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THE POLITICAL IDEOLOGY OF JOSÉ MARTÍ

Jaime Suchlicki *

From the ideological and organizational points of view, the Cuban War of Independence represented Martí's revolution. His ideas formed the foundation on which the revolution rested, and his knocking on the conscience of the Cubans awakened the feeling that brought about the war.

The purpose of this paper is to trace the ideas of Martí regarding that war, and to probe into his mind in order to explain his political ideology; but before undertaking this task, something should be said about the history and intellectual conditions existing in Cuba during the nineteenth century.

In Cuba during the first half of the nineteenth century there was little thought of independence from Spain. Nevertheless, the revolutionary spirit of the French and American revolutions, and the struggles for independence in Spanish America inspired the minds of the Cubans with the desire for freedom. The writings and ideas of Félix Varela, José de la Luz y Caballero, José A. Saco, Domingo del Monte and others helped to create the necessary conditions conducive to revolution. Cuba had, in addition to these political and social thinkers, a tradition of poets and literary writers. José María Heredia, José Jacinto Milanés, Gabriel de la Concepción Valdés (Plácido), Cirilo Villaverde, Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda, Juan Clemente Zenea, and others, awakened in the Cuban people, with their verse and prose, a romantic love for their island and a nationalistic urge to liberate her from the Spanish yoke.

The Cubans looked to Spain for the needed reforms that would change the status quo of their oppressed island. They turned their eyes to a Spain, fighting against José Bonaparte; enacting, through the Constitution of 1812, liberal reforms; and experiencing the revolutionary era of 1820. They hoped for the extension of this liberalism to Cuba. Only when they sadly realized that the mistakes of Spanish rule in America had not been a sufficient lesson to Spain, they turned to the idea of independence.

Throughout the nineteenth century, sporadic conspiracies and revolutionary attempts were discovered by Spain, but it was not until 1868 that the first great effort was made to liberate the ever faithful island from Spanish rule. Thousands of lives were sacrificed on both sides, while Cuba was plunged into a Ten Year War. Spain, realizing that subjugation by force was impossible, agreed on granting reforms and in 1878 an armistice was reached. The Spanish generals met the insurgent leaders at Zanjón, Cuba, where a treaty was arranged, liberal reforms were granted, and the Cubans laid down their arms in good faith. Once

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the island was pacified, the old policy was reverted to and the treaty was shamelessly repudiated.

The failure of Spain to live up to its promises caused much dissatisfaction. The Cubans came to realize that the Spanish government would not honor its commitments and that the only solution was to continue fighting. Actually the war had never ceased. Since October 1878, a Cuban Revolutionary Committee was functioning in New York under the direction of General Calixto García, one of the military leaders of the Ten Year War. This organization, aided by war veterans still living in Cuba, began to prepare for the resumption of hostilities against Spain. On August 6, 1879, a new revolt broke out in Cuba. This premature movement, known as *La Guerra Chiquita*, ended a year later with the surrender of the Cuban patriots.

The years that followed were characterized by schism among the Cubans. The enthusiasm and prestige of the Cuban patriots and military leaders were not sufficient to coordinate and direct the revolutionary efforts. The need was for a figure that would inspire, with leadership and stature, the union of all the Cubans, both in exile and on the island.

This vacuum was filled by a young poet and revolutionist, whose devotion and faith in the righteousness of the cause of Cuban independence made him rise above his contemporaries to unite and lead the Cubans. Born in La Habana on January 28, 1853, of Spanish parents, José Martí spent his early years as an eager student. His environment, teachers and friends helped arouse in him a devotion to the cause of freedom, and the tradition of Cuban political writings influenced his embryonic mind. At the age of seventeen he was sent to jail for political reasons, an event which left a lasting moral and physical impression upon him. Soon thereafter he was deported to Spain, where at the age of twenty-one he received his degree in philosophy and law from the University of Zaragoza.

Martí traveled from Spain to various capitals of Europe, and in 1875 he went to México. The two years he spent in the Aztec nation were maturing years. México was going through a period of intellectual ferment, and Martí was exposed to the ideas of Gabino Barreda, Justo Sierra, Ignacio Altamirano and others. The coming into power of Porfirio Díaz prompted his departure from México to Guatemala, where he taught literature and philosophy. After the Peace of Zanjón in 1878, he returned to Cuba and began practicing law. His revolutionary activities were soon discovered by the Spanish authorities, and again he was deported to Spain, from where he escaped to France. Finally in 1880, Martí arrived in the United States and made New York the center of his activities for the next decade. Nevertheless, he continued to travel throughout America and to observe the many problems of the Latin American nations.

