

CELEBRATING THE HUNDRED AND SIXTY EIGHT YEARS ANNIVERSARY OF THE BIRTHDAY OF JOSE MARTI THE APOSTLE OF THE CUBAN REVOLUTION. A CANDLE WHICH CONTINUES TO LIGHT OTHERS.

*By Phatse Justice Piitso**

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Hundred and sixty eight years ago, on the 28th of January 1853, the honour from the trumpet, reverberated the happiest sounds into the deeper springs of our mother nature, when the horn announced the birth of our revered philanthropist of the struggles of humanity, Jose Julian Marti Perez, whose birthday we celebrate. Today, the birth of this towering colossus from of our mother nature, is a testimony of the greatness of the glorious pages of history, as his profound ideas and magnanimity, continue to live and will never die.

The heroic nation of Cuba, conferred our illustrious son, for his magnitude to the cause of the struggle for the liberation of mankind, the title of Apostle of their revolutionary struggle and the founding father of their epic struggles for independence. Today, as we celebrate the birthday of this organic intellectual of our age, and as we cherish his paradox of love, his being, his tenacity and selflessness, his devotion and dedication to the sacred revolutionary cause, we undoubtedly, declare him not only to be the Apostle of the great nation of Cuba, but an Apostle of the revolutionary ferment and the worldwide struggles for emancipation of all of humanity.

Comrade Leon Trotsky wrote the following about the leader of the great October socialist Vladimir Lenin when he said: “besides the factories, barracks, villages, front and the soviets, the revolution had another laboratory, the brain of Lenin”. Today as we emulate the profundity of his words, we declare that from all the great battalions of men and women, from the most powerful of the metropolis and the most downtrodden in the periphery, from the south and the north of our globe, the world revolutionary movement has a laboratory, the brain of Apostle Jose Marti.

The renowned internationalist and one of the Commanders of the Cuban revolution Ernesto Che Guevara, once said the following about Jose Marti, remarkably giving testimony to his character, as a rare specimen with distinguished leadership qualities”

“Do not be afraid to approach him, do not think you are approaching a god, rather a man greater than others, wiser and more sacrificing than others. You bring him back to life a little whenever you think about him and quite a bit whenever you act as he wanted to act”.

He was an imaginable powerhouse of a genius, a profound thinker and an eminent writer, a prolific poet, a seasoned diplomat, educator, patriot and an all-round revolutionary. He was indeed a beacon illuminating the glorious path of our struggle, not only for the liberation of the people of the beautiful Caribbean island of Cuba, but for the whole of the Latin American hemisphere and indeed the world.

His fervent desire for freedom and equality, saw him later banished from Spain, Mexico, Guatemala and Venezuela for his opposition against the enslavement of the African people, against the horrors of abuses by military dictatorships and colonial governments.

He was tremendously inclined to his philosophical preposition that his homeland is humanity.

In his lifetime, he discovered his immense love and hobby for writing, a weapon that he used its prospects to express his inner feelings, and understanding of the world material conditions. He wrote such marvellous and thought provoking theoretical works such as the Spanish and the Cuban revolution, simple verses, the memorial meeting in honour of Karl Marx, mother America, Simon Bolivar, Guatemala, the funeral of the hay-market martyrs, and many others.

His magnanimous thoughts were rekindled much earlier, when at the age of sixteen years, in the year 1869, he founded his first newspaper, La Patria Libre (Free Our Fatherland), where he published some of his magnificent works, such as the famous poem, Adbala, in which he accentuates the liberation of an imaginary country, the liberation of Cuba from the Spanish colonialism was at the heart of his revolutionary thoughts.

In the publication of La Patria Libre, he wrote extensively about the ten years war of 1868-1878, during which the Cuban landowners, together with the peasants and the slave movement, waged a fierce struggle for the independence of Cuba and the freedom of the slave people, against the Spanish colonial domination. As a consequence, he was subsequently arrested for his support for the insurrection and criticism of those supporting the Spanish colonial power, the reason which led to his banishment to Spain.

His arrival in Spain came simultaneously with the proclamation of the first Spanish Republic in 1873, when he published an open letter addressed to the head of the new Spanish government, Don Estanislao Figueras, titled the Spanish republic and the Cuban revolution. This was one of the most decisive theoretical interventions by Jose Marti on his firm views about the necessity of the struggle for the independence of the people of Cuba.

