

Join the Free the Cuban 5 Committee-Vancouver!

From campuses to suburbs, and everywhere in between, we are committed to working with all organizations and individuals calling for the freedom of these 5 heroes. Our campaign includes forums, petition drives, vigils, and a monthly picket action in front of the U.S. Consulate in Vancouver initiated in 2005. Through this constant work, we have collected over 5000 signatures demanding their immediate release. We have also been joined in this effort by 56 Canadian parliamentarians who signed a letter to the U.S. government demanding freedom for the Cuban Five.

We work as part of over 300 solidarity groups in every continent worldwide. We are committed to continue organizing around their case, and will demand justice for the Cuban Five until they are all free!

Please join us in our bi-weekly meetings, educational events, and our monthly picket actions on the 5th of every month to coincide with activities which take place around the world known as "the 5th of the month for the Cuban 5".



Free the Cuban 5 Committee-Vancouver
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René González: I Will Just Be a Cuban Citizen and Patriot

by Juana Carrasco
 May 7, 2013

Reprinted from Juventud Rebelde
 René González with his wife Olga Salanueva

In a message to the Cuban youth Rene Gonzalez Schewerert gives wise advice: "You should learn to love its history, to study hard, especially History. Learn why we are here, and why we must continue to defend this. These are difficult times, complicated, but we have to deepen into our roots and make the youth appropriate what we are building, because there are not many other choices and we have to defend this."

He says this having spent 13 years of his life in unjust imprisonment, and in this he made history with his four brothers who are still in the imperial dungeons.

As from Monday May 6th he can speak freely, for he has taken steps to renounce his U.S. citizenship.

"We managed to knock down one wall" -I know I said this in the plural because it is the strength of the Five, of his family which in the struggle has become one, of Cuba and of the international solidarity, but there are still other walls to bring down, and for René this is "the first commitment."

He comes with mixed emotions at this stage of the battle, when he had an "absurd parole" because the change in position of the U.S. Government, under the circumstances, occurs when he had unfortunately lost his father, Candido, and that is the catalyst for the decision of Judge Joan Lenard to allow him to stay in Cuba in exchange for the renunciation of his U.S. citizenship, which had René requested on more than one occasion.

"But I think joy is foremost, the happiness to be here, to feel the love of the people when one walks the streets, and knowing that for my brothers there is a small glimmer of hope, it is a joy they will receive in prison. The image of my reunion with my family is a hope for them, it is the display of something that they see as possible. And so it is essential I join this fight, it will be my priority. Once we have completed this whole supervised release business, we will see how we can join in that fight and do our utmost to see justice is done in the end or correct this injustice, because justice cannot now be done. And they will return to us."

This he reiterates when responding to the question of what will work on in Cuba ... "I have not had time to think what I will do from now on." However, he does not hesitate: "My priorities are our brothers ... to keep working for their freedom ... and deserve this affection from the people."

René explained some elements of the process: "The judge gave us a period until the 16th. What we did today was the first step of this process, which is the application for renunciation of citizenship. What remains, and it depends on them, is a certificate that they are going to draw up from my application and once the documents are signed, it is in the hands of the U.S. government, the Department of State, to accept the renunciation. They, before the

16th, should issue me a certificate of loss of citizenship.

"Once that certificate is given me, I will just be a Cuban citizen and patriot," and his chest swells, he smiles and he fondly squeezes the hand of Olga, his wife, who also smiles.

It's a long story and somehow the Cuban people have been linked to it; he says the arrest of the Cuban Five, the trial, the harshness of the prison that originally was applied to the maximum extent in order to break them, which took over two years before the start of "a long trial, riddled with irregularities, in which prosecutors simply forgot their legality, acted arbitrarily."

A test that they faced with the resources they had, each in his own way: "I, doing exercises; Antonio, as you know, communicating, doing his paintings; Ramón in his sport; Fernando studied, and Gerardo with that humour that he has, that rises above any tragedy, but at the same time we cannot forget that suffering, the possibility of dying in jail.

"It may be a hard process, but my presence here says you can face. One has to face it with all the morale that growing up here first gave us, and defend it."

René points out what he believes was a very important element against the prosecutors and the prison population, which "sees us as people of dignity, the dignity that emanated from this fight, we were outside the prison status and that allowed us, the Five, to pass this stage with no problems, even up to the respect of the guards in most cases.

It's a struggle, it is a terrible experience, but which one, if he tries, can leave. Here I am, and all four have the same willingness to continue fighting, but we cannot forget that we do not deserve it. What matters is that they are 15 years, which multiplied by four is 60; and with mine, 75 years, overall, of injustice, five Cuban families robbed, five Cubans robbed that we should be here, and I think it is important not forget that. What is more important, we have to keep fighting for them to return. They will resist, they will not break, but we have to bring them home."