While the years in exile strengthened his character and prepared him for his martyrdom, his travel exposed him to the ideas of the old

and new continent. In Spain Martí came in contact with the ideas of the German philosopher Krause. The Krausist ideas, imported to Spain from Germany by J. Sanz del Río, were uppermost in the Spanish thought of that time. Krause's idealism greatly influenced the ideology of Martí¹. In France Martí met Victor Hugo, whose humanism and love for the poor made a lasting impression on the Cuban exile. Three sons of Spain also had a profound influence on Martí. From Baltasar Gracián, he took his literary style, his liking for philosophical essays and for commentaries on ethics and politics; from Francisco de Goya, kindness toward the humble and the penetration that unveiled men's souls; from his contemporary, Joaquín Costa, his love for agriculture, his friendliness for rural workers and his uncompromising repugnance for the evils of politics or expedient dissimulation². The years spent in exile and the persecution and imprisonment, did not make Martí resentful. He never lost faith in the inner goodness of man. "Man is organized and good", he wrote, "and in the end always saves himself"³.

What distinguished Martí and made him, above all, a leader of people, was his quality to organize and to harmonize. His mark of leadership was to take man's passions, beliefs and ideas, and mold them for a common cause. His oratory inspired his listeners, his honesty and sincerity, demonstrated by his actions, inspired faith, and his conviction in the ideas he was pursuing, gained for him the respect and loyalty of all who knew him.

Martí relied not only on the physical strength of man, but on his spiritual powers. When he had to call on virtues that men did not appear to have, he helped them bring those virtues out. Many times he said that man was not what he seemed to be, but rather what he was inside. "What mattered was not man as he was, but as he should be"⁴.

Martí's great undertaking was to liberate Cuba. He always felt that America would not be free as long as parts of it were not. He wanted a country fought for and won by the efforts of the Cubans—one that could respect itself and demand respect from others. He rejected the idea of a country obtained through the benevolence of a foreign power.

¹ Medardo Vitier: *Martí: Estudio Integral*. La Habana, 1954; p. 69.

² Pedro de Alba: «Martí and His Pilgrimage», *Pan American Union Bulletin*. May 1945; p. 267.

³ «Generoso Deseo», Article in *Patria*. April 30, 1892. Gonzalo de Quesada, ed., *Obras Completas de Martí*, La Habana, Editorial Trópico, 1937; Vol. 3, p. 39. *Patria*, founded in 1892, was the official newspaper of the Cuban Revolutionary Party, and continued to be published until the end of Spanish domination in Cuba. Through its pages, Martí was able to communicate his ideas to the Cuban exiles. *Patria* was, from the propaganda point of view, the most important vehicle to promote the war against Spain. The *Obras* is the most complete collection of the writings of Martí. They contain almost everything that he ever wrote. The volumes are organized in chronological order and the *Guía* (Guide), which comprises one volume, is of extraordinary usefulness.)

⁴ Article in the newspaper *El Partido Liberal*, México, January 30, 1891. *Obras Completas*, Vol. 19, p. 21.

Martí realized very early that independence from Spain was the only solution for Cuba, and that this could only be achieved through war. No concession could be expected from Spain. Furthermore, the annexationist ideas had been taking shape in the minds of many Cubans and North Americans, and the danger of Cuba becoming a possession of the United States, convinced him that a fast and decisive war was necessary. In 1882 he referred to the advocates of annexationism in Cuba as: "An important group of cautious men, proud enough to despise Spanish domination, but too timid to risk their welfare fighting against it"⁵. Throughout the next decade, the annexationist ideas remained as an impending threat to the independence movement and a main concern to Martí: "The annexationists are a grave and constant factor in Cuban politics", he wrote in 1892, "and the duty of the Cubans... is to follow the more popular and historic solution, the more unavoidable and natural solution: the War for Independence"⁶.

