

One hundred and twenty years of an ignominy

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By María Josefina Arce

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Tomás Estrada Palma, president of the Neocolonial Republic born on May 20, 1902, put his signature on the interferenceist Treaty of Lease of Naval Bases and Coal Bunkers, by means of which a portion of Cuban territory was handed over to the United States, which thus strengthened its interference in our country.

Let us remember that Washington had opportunistically intervened in the Spanish-Cuban war. The defeat of Spain and the signing of the Treaty of Paris gave way to the U.S. military occupation, to which end the Cubans were forced to accept an appendix to the 1901 Constitution.

Called the Platt Amendment, the document granted the Northern neighbor the power to intervene in Cuba when it considered it necessary, and forced the Caribbean nation to sell or lease land for the establishment of naval and coal bases.

This institutionalized the Guantanamo naval base in the eastern part of the archipelago, a territory still illegally occupied by Washington against the will of the Cuban government and people.

According to historians, during the neocolonial republic that enclave was a den of corruption and in the neighboring towns gambling, prostitution, drugs and smuggling of all kinds proliferated.

Since the triumph of the revolution, the Guantanamo naval base has been a focus of threats and even aggressions against our people, resulting in several deaths.

Likewise, at the beginning of this century it was converted into a detention center, as part of the fight that the United States claims to wage against terrorism, as a result of the attacks in September 2001 against the Twin Towers in New York and other targets on U.S. soil.

Prisoners at the Guantanamo naval base were subjected to physical and psychological torture, where some 39 remain in a legal limbo.

Since January 1959, the revolutionary government has demanded the return of this territory illegally occupied by the United States to its true owner, the Cubans.

Havana's demand has been supported for decades by governments, political personalities, intellectuals, social movements and all peace-loving people.

The Guantanamo naval base is a symbol of Washington's violation of international law and an affront to the dignity and sovereignty of Cubans.

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