

## The Hour of Triumph

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They returned. On December 17, finally, Gerardo, Ramón and Antonio were free, in Havana, with Fernando and René and their families.

From the moment President Raúl Castro announced it on national radio and television, the people came out into the streets to celebrate what is a great triumph for Cuba. It is a victory for all those who never tired in demanding their freedom. In Cuba, but also in Miami. And throughout the whole world. It was a long and difficult fight. Sixteen years is too much time. There were moments of joy but many more of bitterness and sorrow. Countless are the anonymous heroes who never faltered in the uphill battle that required perseverance and sacrifice.

There were many, but I feel duty bound to mention two: Roberto González Sehwerert and Leonard Weinglass. Both endured immense difficulties including grave debilitating health and they struggled, literally until the last breath.



*Roberto and René González with their mother Irma*

Roberto learned English and the tangled path of the U.S. judicial system until he became a specialist, he had the joy of embracing his brother René, now freed, but he died with the same determined tenacity to rescue those who remained in prison and who were also his brothers.

Lenny dedicated all his time to this cause without asking anything in return. He devoted his brilliant professional career and at great personal sacrifice he visited the Five in the prisons. He traveled the world seeking solidarity and he was the vital core of the legal battle that he never gave up until his noble heart stopped beating. He left us with the sorrow of not reaching the promised land.

But both Lenny and Roberto are with us in this time of celebration that, without them, would have been impossible.

That same day, President Obama announced the reestablishment of diplomatic relations with Cuba and a series of measures, welcomed by all, to dismantle the blockade and initiate a new era in bilateral relations.

He will surely face the already announced opposition of those who will do all they can to frustrate his proposals. A long road lies before us which poses new challenges for the solidarity movement and also for Cuba.

We forge ahead with optimism. With us always will be the Five brothers who displayed unsurpassed example of the capacity of their people to resist. And in the forefront will be also, Lenny and Roberto.