Martí did not desire the war he was destined to organize. He fully understood the horrors of war, but he saw some positive and concrete achievements that would come out of it. "In a new and heterogeneous country", he said, "the benefits of war, for the development and unification of the national character, are greater than the partial disaster produced to the repairable wealth"⁷.

Martí's wisdom concerning the war resided in his understanding of the reasons that produced the failure of the Ten Year War and on his analysis of the existing conditions. In the Ten Year War indefinite prolongation, internal dissension and regionalism were vicious circles which the insurgents could not break through. Furthermore, lack of support and organization had been a definite factor in the outcome of the war. Martí realized that the triumph of the revolutionary forces was not dependent on the existence of military leaders, not even on oppressive conditions inside the island, but on popular support for the war. What was needed was to create the necessary conditions so the Cuban people would want the war and be willing to organize in pursuing its objectives. "A group of men pushed by its people", he wrote, "obtain what Bolívar did; but a group of heroes abandoned by its people might look like bandits"⁸.

The popular character that Martí wanted the struggle for independence to have, and his fear of a military dictatorship after the expulsion of Spain were expressed in a letter to Máximo Gómez in 1884. Gómez and

⁵ Letter to Gómez, July 20, 1882. *Obras Completas*, Vol. 1, p. 201.

⁶ «The Annexationist Remedy», *Patria*, July 2, 1892. *Obras Completas*, Vol. 3;

⁷ «La Guerra», *Patria*, July 9, 1892. *Obras Completas*, Vol. 3; p. 187.

⁸ Letter to Emilio Núñez, October 13, 1880; Félix Lizaso, ed., *Epistolario de José Martí*. La Habana, Cultural, S. A., 1930; Vol. 1, p. 69. The *Epistolario* is a three volume collection of Martí's letters. Although not complete, its chronological order allows for the study of some of Martí's ideas as they evolved with the passage of time, and for an approach and understanding of Martí, not only as a political and social writer, but also as a man.

Antonio Maceo, two generals of the last war, were at the time engaged in conspiratory activities. Martí had participated in them, but his fear and doubts regarding the authoritarian attitudes of Gómez prompted his break with the movement. In that letter he wrote:

A nation cannot be founded, General, in the same manner as an army camp is commanded. When in the preliminary works for a revolution there is no showing of sincere desire to compromise, what guarantees could there be that public liberties will be respected tomorrow? What are we General? The modest and heroic servants of an idea or the brave and lucky *caudillos* that are getting ready to take the war to a people for the purpose of later subjugating them?...

The fatherland belongs to no one, but if it did, it belongs, and only in spirit, to the one who serves it with the greatest unselfishness and intelligence⁹.

Martí had no faith in those incomplete and rootless attempts which appeared sporadically and were born, he felt, from the desire for personal glory. He was interested in keeping watch over the awakening of Cuban feeling in order to direct it along the road for independence. To organize the war it was necessary to revive the faith of the people, and to combine all efforts so they would culminate in victory. This, Martí thought, could only be accomplished through the organization of a party. "If a revolutionary party does not exist", he wrote, "to inspire sufficient trust or channel the aspirations of the country, to whom will the people turn, but to the men of the annexationist party"¹⁰.

Martí directed all of his efforts to this end after 1884. His speeches and writings earned him respect and admiration, and his name took root in the hearts of the Cubans. Years of propaganda and constant activity had their result. By the end of 1891, the union of all the Cubans in exile was beginning to take place, and Martí was recognized as the undisputed leader and dynamic force behind the independence movement.

On January 5, 1892, Martí attended a meeting in Key West, where the representatives of the different political groups in exile approved a set of Resolutions previously drawn by Martí. These Resolutions, called *Bases*, constituted the foundation of the Cuban Revolutionary Party. On April 10, 1892, the *Bases* were unanimously proclaimed by all the Cuban and Puerto Rican emigres in the United States¹¹.

Martí brought out in the *Bases* the ideas that had been ripening within him during the previous decade. They represented a pragmatic approach to the Cuban situation, appealed to all classes and races, and touched upon some essential political problems, on international relations, and on the organization of the war. The *Bases* were not aimed at defining

⁹ Letter to Gómez, October 20, 1884. *Obras Completas*, Vol. 1; pp. 215-219.

¹⁰ *Obras Completas*, Vol. 1, p. 207, as quoted in Emilio Roig de Leuchsenring, ed., *Vida y Pensamiento de Martí*. La Habana, Municipio de La Habana, 1942; Vol. 1, p. 89.

