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José Martí, Cuban Patriot

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An expedition was to leave from Key West for Santa Clara, Cuba. Antonio Maceo and Flor Crombet were to leave with another group from Costa Rica for the eastern part of the island. Throughout Cuba cohorts were to be posted to rise up at the signal for the revolution to start.\footnote{145}

By the middle of July Martí was in New Orleans on his way to Mexico to obtain funds for the revolutionary treasure chest.\footnote{146} It is claimed that while in Mexico he also visited President Porfirio Díaz to enlist his support in the Cuban invasion.\footnote{147} There is no documentary evidence that this interview was ever held, but one Mexican writer insists that he has talked with persons who claim that the interview was held.\footnote{148}

\section*{Failure of the Fernandina Filibuster}

By Christmas Day, 1894, Martí had completed all details for the expedition to Cuba. Three ships had been rented, provisioned with arms, and were waiting to set sail from Fernandina, Florida. One ship was to pick up General Antonio Maceo and General Flor Crombet in Costa Rica and take them and their volunteers to Cuba. Another was to carry Martí and his men to the Dominican Republic, then invade Cuba from the south, with Maceo’s group invading from the north. The third ship was to go to Key West, pick up volunteers there, and take them to Santa Clara.\footnote{149}

Unfortunately for the conspirators, one of their trusted members, Colonel Fernando López de Queralta, revealed the plan, and the United States government closed in on them on January 12, 1895, and confiscated the ships and arms.\footnote{150} Martí was most distraught at this unexpected disaster, but his friends rallied to his support. In particular, the mother-in-law of his best friend, Gonzalo de Quesada y Aróstegui, offered to furnish bail for those arrested in connection with the debacle. Horatio S. Rubens, the young lawyer engaged as counsel for the revolutionists, was able to save part of the supplies of the expedition.\footnote{151} In some ways the confiscation was a blessing, because the publicity convinced the cigar makers of the Cuban emigrant colonies in Florida that Martí was in earnest and had invested their contributions in arms.\footnote{152} He became “positively an idol” to them.\footnote{153}

\section*{The Manifesto of Montecristi}

Slowly Martí began to gather together the pieces and to make new plans for the invasion. On January 29, 1895, Martí signed an order for a general uprising in Cuba directing Juan Gualberto Gómez, representative of the Cuban Revolutionary party in Havana, to take charge of the arrangements in Cuba.\footnote{144}

Martí left New York on January 31 for Montecristi to meet with General Máximo Gómez to consolidate their plans to launch another invasion attempt.\footnote{154} They met on February 7 and spent the rest of the month awaiting news of an uprising in Cuba. On February 26 word came that the revolution had begun.\footnote{155}

Meanwhile in Costa Rica Antonio Maceo refused to undertake his part of the expedition unless $5,000 was forthcoming, rather than the $2,000 which was his share of the revolutionary funds. Flor Crombet was anxious to begin the operation, but Maceo had again lost faith in Martí. On February 26 the latter found it necessary to write him a sharp letter pulling him into line.\footnote{156} Maceo responded, but never forgave Martí.\footnote{157}

One month later Martí was still in Montecristi, where, on March 25, he and General Máximo Gómez signed El Manifesto de Montecristi. Martí did the actual drafting of the document.\footnote{158} The Manifesto was the message of the Revolutionary party to the Cuban people. In an exposition of the principles of the revolution it called for a just war, which could not be against the individual Spaniard, but against the colonial regime. It urged understanding and appreciation of the Negro, not fear, and foresaw a vigorous and healthful war to give Cuba a rebirth. It read:

The revolution will tomorrow fulfill the duty of explaining once more to the country and to all nations the local causes, on the basis of universal interest, with which the veterans of Yara and Guáimaro renew for the advancement and service of humanity a war worthy of the respect of its enemies and the help of its peoples, according to the rigid concept of the rights of man, and its abhorrence of sterile vengeance and useless devastation.\footnote{159}

At this time Martí wrote his “political will” in a letter to Federico Henríquez y Carvajal, a close friend and prominent public figure in
Communist-style directorate to form the leadership of the Integrated Revolutionary Organization, a committee to establish the single proletarian party that Castro had promised to form. At least ten Communists were in the group, including Blas Roca, Carlos Rafael Rodríguez, who had replaced Fidel Castro on February 14 as head of the all-powerful Agrarian Reform Institute, and Lázaro Peña, head of the Cuban Workers Federation. Conspicuously absent was Juan Marinello, head of the University of Havana, but no longer president of the Popular Socialist party (Communist).