René appreciated "the solidarity which is overwhelming" and confesses that being unable to respond to every letter, that supported them so much, affected them. "Forgive us for not responding," and he tells the Cuban people, that he feels the same essence, solidarity, spirit, and love always. And for Obama he wishes "Courage, is all you need, to have the courage to do justice."

What is missing from the solidarity campaign? A reporter asked, as concerned as the others to achieve the return of all: "Just one thing is lacking; that the whole of American society, that the people know that the government put us in prison to defend their terrorists, and to do that they forced a judge to say to me: Terrorism is bad, but you have no right to fight it here ...

By any means that you can access American society, do it, because they need to know ...".

FREE ALL THE 5 CUBAN HEROES NOW!

THE CUBAN 5

Spring 2013 Issue #2



Newsletter of the
Free the Cuban 5 Committee-Vancouver, Canada

WWW.FREETHE5VANCOUVER.CA

An Advancement for Human Rights! A Progress for Humanity! René González to Remain in Cuba!



The Free the Cuban 5 Committee Vancouver joins the worldwide joy and celebration of this major breakthrough in the case of the Cuban 5 Heroes and especially René González.

Today, on May 3rd 2013, Judge Joan Lenard signed the order to allow René González to remain in Cuba for the remaining portion of his three-year parole, and of course he can continue to remain in Cuba thereafter. Currently René González is in Cuba, where he was visit-

ing for the memorial service of his father who recently passed away.

This great victory is felt with joy, happiness, sweat and blood. René has come a long way in this heroic struggle of 14 years against the U.S. injustice system. We feel and understand this great victory. Nevertheless, we must immediately remind ourselves that we still need to go for another four victories until all of our five heroic Cuban brothers are freed. We need to remind ourselves that one battle has been won and four more big battles continue to be fought. Without a doubt René's freedom will give us tremendous energy, inspiration and hope to fight for the freedom of Gerardo Hernández, Antonio Guerrero, Ramón Labañino and Fernando González. This is a time when we must come together more than ever to multiply our struggle for the Cuban 5 until they are all freed. We have won a great victory. Needless to say, if we have won this one, we will win the other ones even though a difficult road lies ahead of us. We believe with the united world wide effort we can join the Cuban people in the struggle for the final freedom of the Cuban 5.

We will win!
 Volverán!
 Free the Cuban 5 Committee Vancouver
 May 3rd 2013

Letter from René González to Free the Cuban 5 Committee-Vancouver

Dear friends, for many years we have received support from all of you. There have been lots of letters to our prisons and the news of daily actions performed to obtain the release of the Five have been a source or strength for us. It is impossible to thank you all for the effort and commitment you have given to our cause. Today you meet again after 90 months of dedication devoted to demand justice for us and our families. In this scenario comes the news that after so many years of pain and ignominy the separation from my loved ones is terminated. It's not yet a victory. I filled up to the to the last day of my unjust sentence and a year and a half more of unjustifiable separation from my country, my people and my family. But if I'm in my homeland today is undoubtedly thanks to the efforts of worldwide solidarity. Vancouver's youth have been among the strongest supporters from the beginning of our campaign, where 10 years ago my daughter Irmita and Elizabeth the wife of

my brother Ramon shed tears when they stepped on your land and witnessed your devotion to justice on our case.

Today more than ever it is time to fight more firmly, each day that passes is another day that my brothers have to suffer their unjust confinement. Today my family begins to try to compensate for what seemed an eternity away and from their pain, but we are not entirely happy. Since the beginning of our battle we have done everything to convey to the world and to the U.S. government, as they tried to brake us down, that instead of being five families we are all one. The day we are all together then my family and myself will celebrate and rest. But for now for us the struggle continues.

With a revolutionary embrace.

René González

May 5, 2013

92ND PROTEST ACTION
FRIDAY JULY 5TH
U.S. CONSULATE 1075 WEST PENDER STREET
DOWNTOWN VANCOUVER B.C. CANADA
FREE ALL THE CUBAN 5 NOW!

RENE GONZÁLEZ
GERARDO HERNÁNDEZ
ANTONIO GUERRERO
FERNANDO GONZÁLEZ
RAMON LABAÑINO

Free the Cuban 5 Committee Vancouver
www.freethe5vancouver.ca

Letters from the Cuban 5 Heroes on René's Return to Cuba

*We were, are and will always be the 5
To my brother René in freedom*



That September 12, with no adjective to describe its violence, I was the last one who arrived in Miami [detention center], and consequently the last one to be placed in an extremely cold cell, with a bare mattress, a blanket and a roll of toilet paper; all of us isolated.