¹¹ Nestor Carbonell: *Martí, carne y espíritu*. La Habana, 1952; p. 158.

any political philosophy to be adopted after independence, nor at creating a document that would become a source of controversy. It should, however, be noted that they were drawn with special consideration for the international situation of Cuba.

Article I contemplated complete independence for Cuba and Puerto Rico. Article II defined the character of the war as "generous and short, aimed at assuring, in peace and work, the happiness of the inhabitants of the island". Article III defined the future task of Cuba as: "fulfilling, in the historic life of the continent, the difficult duties assigned to her by her geographic position". Article IV spoke of "founding a new people, and of establishing democracy capable of defeating, through real work and the equilibrium of social forces, the dangers of sudden freedom in a society reared for slavery". Article V stated the aim of the war as "the decorum and well-being of all the Cubans and the rendering of the free fatherland to all the people". Article VI expressed "the intention to substitute for the economic chaos reigning in Cuba a system of public fiscal administration, which shall immediately open the country to the diverse activities of its inhabitants". Article VII mentioned the desire of the party "not to alienate the peoples with whom prudence of affection suggested or imposed the maintenance of cordial relations". Article VIII enumerated five concrete objectives. The third of these objectives showed Martí's concern with the danger involved to Cuban lives when organizing a war based on popular support. He mentioned the desire of the Party "to disseminate the knowledge of the spirit and method of the revolution in Cuba, and to create in the inhabitants of the island a favorable disposition toward a revolutionary victory, which would not place Cuban lives in unnecessary jeopardy"¹².

Martí gave to the party a democratic organization based on the supremacy of the civilian command over the military. The direction of the activities was placed in the hands of a delegate elected annually. From the formation of the party until its disappearance, three years later, Martí occupied that position. "The articles of the party", Martí wrote, "were established to remedy past mistakes... and to assure the continuous intervention of the Cuban people in the control of its own affairs"¹³.

From 1892 on Martí's efforts were directed toward the realization of his dream: the independence of Cuba. So well had he organized the revolution, that when he gave the order for the uprising early in 1895, the ultimate expulsion of Spain from the island was assured.

In Santo Domingo, on the eve of his departure for Cuba, Martí reiterated, in what was later known as the Manifesto of Montecristi,

¹² The full text of the *Bases* can be found in: Emilio Roig de Leuchsenring, ed., «La Revolución de Martí», *Cuadernos de Historia Habanera*. La Habana, 1941; Vol. 19, pp. 57-58.

¹³ Letter to the President of the Club of Kingston, Jamaica, May 25, 1892. *Obras Completas*, Vol. 3, p. 75.

the reasons for the war. In this document, signed also by Gómez and issued on March 25, 1895, Martí reaffirmed the right of Cuba to obtain, through self-sacrifice and determination, its freedom and independence from Spain. He advocated a war without hate, with mutual respect for the honest Spaniard, pious with those who repented, but inflexible with vice, crime or inhuman actions¹⁴.

The same day the Manifesto was made public, Martí wrote a letter to his friend, Federico Henríquez Carvajal, which has been considered by most Cuban historians as his political testament. Martí had become quite concerned with the expansionist activities of the United States, and he viewed them as a threat to the independence of Latin America. Conscious of his destiny and of his duty toward Cuba and toward the entire American Continent, he wrote the following:

I called forth the war; my responsibility begins rather than ends with it. For me the Fatherland will never be triumph but agony and duty... The person who thinks of himself does not love his country; and the ills of nations reside, however subtly they may at times be disguised, in the barriers or hasty actions with which the self-interest of their representatives retard or accelerate the natural course of events... The Antillas will save the independence of our America, and the now dubious and battered honor of English America, and perhaps hasten to stabilize the world...¹⁵.

Soon thereafter, Martí landed in Cuba to participate in the war, but a Spanish bullet cut his life short on May 19, 1895. Martí's death represented a tremendous blow to the morale of the revolution; his voice was not to be heard again, but his writings and ideas remained to be studied by the following generations.

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Martí can only be understood if we think of him as a student of social problems, rather than a purely political doctrinaire. He did not have a preconceived scheme for the organization of society, nor did he accept prefabricated molds that would impose a rigid political philosophy upon society. This, together with the fragmentary nature of his writings, makes the study of his political ideology difficult.