In three years, step by step, Fidel Castro and his fellow Marxists converted the freedom-loving people of Cuba into a tightly-knit socialist dictatorship. In typical fashion the end, social revolution, justified the means, deception, betrayal, terror, and destruction of human liberties. The use of Martí as a symbol is clearly evident; his abuse, tragic.

**Chapter 10**

**SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS**

The life of José Martí was an odyssey, a wandering in exile, a life fraught with perennial anguish in its dedication to free Cuba from Spain. Poet, dramatist, political prisoner, pamphleteer, novelist, journalist, teacher, diplomat, filibusterer, and revolutionist—Martí was all of these and more. Yet he is probably best known for his writings and revolutionary activities. His fevered brain assimilated and converted into fluid Spanish prose some of the currents of social, political, and economic thought of the nineteenth century. He was a graphic reporter of great and little events in Europe, Latin America, and the United States during the 1880's and 1890's. He often wrote with such haste, however, that many of his observations remain in topical settings, where their usefulness is obscured. At worst in his writings he was obtuse, wordy, and flamboyant; at best he was sincere, sensitive, and acute in capturing the essence of the personality of a great man or reporting a human interest story. One can see originality of expression in much of his work, especially his poetry, but on the other hand much of his material, particularly on European affairs, came to him from other sources.

*The Specter of Failure*

Although Martí is given credit for having started the Revolution on its final journey to success, and therefore in the final analysis is identified with that success, no one element seemed to dominate in the personal history of Martí quite so much as failure. His relations
with his father were for the most part marked by misunderstanding. He failed as a young conspirator by allowing himself to be discovered. His teaching experience in Guatemala turned out unsuccessfuIt as did his marriage to Carmen Zayas-Bazán. He ended in disaster as a conspirator for a second time in Cuba, when he was once again deported to Spain. The newspaper he started in Venezuela, as well as his reporting ventures for a newspaper there, ended unhappily. He began writing for numerous magazines and newspapers in New York, but he never seemed to last for more than a year or two on most of them. He had grandiose schemes for books, but he never carried them out. He was deficient as a novelist and dramatist, although he succeeded as a translator.

The Fernandina expedition, which was to invade Cuba, was a fiasco. When Martí finally did gather a group to go to Cuba, he and Gómez were unable to secure the original number of men, although the small party that set out did manage to reach the Cuban shore. Martí’s relations with General Antonio Maceo were never smooth, and they were unable to reach an agreement on the establishment of the government that Cuba was going to have. Martí’s final and decisive defeat was as a soldier. As a newly-created major general he knew less about fighting than the ordinary private. Apparently without having fired a shot he was cut down by the enemy. Yet it seems that he was not wholly unprepared for the death that came to him at Dos Ríos. Some assert that he committed suicide, which could indicate that he himself considered his life a failure, redeemable only by an act of self-sacrifice. To paraphrase an old French proverb, “Nothing succeeds like success,” one might say that with respect to Martí’s last act, which assured him his long-sought martyrdom, “Nothing succeeded like failure.”

Despite Martí’s record of inadequate performance in many endeavors, he still made decisive contributions to the Revolution. A hero by correspondence, he kept the spirit of the Revolution going by reminding its leaders of their duty, by encouraging the tobacco workers of Florida to give just a little more to the party, and by dedicating himself to the movement, writing, speaking, and traveling. As the friendly persuader he did not fail. He was the force behind the creation of the Cuban Revolutionary party. Therein lies one of his greatest successes, a substantial contribution to the independence of Cuba.

Whether Martí’s failures were the result of a lack of personal capacity at times, or of an inability to foresee or adapt himself to circumstances, or of merely innocent association with misfortune, it was precisely his everlasting faith in spite of adversity that led to his greatness. Although discouraged at times, he continually displayed a boundless optimism in believing that the revolutionary forces, poorly organized, poorly equipped, and poorly trained though they were, could overcome the Spaniards after so many abortive uprisings. With this record of defeats, carrying on the fight must have taken great courage. He never lost faith that the Revolution would be a success. This is the faith that moves nations. It brought independence to Cuba, although Martí did not live to see it fulfilled. Cubans may find it unpatriotic to speak of Martí’s failures, but to point them out is only to emphasize his successes, and to explain his apotheosis. Most saints have undergone great tribulations in their lives.

