# Communiqué of Socialista Libertario on the death of Orlando Zapata

Libertarian Socialist Collective

September 18, 2010

The recent death of Orlando Zapata after 85 days of hunger strike — demanding an end to the beatings he endured, the continuous moves from prison to prison, his right to the food his mother brought him, his right to wear a white robe recognizing his condition as a prisoner of conscience demands taking a clear position, without ifs, ands, or buts, against the regime of the Cuban generalísimos, the Castro brothers. It means taking a position in support of his struggle and, above all, in support of his dignity that we feel even now after his death, because even this has been subject to censorship in the interests of the state. It means taking a thoughtful stand that could be the tip of the iceberg of an underground response to the Cuban regime, a regime that upholds and defends a cruel, Stalinist socialism, learned from its Russian, Albanian, and its current Chinese friends. The death of Orlando sadly reminds us of what happens in Cuba, that darling of the submissive left, when you dare to resist the regime: imprisonment,

torture, and even death. No one may dissent from what the party and the State order.

Cynicism is the fruit of both fear and the weakness of this regime in crisis; it also reveals the division the country is experiencing. Cynicism, like that of the gangster from the political police who, as Orlando was dying, told his mother, Reinalda Luisa: "I have good news and bad news: the good news is that he is in the Ameijeiras Hospital, the bad news is that he is dying".

Orlando Zapata answered them with his moral convictions and his unconquerable dignity. Because of them he died confronting the arrogance and impunity of the entire Cuban correctional, military, media and political establishment. The official Cuban media (Granma or Juventud Rebelde) have not allowed anything about Zapata's death to be made public. Not even the cynical words of generalísimo Raúl Castro: "I regret his death, but in Cuba there aren't any victims of torture, people have never been tortured, there was no execution. That happens in Guantanamo." The political police and the army have occupied the streets of Banes, Zapata's home town, to prevent any type of public demonstration of dissent. Keeping control of a cadaver and of the human suffering caused by the death of a loved one reveals much about the fear felt by the regime for its immediate future. As we write these lines, another four prisoners of conscience and an independent journalist have gone on hunger strike. We extend to them our human solidarity and our warm regards.

As Zapata was dying, Brazilian president Lula was in Cuba, interviewing and embracing the Castro brothers. Zapatero at first lamented Zapata's death (though without actually condemning it, echoing the manner of the Basque left when it comments on the ETA's bombings) in a brief message and in a hurry to change the subject. A reading of the opinions of the craven defenders of the Cuban regime, so-called leftists, evokes moral and human revulsion. Some people, in their ideological delirium, will justify any atrocity.

Our solidarity and our hopes go out to the Cubans who in the coming years will search, in a groping fashion, for their liberation from a regime that has shown its true nature in the death of Orlando Zapata. Our hopes and our quest for freedom are for a true revolutionary socialism, a humane socialism that cannot be imposed by decree, one that is inseparable from the self-determination and free will of the people — the very opposite of the dictatorial brutality embodied in the regime of the Castro brothers.

Socialista Libertario Collective
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Translation Luis by Prat