Martí approached the problems of society with idealism and optimism. He regarded his time as an age of progress in which man walked the earth, inspired by sentiments of love and humanity. It was the optimistic chant of a happy era when man, on his way upward, rose from his knees to dominate the world. Martí had seen man on the

¹⁴ The full text of the Manifesto can be found in *Obras Completas*, Vol. 8, pp. 159-176.

¹⁵ Letter to Federico Henríquez Carvajal, March 25, 1895. *Obras Completas*, Vol. 8, pp. 187-190.

threshold of that world, ready for the leap that would make him the master of himself and his future greatness. To achieve this, it was man's task to develop his capabilities to the maximum¹⁶.

For Martí, man could never be sacrificed for the agrandizement of society. He thought of man not only as an individual, but as a member of society. By fulfilling his destiny, man was to realize his place of duty and influence in the larger organism of society. The belief that a better man was destined to live in a better world is present in most of his writings.

Two ideas underlie the whole of Martí's political ideology: the idea of liberty and the idea of justice. Again and again he spoke of them as the supreme aim of human life. Martí thought of man as belonging to two groups: those who loved freedom because they only wanted it for themselves, and those who loved freedom because they wanted it for every man¹⁷. Freedom was for him a right that entailed the obligation to extend it and respect the freedom of other men; freedom based on sacrifice and hard work. "Man", he said, "should not expect others to give him freedom, but work hard in its pursuit"¹⁸. The type of freedom that Martí advocated had to be based on custom and law, on individual rights and on the mutual respect of all classes¹⁹.

The second idea was that of justice. "Justice", he wrote, "is the adaptation of positive law to natural law"²⁰. But how was justice to be achieved in society? He felt that to create a just society it wasn't enough to give political liberty, it was also necessary to distribute the wealth. The accumulation of wealth in the hands of a few was conducive to injustices. "Exclusive wealth is unjust", he wrote. "In political economy and good government to distribute is to make happiness"²¹. He believed that the greatness of nations was dependent on the economic independence of its individuals. Therefore, it was necessary that everyone should possess and cultivate a piece of land²². "The distribution of land", he explained, "if given to those who are working for low wages, would draw them away from low salary jobs"²³. He did not

¹⁶ Article in the Magazine: *La Opinión Nacional*. Caracas, March 22, 1881. Lilia Castro de Morales, ed., *Diccionario del pensamiento de José Martí*. La Habana, Editorial Selecta, 1953; p. 180. The *Diccionario* is a one volume summary of Martí's thoughts; it contains short paragraphs of his writings, organized by topics, with their corresponding citations. The *Diccionario* gives the reader a quick reference for many of Martí's ideas, while at the same time it serves as a guide to his major works.

¹⁷ «Sobre Mariano Balaguer», *Patria*, April 16, 1892. *Diccionario*, p. 212.

¹⁸ Lecture in Steck Hall, January 24, 1880. *Obras Completas*, Vol. 9, p. 15.

¹⁹ Article in the Magazine: *La América*. New York, November 1883. *Diccionario*, p. 211.

²⁰ Letter to Joaquín Macal, Minister of Foreign Relations of Guatemala, April 11, 1877. *Obras Completas*, Vol. 19, p. 47.

²¹ *Guatemala*, Monograph published by Martí in Mexico in 1878. *Obras Completas*, Vol. 19, p. 87.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 71.

²³ «El Partido Revolucionario a Cuba», *Patria*, May 27, 1893. *Obras Completas*, Vol. 5, p. 78.

advocate the taking of the land away from the large land holders, but the distribution of the land that the government possessed. "Cuba had", according to Martí, "an abundance of fertile land"²⁴.

Martí's political ideology pointed to the suppression of the Spanish colonial system and to the establishment of a Republican type of government in Cuba. That new order, generated through revolution, would enact laws according to the needs of society. He felt that after the liberation from Spain, Cuba had to be liberated from Spanish customs and its legacy of social vices. This was to come slowly, as a process of political maturity, of education, which, without hate, would establish the foundation of a healthy Republic. The new nation was to be based on the close collaboration of all social classes, and not on the struggle of one class against the other. It would be the fatherland where everyone could live in peace with freedom and justice — a nation based on law, order and the hard work of its inhabitants²⁵.