It was a gloomy silence on that 13th floor of the Miami Detention Center. By purely animal instinct, one begins to walk in circles within that tiny space. From time to time, I would stop before the narrow window on the metal door, where a guard on duty had us under constant surveillance. In a cell in front, at the far edge of my sight, I saw a man who would also stop from time to time at his window. An austere bearded face, his chest bare and I wondered: who is that guy? Isn't he cold?

It was René, I didn't know him yet.

In those first days, the first of many countless ones to come, they took us, him and me, to the Courtroom. We had to declare

ourselves innocent or guilty, which in our case meant declaring ourselves honorable or dishonorable, honest or dishonest, loyal or traitors. We two were very certain about our innocence. But there was one, whom I also didn't know, who would declare himself guilty. Each one of us was brought separately before the Judge, but René read the treason in the face of that twerp, who tried to wrap me up in his fable. Later, René told me: I have to talk with that guy. I just asked him to be calm.

That is how I knew him. That is how we five became brothers. That is why his freedom is our freedom, his pain and happiness is also ours. That is why our unjust prison will continue being his prison. That is why we were, are and will always be the Cuban Five, forged as one man, one Cuban like millions of compatriots, loyal to his people and his homeland.

Tony Guerrero Rodríguez
May 10, 2013
Marianna Federal Prison



We will always be the Cuban

He could have used the same reasons of those who very soon decided to plead guilty and cooperate with the authorities. After long years of separation, he already had at his side Olga and Irmitta, and had been able to enjoy for just four months the newborn Ivette.

What to do? Cling to the principles, leaving the three of them alone in a strange country and face again years of separation? Or "negotiate" and give them what they asked for in exchange for forgiveness and a new life? In his mind there was never a doubt, nor was there in his conduct a moment of hesitation.

Prosecutors knew they had very little against him, and tried to get him out of the way with offers. It bothered them that he sang "El Necio" (The Fool) and so they got tough on him. No one saw him crying when they separated Olga from the girls and they threw her into a cell. He had to do that in silence, as we all did because of the indignation and pain we felt when we heard the news, but we never noticed even minimal despair from him.

He fulfilled with dignity every day of his sentence, and came out with his head held as high as when he went in, but yet he still had to suffer the loss of his brother and his father in solitude.

Today each one of the Five is a little more free. Part of us wander through the streets of this island with him, and we can almost breathe the air, and bathe under the sun.

Someone asked me if we will now say that we are not five, but four, that would be a mistake! We are five and we will continue to be five! Today we have to continue the fight not only for the other four, but for René as well, because we know him, and we know that he will never be really free until we're all back in the homeland. The difference now is that this battle, which will be until the end for the Five, has from this day on a new standard-bearer.

Congratulations René! Your four brothers celebrate with you, proudly!
HLVS!

Gerardo Hernández Nordelo
Victorville Penitentiary
Mayo 3, 2013.

Now René is Free!

We are overcome with optimism, with joy, because the long-awaited freedom of one of our brothers is now reality. It was time already! After so much delay and injustice! Above all, we feel very relieved that our comrade is no longer in danger of his life, not having to stay one second more in that scenario surrounded by the threats we all know of.

With him, we four also feel a bit freer. It is as if a part of us is already at home, with our families and friends, in the heart of our people, with our sisters and brothers of the world.

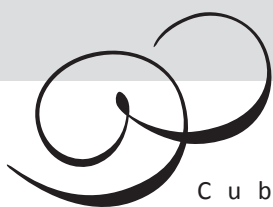
René is our forward detail. He carries with him the embrace and affection of the Five to all of you. With his presence are all the Five: In each action that is carried out for

the good of and humanity, in his new responsibilities and tasks, in his new missions and dreams. He will be there until finally the Five find ourselves free, in that land that we love so much.

We are filled with joy and with the optimism that love and truth always win over injustices!

Venceremos!
Five eternal embraces!
Fernando.
Gerardo.
Antonio.
Ramón.

by Ramón Labañino
FCI Ashland, Kentucky
May 6, 2013. 9:29 AM



C u b a

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Free the Cuban 5 Committee - Vancouver brochures distributed in the United Steelworkers (USW) National Convention, April 2013



Vancouver Cuban 5 Action

**May 5, All Day of Action Marking
90 months of consecutive protest!**

On Sunday May 5, Vancouver supporters of the 5 Cuban Heroes gathered for a day of action to mark the 90th consecutive monthly protest in Vancouver demanding the immediate freedom of the Cuban 5. The significance of the day was doubled as only two days before the day of action took place, the world found out the exciting news that the U.S. Judge in charge of the Cuban 5 case had signed the order to allow René González to remain in Cuba. This was a great victory for the cause of the Cuban 5 as now the first of the 5 is free in Cuba and able to continue the battle for the freedom of Antonio, Ramon, Gerardo and Fernando from his homeland of Cuba.