**Martí’s Moral and Social Philosophy**

Martí was not a philosopher, although this point has been the subject of contention among Cuban writers. Martí, rather, was a writer of homely moral phrases, many of them rephrasings from the Bible. An eclectic, he seldom gave the source for his philosophizings. It is difficult to coordinate his social and moral philosophy, but it is possible to detect certain “resonances,” a favorite term with one biographer of Martí.

Martí constantly moralized about man—his mind, character, love, and friendship—the good life, and death. He felt that social conventions hampered the full development of the individual, and hoped that by exposing society’s restrictions he could somehow ease them by means of his writings. He was torn in his concept of man between seeing him romantically as self-sufficient, intelligent, and self-sacrificing, and looking upon him as only a part of an ignorant mass, or as a sleeping beast. He wrote lovingly of all human virtues: truth, honesty, dignity, fraternity, compassion, piety, selflessness, justice, happiness, friendship, and love. His poem on friendship, “La
55. Rodrigo Demorizó, p. 125.
59. Ibid., VIII, 159.
60. Ibid., VIII, 199.
61. Ibid., LVI, 101-102.
62. Ibid., LVI, 105; VIII, 204.
63. Ibid., LVI, 109-111, 115-116, VIII, 221-222.
68. Gómez, p. 356.
72. For a comprehensive history of Cuba from pre-Columbian to present times see Ramiro Guerra y Sánchez et al., *Historia de la Nación cubana* (10 vols.; La Habana: Editorial Historia de la Nación Cubana, 1952).
74. Cosme de la Torriente, “Política exterior. Las relaciones entre la República de Cuba y los Estados Unidos de América,” in *Historia de la Nación cubana*, VIII, Libro 4°, cap. iv, 231.

CHAPTER 2

1. A systematized short cut to the thoughts of José Martí is a selection of 2,460 of his observations in *Código Martiano o de ética nacional*, ed. Carlos A. Martínez-Portúa y Foyo (La Habana: Seoane Fernández y Cía., 1943). This work has been used for some of the citations in this chapter. Also see José Martí, *esquema ideológico*, eds. Manuel Pedro González e Iván A. Schulman (México: Ed. Cultura, T. G. S. A., 1961).
3. Ibid., LXIV, 172, 193-194; LXIII, 75.
4. Ibid., LXII, 127.
5. Ibid., LXIV, 40-41.
8. Ibid., LXVII, 27; XII, 30; XXX, 159, 148.
9. Ibid., XX, 31; XXVI, 57; II, 90; XIX, 97; II, 220; IX, 155; LXIII, 75.
10. Ibid., XXVI, 146.
11. Ibid., XII, 145; VII, 75.
12. Ibid., XII, 46. 13. Ibid., XII, 136; XXIV, 119-120; XI, 135; X, 21.
13. Ibid., XV, 60; LXVI, 73.
14. Ibid., XVI, 107; XI, 93.
15. Ibid., XLI, 97.
18. Ibid., XXVI, 36; XVII, 217; LXII, 56, 128; LXIII, 175; LXIX, 25.
19. Ibid., LXIV, 194, 96.
22. Ibid., LXIV, 187.
23. Ibid., LXIV, 67.
24. Ibid., XXVI, 76.
25. Ibid., XXVI, 115, 118; XXV, 28.
27. Ibid., 80-134.
28. Ibid., 119-120; XI, 135; X, 21.
29. Ibid., LXIV, 149.
30. Ibid., 114.
34. Ibid., LXIII, 26.
35. Ibid., LXIV, 145-145.
36. Ibid., III, 175; XIV, 85.
37. Ibid., I, 182; VIII, 188.
38. Ibid., LXIV, 28.
39. Ibid., XVII, 211; XII, 20.
40. Ibid., LXIV, 151; LXII, 80, 134-135.
41. Ibid., LXIV, 149.
42. Ibid., p. 87.
47. *Obras*, ed. Quesada y Miranda, LXII, 73.
48. Ibid., I, 72-73.
49. Ibid., I, 72-73.
50. Ibid., LXX, 43, XX, 60, 70; XIII, 137.
52. Ibid., LXII, 105.
53. Ibid., LXIV, 32; XX, 69; XXVI, 51.
55. Ibid., LXII, 127.
58. Ibid., LXIV, 92-93, 123-128; LXIV, 78.