
OPINION: Unity

By: Enrique Ubieta Gómez / Special for CubaSi

24/06/2024

Unity is both a simple word and a complex concept. Everyone uses it, even the most hardened followers of divisionism. It is easy to achieve, on a small scale, when it refers to a concrete fact that represents a collective interest. But it is hard when it concerns entire peoples and processes delayed over time. Among the politicians of the capital, the tinkling of money (for winning or losing) and the exchange of interests appease personalist spirits. It does not mean that there are no deep-rooted beliefs and contradictions among them, but the pragmatic vote predominates—in times of insecurity, when the capitalist system cannot sustain a coherent discourse. After all, in capitalism everything is a commodity, including politics and politicians. The revolutionary left, however, exists by virtue of a basic principle: we work for others. That is, for the exploited, for *“the poor of this Earth,”* according to Martí. This entails an ethical commitment.

Nobody expects revolutionaries to be “pure,” because purity does not exist. Furthermore, there are not many men and women capable of giving up everything, even the well-being of their own family. And that is the vanguard. But our history is proud to have some: Céspedes who responded in an exemplary way to the Spanish Captain General, when he offered him the life of his son in exchange for his betrayal: *“It is hard for me to believe that a dignified, honorable soldier like Your Excellency could allow such revenge, if I do not obey his will, but if I do, “Oscar is not my only son, I am the father of all Cubans who have died for the Revolution;”* Mariana Grajales, who upon hearing the news of one of her sons falling in combat, urged the youngest to take her place in the jungle. José Martí, with his multiple talents, instead of being the “provider” of a “better” life for his wife and son, chose a path of dedication, which hurt them later. The same can be said about Ernesto Che Guevara, who wrote in his famous farewell letter, when other lands

of the world demanded my modest efforts: *“I am not sorry that I leave nothing material to my wife and children; I am happy it is that way. I ask nothing for them, as the state will provide them with enough to live on and receive an education.”*

One of the goals of the counterrevolution is to destroy that ethical imaginary. In the 1990s, they promoted a crusade against heroism and epicness. In this new century, fake news discrediting left-wing leaders are spread and that counterrevolution turns to the corrupt bourgeois judicial system to condemn them with technicalities or legal tricks. But Andrés Oppenheimer, the spokesperson of imperialism for Latin America, cynically compares the legal proceedings against Trump, with what was done to Lula or Cristina Fernández, to explain why these sentences do not decrease, but rather increase the acceptance of “populist” politicians. The right needs to say: the left is just as corrupt. And there are “left” leaders who think more about themselves than about their people.

Nonetheless, another obstacle usually stands between the necessary unity of revolutionaries: if they fight by heart, as it must be, their revolutionary ideals will not always match with the course of events, or others’ ideals and perceptions. We then return to starting point: the first conviction of a revolutionary is ethical, not theoretical, to accompany the poor of the Earth, to defend their interests. That’s their compass. There are meticulous connoisseurs of the work of Marx and Engels, who are not revolutionaries, because their adherence to a process of change is strictly theoretical. They do not understand that Marxist individuals are, above all, a subject of social transformation.

There are times and leaders in history whose bright is so strong that people’s will revolves around them: José Martí, Lenin, Ho Chi Minh, Fidel Castro, for example. Nevertheless, the unity they built —sometimes imposed—, did not come naturally. There are times, however, when wills are torn apart. And it happens when the media, scholarships, the social networks, even obstacles, manage to infuse small or median doses of theorems, which contaminate the liberating, anti-colonial, revolutionary thought. They manage to turn freedom into liberalism, socialism into social democracy, openness to what is different submitted to

metropolitan thinking.

I know Marxist thinkers who have incorporated terms and concepts of bourgeois liberalism into their conceptual arsenal. They speak, without the necessary conceptual accuracy, of “freedom of the press,” or of a multiparty system. Their statements do not seem sometimes to respond to any plan, but to the desire to be considered “bold” or “modern.” I also know those who try to stop them in the wrong way. I am beginning to believe that right-wing and “left-wing” provocateurs have infiltrated the ranks of revolutionary thought. The latter do a lot of harm, because they confuse the reader, and by erring in form, they err in content. Both, paradoxically, attack revolutionary institutions. The debate becomes personalized, and the essential ethics between us evaporates. Every time one of these egomaniacal provocateurs “attacks” a non-revolutionary or frankly enemy stance in a wrong way, he or she freezes the necessary debate, nullifies it. Every time he or she targets a specific person, whose way of being or acting does not please his or her ideal, then attention is diverted from truly serious events or behaviors.

Unity, as has already been said, is not unanimity. It arises from the discussion of ideas and revolutionary commitment. It has bordering points that cannot be ignored: anti-imperialism, national independence, and socialism (social justice) that guarantees it. *“Martí’s ‘everyone’,”* wrote Cinto Vitier, *“is not merely quantitative. It blossoms from love but also from a critical rejection.”* Now that we are clearing a path unprecedented in our conditions, where there are some people trying to divert it towards a distant past that took the lives of so many Cubans, let us remain united—in word, actions, and example—in the basic principle: with the poor and for the poor.

Let me quote, finally, Raul Castro’s words last January 1st in Santiago de Cuba: *“And the greater the difficulties and dangers, the greater the demands, discipline and unity required. Not a unity achieved at any price, but one based on the principles so accurately defined by Fidel in his reflection of January 22, 2008, and I quote: “Unity means sharing the struggle, the risks, the sacrifices, the objectives, ideas, concepts and strategies, arrived at through debates and analysis. Unity means the common struggle against annexionists, sellouts and corrupt people*

who have nothing to do with a revolutionary militant". And he added another essential idea: "We must avoid that, in the enormous sea of tactical criteria, the strategic lines are diluted and we imagine non-existent situations." (...) Unity is our main strategic weapon; (...) Let us take care of unity more than the apple of our eye! I have no doubt that this will be so."

Translated by Sergio A. Paneque Díaz / CubaSí Translation Staff