The day of action began at the Vancouver Art Gallery in the centre of the city where thousands of people walked by the vigil and informational display for the Cuban 5. Participants of the vigil held signs and handed out information about the Cuban 5 to the public walking by including many U.S. citizens on vacation in Vancouver.

The vigil was followed by a march to the U.S. Consulate through the downtown core. On route to the U.S. Consulate marchers chanted for the freedom of the Cuban 5.

When the march arrived at the U.S. Consulate, Free the Cuban 5 Committee co-chair Alison Bodine, welcomed participants to begin the 90th monthly action for the freedom of the 5 in front of the U.S. Consulate. Protesters cheered loud and clear demanding the immediate freedom of ALL the Cuban 5 heroes.

Between energetic rounds of picketing of the U.S. Consulate, participants gathered together for some exciting guest speakers and presentations. The first of which was a phone call from Alicia Jrapko, coordinator of the International Committee for the Freedom of the Cuban 5 based in San Francisco, California. Alicia led the group in chants over the phone and announced the exciting "5 days for the 5" events taking place in Washington at the beginning of June. Following Alicia, Free the Cuban 5 Committee co-chair Azza Rojbi read a letter the committee had received from Cuban 5 hero René González. René's warm letter concludes with, "The day we are all together then my family and myself will celebrate and rest. But for now for us the struggle continues."



After more rounds of protesting at the U.S. consulate, with more spirit than ever having heard René's words, the group then moved to Joe's Cafe for a cultural night and film showing about the Cuban 5. The event was also a celebration of the victorious return of René to Cuba.

The event featured poetry and live music dedicated to the 5 Cuban Heroes and showed the new film about the Cuban 5, "The Cuban Wives".

The day of action was a great success for the campaign to free the 5 Cuban Heroes in Vancouver and with the words of René encourage us to continue the struggle, every day more for the freedom of all 5 Cuban Heroes from U.S. prisons and their immediate return to Cuba.

Vancouver Cuban 5 Action Adriana Pérez, wife of Cuban 5 Hero Visits Vancouver

Canada Strengthens the fight for the Five
Reprinted from Cuba Debate

April 17, 2013

More than a hundred Canadian solidarity activists with Cuba, representatives of the Steel Workers Union of Canada (United Steel-Workers/USW) and other friends of the Greater Antilles, met on the night of Monday April 15th at the Westin Hotel in Vancouver, to hear the testimony of Adriana Pérez O'Connor, wife of Gerardo Hernández, one of the Cuban Five, imprisoned in high security prison in the United States.

The event was attended by the new Cuban ambassador to Canada, Julio Garmendia, who declared that to achieve the return to the homeland of Gerardo, Antonio, René, Fernando and Ramón, is a priority for the Government and people of Cuba, while stressing that the Five are a living example of stoicism, dignity and patriotism to the current generations of Cubans.

Ken Newman, president of the USW, expressed the commitment of the Union to strengthen the fight so that every day, more voices rise up in Canada to achieve the freedom of the Cuban heroes and the return to their homeland.

Tamara Hansen, coordinator of Vancouver Communities in solidarity with Cuba, urged those present to get involved in the cause

for the liberation of the Five and hear the testimony of a courageous woman whom the U.S. government has denied the opportunity to visit her husband for almost 15 years in prison, denying the visa twelve times that has been requested.

In her words, Adriana Pérez gave details of the injustice committed to the Five and the record of arbitrariness during the trial held in Miami and called to strengthen solidarity with the cause of her husband and his four companions as a way to achieve that U.S. President Barack Obama exercise his presidential powers and end the incarceration of these antiterrorist fighters.

In this regard, she sought the support of Congress, trade unionists and anyone who is able and willing to join the cause to

achieve their immediate release and stated that: "In the almost 15 years we have been deprived of many things, but never deprive us of our will to be happy one day with our loved ones."

The event in Vancouver became a firm commitment for all present to redouble efforts in Canadian territory, in favor of freedom of the Cuban Five. Adriana Pérez will visit other Canadian cities such as Toronto and Ottawa, and is anticipated to meet with members of the Cuban community in Canada, parliamentarians and members of associations of solidarity with Cuba.

