

Scarcely 24 hours after the General Meeting of the Assembly to Promote a Civil Society in Cuba took place, Or. Oscar Elias Biscet Gonzalez, President of the Lawton Foundation of Human Rights, described the great event as "monumental" and an event which has consolidated the universal thought of non-violent civic struggle in Cuba. He acknowledged Martha Beatriz Roque Cabello as the only case in Cuban history in which a woman "has stood up to guide the nation in the conquest of its freedom and rights," and he called for "those who are truly fighting out of love and altruism for the cause of the Cuban people" to come together to win the battle. The following is the entire text of his statements to Servicio NotiCuba.

Journalist: Biscet, I would like for you to tell me, according to the information you've received, your opinion about the significance of the General Meeting which took place this Friday and Saturday here in Havana.

Biscet: I think the meeting is one of the most important events that have taken place in this country because it confirms and opens a door for us to achieve our freedom. The meeting has taken many years of work, and in it, humanity's thought of practicing a non-violent civic struggle through which winning the rights and freedoms for the Cuban people has come together. I think it is one of the most monumental events that have taken place in the country, and I think from now on, the opposition should gain strength in organization and should further deepen this type of fight in order to be able to consolidate it and achieve what it desires: freedom for the Cuban nation.

Journalist: Martha Beatriz is the principal figure of the Assembly to Promote a Civil Society. She was a prisoner, sentenced to 20 years of loss of freedom and released under specific terms. Less than nine months ago, she called this meeting, and as you know, it has been a complete success. What is your opinion of Martha Beatriz as a person and as a fighter?

Biscet: First of all, I will tell you that in the struggle I have carried out to win human rights for the Cuban people, I have always based myself in many people, in many worthy men and women who have carried out this type of struggle or simply have made a protest and with that protest have unleashed a revolution that has liberated their country from a dictatorship. I have always held some women in my heart that the world has given us in their struggle to obtain dignity for their nations. Among them, we have Lucretia of Rome, who, with her suicidal attitude, incited men of that time to understand that there was a dictatorial government. They caused the downfall of the last king of Rome, and a republic was established. Also, when I think of women, I think about Rosa Parks, who with dignity, did not stand up to give up her seat on the bus in a segregationist system that humiliated blacks in the United States at that time. Her attitude caused a revolution to break loose, and Blacks achieved a social equality and justice in the United States. Also, at times, I think of Joan of Arc, who as a woman, moved an army and was able to expel the English army from her country. And when I think about these women, I also think that in Cuba many women have done many good things to support their husbands who fight for freedom. Nevertheless, never before in Cuba has there been a situation in which a woman would lead a movement in order to achieve individual rights for its citizens. For the first time in the history of our country, a woman has stepped forth to guide nation, to take it to win its inalienable rights. I think Martha Beatriz is a tremendous example in our history, and I think that all Cubans should follow that example that guides us along the path that we should take so the entire nation-opposition members and non-oppositions members and even those that support the government-understands that we all have rights and that we all want to enjoy the gifts that God gave us, like freedom of association, freedom of expression, the freedom to write and to speech-that is, all those rights that we can win with the example that Martha Beatriz has put forth.

Journalist: In a speech before the European Parliament, Martha Beatriz called you "**he flag that flies as an**

freedom to the Cuban people. It's true that we were, **some time ago, a smart group. State Security, if** reference to the Lawton Foundation, told us that we were four cats but that we were quite bothersome, but what I mean is that when whatever a figure or person, be it a man or a woman, stands up to defend the dignity of a nation, later on all others who really feel that same burning, that same desire for freedom **as I** feel, stand up for the same. And I think that when someone is on the path of achieving his rights, that when one sacrifices more and achieves fame and glory, I think that he/she also awakens zeal in others and with that zeal, a hate also arrives. As long as it is zeal, one endures situations. We also know that the regime hates but not because of our zeal; rather, it fears losing its power. For this reason, I ask all of our **well-known** brothers and those who are not yet well-known but who struggle in silence to unite in order to achieve that which we all desire. We have to be together because with unity is the only way we can achieve the freedom of the Cuban people. I think we must not waste our energies criticizing each other when we must criticize an evil power that is governing, telling a nation to get on its knees. I believe **that** it's time for those of us who are brothers in the struggle to put all our petty difficulties and the ups and downs that we have among ourselves aside. All those **who** are fighting out of love and out of caring for the cause of the Cuban nation should come together with one singular objective: to achieve freedom **for** the Cuban people. For this reason, I say that's enough of the small differences. Let's come together if we love God, if we love our country. Perucho Figueredo said it so well: To **die** for your country **is** to **live**. Let's **all** be willing to die together in order to achieve freedom.