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OBITUARY

## Miguel Romero “Moro” (1945-2014): Revolutionary dignity

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On January 26 in Madrid, cancer finally conquered the tenacious resistance of Miguel Romero Baeza (born Melilla, 1945). A journalist and revolutionary militant, who experienced and fought the Franco dictatorship and the capitalist system with the same passion, intelligence and dignity which with he faced his disease. He never lost the capacity of indignation faced with injustice, he was always on the side of those at the bottom, was immune to accommodation and at all times maintained analytical lucidity and decisiveness in action. As happened with so many others and other revolutionaries, his was first sensitivity towards other people's suffering, then an ethical option ("with the poor people of this earth I want to share my fate ") and later, only later, came tactics and strategy, party and program. He lived exactly as he thought. Neither a drop of ambition, nor an ounce of profit. Decently. Austerely. Incorruptible.

For that reason, already much ravaged by disease, he was in his element in the plazas of 15-M and amidst the mareas or in meetings and educational activities with young people of Izquierda Anticapitalista. Just like when he began to participate in the student movement of the 1960s, or was present in the pickets and general strikes or the first mobilizations for amnesty, then against NATO entry and the presence of the North American bases, in solidarity with the thwarted Nicaraguan revolution or in whatever cause was worth the trouble. Most particularly in all the attempts to organize the international resistance to global capitalism; thus the intense activity that he displayed in the activities of the World Social Forums like that of Porto Alegre.

With the same courage he fought to conquer liberties faced with the brakes and restrictions of the Constitution, daughter of a Transition that neglected the aspirations of the workers' movement of the whole Spanish state and the peoples of the nationalities. He escaped jail under Francoism, but his articles in the dossier "¡Viva la República!" in the magazine "Saida" earned him a month in prison for refusing to pay the security that the court demanded of him. One of life's paradoxes, somebody that dedicated his youth to bringing down the dictatorship was jailed by the new democrats to defend a form of democratic government and state. He was irreducible, he never accepted the farce of the Pacts of Moncloa nor of a regime, that of the reform which is now

foundering and in which the fed up, rebellious and indignant youth now have no confidence.

Moro - the name by which his companions and friends knew him, and with which he fully identified, was part of the generation of 1968 when it seemed that we could change the world, when - in spite of the repression - winds of hope and generosity blew, times in which it was neither mad nor peculiar to fight for the socialist Revolution, which we conceived of as very different from the Stalinist dictatorship, and which, on the contrary, we saw as the condition for a society of free and equal women and men. Times of generosity and commitment, well removed from the cursed governing principle of the cost/benefit ratio.

Precisely then we met, in times in which, to use some words he dedicated to Silvino Sarriego, we forged "a close friendship, created more ago than forty years, when friendship and revolution were inseparable". Moro, in addition to being a fighter, an activist and a lucid politician - who never received a penny from the public coffers - was a close and unconditional friend to those who were proud to receive his affection and confidence. And shared life. And there was born my friendship and co-militancy with Moro, Jaime Pasto, Lucia González ( how I miss you), and the new people who continued arriving in our lives: Chato Galante, Justa Montero, Marti Causa, Petxo Idoyaga and many, many more on a list impossible to reproduce.

Political participation in 1966 was wishing to organize politically, there was no argument on the need to do so do, it was enough to make an appointment with him. Soon I realized the quality of the "signing". And since then every single day of his life was to be organized to fight. Because Moro always conceived that action is collective and shared or it is not emancipatory. And democratic. The action and social organization of the social movement, for Moro and those who have shared the experience, must be impregnated with democracy, self-management, self-organization. For there is no worthwhile party that is not totally democratic in its functioning, even in the worst conditions of repression.

He was first active in the Frente de Liberación Popular (FLP) and after its dissolution was one of the founders of the group Comunismo, embryo of the Liga Comunista Revolucionaria (LCR) whose leadership he was part of and which he for several years represented in the bodies of the Fourth International, where he shared debates, projects and ideas with people like Ernest Mandel (his maestro), Francisco Louça and Daniel Bensaïd - "Bensa", his French friend, with whom he maintained a permanent dialogue until the death of the philosopher and activist on January 12, 2010.