In his letter he asked the head of the new Spanish government a fundamental question as to why if the new Spanish Republic has been raised on the shoulder of universal suffrage, how then could the new republic of Spain, deny Cuba the rights of to its independence and freedom. Arguing that Cuba has the right to its territorial independence and integrity similarly to the new Republic of Spain.

He vehemently spoke against the horrors of human rights violations inflicted by the Spanish colonial power on the life of the people of Cuba and Latin America. He exposed to the world the atrocities committed by the Spanish colonial government against the indigenous people, and the slave people of Cuba.

Reminding the head of the new Spanish Republic that the battle cries of the sons and daughters of man massacred by the colonial government would never die, and would remain the guiding torch of the struggle for our freedom and equality. Bringing a hypothetical panorama that the ocean space between the republic of Spain and Cuba is filled by the dead bodies of innocent people.

He arguably accentuated in the letter that it was of a historic necessity, just as Spain gained independence from France, Italy from Austria, Mexico from Napoleon Bonaparte and the United States from Britain, that similarly too Cuba deserved its freedom. He said:

“Let the Spanish Republic not be dishonoured, let it not murder its brothers or have its sons shed the blood of its other sons. Let it not oppose the independence of Cuba.

Otherwise, the Republic of Spain will be a Republic of injustices and ignominy, and the government of freedom will, in this case, be liberticidal”.

In his work about consciousness and ideas, he cemented the role of consciousness in the development of human society and the importance of ideas as a weapon against any form of adversity. He said:

“What remains of the village in America must rouse itself. These are not the times for sleeping in a nightcap, but with weapons of the mind, which conquer all others. There is no prow that can cut the cloud-bank of ideas. A powerful idea, waved before the world at the proper time, can stop an armada of iron-clad ships”.

Whilst in the United States of America, Marti formed the Cuban Revolutionary Party, and its strategic objective was to conduct the struggle for the overthrow of the puppet Spanish colonial government in Cuba. Together with General Maximo Gomez and General Antonio Maceo, the son of Mariana Grajales, the mother of the Cuba nation, he established underground movement to commence with the armed struggle in Cuba.

Jose Marti was killed by the Spanish forces during the war for independence of 1895, and his death and ideas symbolised him as a martyr of liberation for the independence and freedom of the people of Cuba and Latin America. It was during this war that the defeat of Spanish troops led to the annexation of Cuba and its territory of Guantanamo by the American empire.

Marti lived and died for the sacred ideas of the liberation of humanity, and more importantly the creation of a universe which will become a home to all its people. Marti lived and died for the impeccable ideals of freedom and equality, the ideals of human solidarity and internationalism.

Jose Marti did not produce a nation of terrorists, instead he produced a nation of revolutionaries and true volunteers of our struggle for the emancipation of humanity, the heroic and peace loving nation of Cuba. A selfless nation with big and warm hearts of true human beings.

On the day of the anniversary celebration of the birthday Apostle Jose Marti, we again make a call to the American government, to the newly elected President of the United States of America, President Joe Biden, to bring to an end to the decades long economic sanctions against the people of Cuba. The economic blockade against the Republic of Cuba by the government of the United States constitute a crime against humanity.

Nowhere in the history records of the world, has a powerful empire such as the United States of America, besieged such a small country as the Republic of Cuba, with illegal economic sanctions, for a period of more than half a century. This is an untold story unprecedented in the history of the development of human society.

On the occasion of the celebration of the life of this outstanding son of the world progressive movement, we condemn the cowardly and evil actions by the disgraced government led by the lunatic President Donald Trump, to designate the Republic of Cuba, as one of those states sponsoring terrorism in the world. We regard this as a futile attempt by the outgoing administration to impede the possibilities of restoring sound and friendly bi-lateral relations between the government of Joe Biden and Cuba.

To us, the people of South Africa, the people of the Southern African region, the people of the African continent and the whole world of humanity, the heroic nation of Cuba continues to be a living candle which continues to light others. In them, we find happiness during our greatest and darkest times, the hope they instil is like a sun, that gives eternal light to humanity.

The Cuban revolution remains to be an example of what the world of solidarity and internationalism represents. No amount of counter revolutionary offensive and propaganda will tear apart this great nation of Apostle Jose Marti.

His memory will last forever and will never die, as we celebrate the anniversary of his birthday today, we shall forever be inspired by his exemplary leadership, a nation will never say goodbye to its commander. Marti lives amongst us and his ideas are the stronghold of the better world we want to build for all - a true homeland to all humanity.

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