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José Martí and his Integration Dream for Latin America

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The figure about José Martí sums up the best of the political and social thought of this continent. His ideas are still valid and are representatives of the nature, idiosyncrasy and culture of our region.

José Martí's project for the independence of Cuba and Puerto Rico is not linked to another bigger one: the Latin American unity and integration.

It is from that historic perspective that the most recent initiatives of that continental integration such as the Bolivarian Alliance for the Americas and the Trade Treaty with the Peoples (ALBA-TCP), the Association of South American Nations (UNASUR) and the Community of Latin American States (CELAC), along with their different characteristic and also many coincidences, are the most important step that has been carried out during the last decades through the path for the long-awaited Latin American integration.

**“... impedir a tiempo con la independencia de Cuba que se extiendan por las Antillas los Estados Unidos y caigan, con esa fuerza más, sobre nuestras tierras de América. Cuanto hice hasta hoy, y haré, es para eso.”**

**(Carta a Manuel Mercado.18 mayo de 1895)**

The pro-independence and anti-imperialist ideas of unity, which José Martí vehemently defended, mark the new guidelines in the Latin American mainland by awakening the people's awareness.

In Cuba, José Martí found in Fidel Castro his best disciple. The journalist Marta Rojas who was awarded the National Journalism Prize and she said that it was an order and not a coincidence that Fidel Castro was photographed before a picture of José Martí in Santiago de Cuba province, after the attack against the Moncada Garrison. It is an emblematic image which has been not only in books of history but also in the life of Cubans.

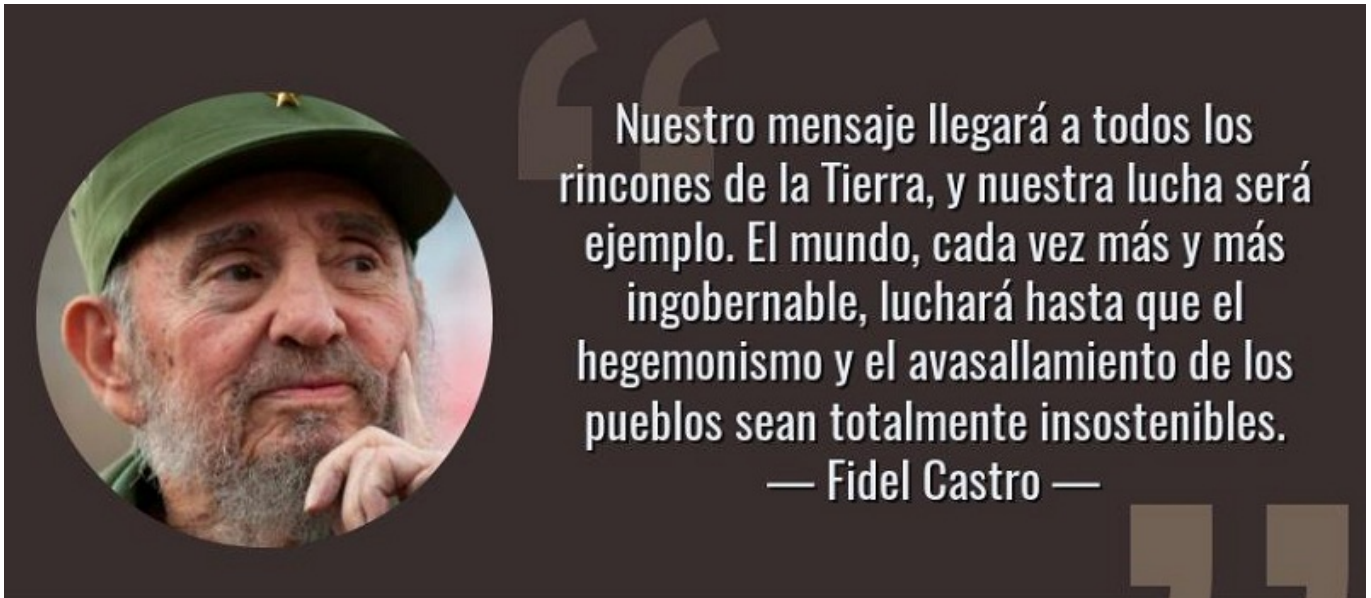
After that and during his speech of defense in the trial for the events which took place on July 26th of the year 1953, the young lawyer expressed:

“I bring in my heart José Martí's ideals.”



Fidel Castro was José Martí's best disciple and his legacy as a leader of the Cuban Revolution make the local people to think about José Martí's validity through Fidel Castro's thought whose knowledge on José Martí's revolutionary project allowed him to understand the Cuban and world reality and the creating his struggle's program.

Fidel Castro with his word and work was teaching José Martí's entire human, ethical, political, ideological, military, patriotic, Latin American, internationalist and anti-imperialist dimension. Fidel Castro had Jose Martí present through his daily behavior and doctrine on humanism.



In the book entitled 'Cien Horas con Fidel' (A hundred Hours with Fidel), when he was then interviewed by the intellectual, Ignacio Ramonet, Fidel Castro describes himself as a Socialist, Marxist and Lenin's ideals follower, although he was a follower of Jose Martí's ideals firstly.

José Martí and Fidel Castro are two outstanding revolutionaries and men of actions with a universal thought. The unity is José Martí's essential word and as Fidel Castro did himself, he called for internationalism and friendship among the peoples: "the trees must stand in a row so that the seven- mile giant cannot pass through! It is the time of remembering and the united march.

Through seven centuries since the publication of the book entitled 'Nuestra America' it has been created the dream about a united mainland. The second declaration of Havana showed that it was possible to create a different society before the United States. Those two emblematic texts summarize the evolution of the emancipation project that was written by José Martí in the XIX century.

In the current regional context, the Latin American nations should strengthen their unity about their common values and interests to be able to preserve the independence, sovereignty of Latin America.

As Jose Martí taught to the local people and Fidel Castro also instilled in us, only the alliance of all the progressive forces will enable to set an integration regional plan based on the solidarity, reciprocity, social justice and the preservation of culture and peace.

The Latin American left-wing movement is experiencing a crucial hour. The challenge is not easy and without unity the Latin America would not able to build its future.

**By Angélica Paredes López**

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