Moro played a key role in the rapprochement between ETA VI and the LCR that culminated in the fusion of both organizations. For years he impelled the development of the revolutionary organizations in Latin America, years in which he was editor of the Castilian edition of "Inprecor", the bimonthly political magazine of the LCR. But most of his journalistic work was focused on his articles for "Combate", the newspaper of that organization of which he was editor at several stages, until the fusion of his party with the Movimiento Comunista (MC). After the failure of that

unification, he was involved in Espacio Alternativo, a current in IU, which in 2008 left the coalition and became Izquierda Anticapitalista, an organization in which he continued to actively participate.

He created the bimonthly magazine "Viento Sur", a publication with an important influence in the alternative left, of which he was editor and main instigator over the 131 issues which have appeared until today. This was his main contribution in recent years, including those of his long illness. Journalistic work which he combined with participation in forums and round tables, conferences and educational talks, working for several years in ACSUR-Las Segovias and authoring works like "¡Viva Nicaragua libre!" (1979), "La guerra civil española en Euskadi y Catalunya: contrastes y convergencias" (2006) and "Conversaciones con la izquierda anticapitalista" (2012) or his participation as co-author in "Porto Alegre se mueve" (2003), "1968: El mundo pudo cambiar de base" (2008), "Enrique Ruano, memoria viva de la transición" (2009) and "Pobreza 2.0" (2012).

Moro lived life intensely, expressed everything that was worthwhile. He enjoyed his family until the last moment, the broad Romero clan of which he boasted. And with reason, I should add, once you knew them. Apart from his stage of Paris, all his adult life was spent in Madrid, except for short stays in other cities, forced by clandestinity. But always he professed to be an Andalusian. An Andalusian able to understand other peoples and to respect their right to decide. He enjoyed his friendships both old and new. Old people and new arrivals. He did not lose the capacity to connect with the following generations. He enjoyed every moment. The need to seize the day governed his routine. Through his character and vision of the world, "nothing human was alien to him". Everything interested him, from the impact of biotechnology to the meaning of Brecht's work.

But above all he had affections. Great ones. An enthusiast for flamenco and Enrique Morente, he also enjoyed Mozart's 40<sup>th</sup> symphony or Tristán and Isolda; a fan of the Beatles and Van Morrison and a connoisseur of jazz. But mainly he was a hardened reader, certainly of Marxist authors, but not only; he read Mayakovski, he read and reread Lorca's "Poet in New York". Look at all the back issues of Viento Sur and witness the permanent tribute to Lorca. And he devoured novels since, as he told it to me, he encountered "Treasure Island" as a child. Like a so many other revolutionaries, he was very fond of "noir" novels. And the cinema. A regular attendee at the San Sebastian festival, it is possible that he held the record for seeing "Rome Open City" or "Viridiana", an admirer of Billy Wilder and Berlanga, in more than one political article - who knows how - he found the excuse to mention Lauren Bacall. And an open secret: when Barça played, the clock was stopped, and it was better to call him after the broadcast of the game. That, all that and more, formed the multi-faceted world of somebody who many people knew solely for his political commitment.

How many, many things, could be said of you, friend, comrade Moro! I can remember nothing bad. And yes, I will remember always the many difficult political and personal moments at which we were together, comrade. Until the night that you entered into a coma. . A moment before that, you still wanted to know "what's happening", as always, the tasks of the moment.

If Moro had to take stock of his life, nothing would express it better than the words he wrote some decades ago in the article "Punto y aparte" in issue 518 of "Combate", which may explain his constant effort to "connect" with the indignant youth, with the new revolutionary generations and his obsession with renewal:

"The article that I have before me is headlined "Relay". It is not a very original idea, but an important one. We have borne witness. We have travelled the path we took, so different from what we had imagined, with all our strength. We are not tired. Even with all the obstacles and setbacks, we enjoyed the race, and now we are content to leave it in hands which are also ours and to carry on. That is what counts and everything else is secondary".

**Manuel Garí**

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**P.S.**

\* Translation International Viewpoint. <http://www.internationalviewpoint.org/>