the Communist Party. They are managed by members of the Communist Party and the Union of Young Communists. And to provide you with an example of this, I urge you to pick up a copy of the Granma newspaper where you can read under the main heading where it says: "Official Organ of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba." Then, who does this newspaper answer to? Without a doubt, to the interests of the Communist Party of Cuba.

On November 10 and 11, 1999 my family and I, among them my mother and two nephews who were then minors, were victims of attacks by mobs organized by the Communist Party and other satellite organizations. They had the support and complicity of the Department of State's Security. For more than three hours they shouted and chanted slogans and obscenities such as "faggots, sons of bitches, etc." Is this action an example of what you call freedom and democracy?

No, Mr. Minister, they are not. These fascist and terrorist acts took place on Calle 20, #2525, between 25 and 27, in Pedro Betancourt, Matanzas, Cuba.

Lastly, I am in prison for political reasons, because of my convictions. My only crime has been to exercise my right to struggle and defend the right of Cubans to be free. I have not attacked army barracks, I have not betrayed my people, and as you mentioned before the Human Rights Commission in Geneva, I am absolutely convinced of my belief and love of freedom, human rights and democracy, only that, and this you did not express, we Cubans have not had these rights for 46 years.

Cubans will only live in freedom, with democracy and human rights, when in Cuba there are no longer any mob attacks against those persons who express themselves against the Regime's policies, when no one is persecuted or imprisoned for their political opinions, and when the government you represent permits and respects the right to freedom of expression, association, assembly and protest.

*Angel Moya Acosta
Political prisoner and prisoner of conscience
Cell #75*