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Every January 27th, Torches and Reasons

By: Giusette León García / Cuba Si

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We have ours ready at home. Three cans we saved for I don't know how long, a piece of prehistoric cotton and some gasoline that a neighbor gave us: everything ready to light the torches again, which is to turn on lights and illuminate reasons, old reasons from Martí for not giving up on humanism, of faith in human improvement, of living with a country and without a master.

I don't recall the first time I walked with a lit torch on the night of January 27<sup>th</sup>. What I do know is I wore a blue scarf and that I walked passed in front of La Libertad Park in my native and beloved Matanzas. I can also assure you that the next day I woke up early and dressed up, perhaps as Pilar or Piedad, some character from The Golden Age, and paraded again in the same place, without getting tired, because Martí was born, and with him the certainty that children are hope and that "the first duty of a man these days is to be a man of his time".

Since then, there have been many lit torches of ideas, of Cuban identity; fervent anti-imperialism; luminaries for solidarity; guides to keep on building. Many times it was Fidel up front. Now I share them with my children and another faithful man is at the front. Then it has a new meaning for me: more than tradition, continuity; the light of Martí that multiplies and confirms itself everlasting.

"Men are like the stars..."

That's what Martí wrote, and added: «...some give light of themselves and others shine with the light they receive». In these days when some of us prepare to remember the Master with

symbols of light, there's no shortage of those who, dazzled, do not even manage to get close and shine, because they are busy looking for the shadows.

Cuba is going to march. The young and those of us who are not so young will do it; so will the children, my healthy and proud children because they are not the exception, but the rule, in a country that has been the only country in the world to safely and sovereignly vaccinate (with its own immunogens) the pediatric population of two years old.

Not empty talk, Martí already said what's the best way to say. What has been done: 1.6 million boys and girls vaccinated; 3.3 million doses administered; zero serious adverse events and immune response superior to that of adults. In addition, at the gates of starting the intervention among children under two years of age.

Adding adults in, almost 34 million doses had been administered at the end of January 24<sup>th</sup>, according to data from the Ministry of Public Health, which means that 87.7% of the Cuban population has a complete vaccination schedule, and with at least one dose we are well over 90%.

In order not to overwhelm us with figures, I only remember that the number of booster doses is also increasing and that researchers from Pedro Kourí Institute (IPK) have already verified that Abdala and Soberana have the capacity to generate antibodies against the omicron variant.

From the side of those who love and create...

In addition to powerful reasons to feel safe (never naïve, always careful), these are also reasons to feel deeply proud and committed to the Revolution that Martí inspired, with the idea of ??homeland that the Apostle bequeathed to us; to light torches in his honor and also, why not, ask him to continue to illuminate us on the long road to being more just every day, not switching sides to those who want to turn off all the lights, those who hate and undo.

To love and create, so we can once more love and create and so on, we light torches every January 27<sup>th</sup>. Because Martí was born and with him the energy of freedom, honor and light, made by hand and soul, "with everyone and for the everyone's sake."

**Translated by Amilkal Labañino / CubaSí Translation Staff**

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