The task of the government was to put an end to the injustices of society. Government was to act as the equilibrating force, active and ready to participate in the shaping of society. "The government", he wrote, "is a moderating and guiding force, ready to intervene to solve existing conflicts"²⁶. He wanted a government born out of and in accord with the needs of the country—a government that, without creating dissatisfaction among the intellectual aristocracy, would allow for the development of the more numerous and uneducated elements of the population²⁷.

For the type of government Martí advocated, there was a need for an unselfish and dedicated ruler. These, he felt, were the moral qualities necessary to govern. The ruler should be, in addition, a man of culture and love. A necessary quality for the man in power was to be able to see ahead of his own times. "To govern", he wrote, "is to foresee"²⁸.

Martí was a firm believer in democracy and in periodic elections. He thought that the natural environment for the development of democracy was in a Republican type of regime. He did not envision the possibility of Democracy flourishing in any other type of political system. He felt that elections were fundamental for the preservation of Democracy and warned against ambitious men, who wanted, through flattery and empty promises to the voters, to perpetuate themselves in power. Votes were sacred and men had not only the right, but also the

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ Speech in the Cuban Lyceum, Tampa, November 26, 1891. *Obras Completas*, Vol. 9, pp. 151-170.

²⁶ Article in the *Revista Universal*. México, August 14, 1875. *Obras Completas*, Vol. 49, p. 65.

²⁷ Letter to Federico Henríquez Carvajal: *Obras Completas*.

²⁸ «La Conferencia Monetaria», *La Revista Ilustrada*. New York, May 1891. *Obras Completas*, Vol. 22, p. 28.

duty, to vote. "A careless vote", he wrote, "is a lost right, and indifference toward elections, the forerunner of the tyrant"²⁹.

Politics was a delicate and complex art for Martí. It was not a matter of form or ideologies, but the art of guiding and combining through pacific means the different elements in society³⁰. Politics could not be borrowed from other nations, but had to be indigenous to the country. "With the knowledge of the natural elements", he concluded, compromise could be agreed upon and conflicts would be prevented"³¹.

Martí believed in the concept of the State as expressed in the ideas of the French Revolution: a State based on natural law, with a written constitution and a division of powers. He felt that man made laws were just, only if they were based on natural law. Constitutions had to be the product of the true needs of the nation. It was impossible to make Constitutions with ideological elements alone. "A Constitution", he explained, "is a live and practical law"³².

Much has been written regarding Martí's attitude toward the United States. His writings have been slanted to show him as being strongly anti-Yankee, or to portray him as the advocate of a Latin America in the image of the United States. The truth lies, perhaps, somewhere between the two extremes. Martí admired the accomplishments of the United States, while at the same time he saw the evils of a society in which, according to him, man placed too much emphasis on material wealth and on his selfish interest. "The Cubans", he wrote, "admire this nation, the greatest ever built by freedom, but they distrust the evil conditions that, like worms in the blood, have begun their work of destruction in this mighty Republic... They cannot honestly believe that excess individualism and reverence for wealth are preparing the United States to be the typical nation of liberty... We love the country of Lincoln as much as we fear the country of Cutting"³³.

Martí was a firm believer in individual initiative, private property and honest profit. He saw two evils in the United States capitalistic society: monopoly that limited the free flow of products in the national market, and protectionism, which caused the same result in international trade. For Martí, the injustices of capitalism were only temporary

²⁹ «Las Elecciones del 10 de abril», *Patria*, April 16, 1893. *Obras Completas*, Vol. 5, p. 11.

³⁰ «El tercer año del Partido Revolucionario Cubano», *Patria*, April 17, 1894. *Obras Completas*, Vol. 6, p. 203.

³¹ «Ciegos y desleales», *Patria*, January 28, 1893. *Obras Completas*, Vol. 4, p. 150.

³² Article in *La opinión nacional*, May 23, 1882. *Diccionario*, p. 110.

³³ «Cuba and the United States», March 1889. *Obras Completas*, Vol. 2, p. 53. This essay was Martí's answer to two editorials, regarding the purchase of Cuba by the U.S. that had appeared in *The Manufacturer of Philadelphia* and the *New York Evening Post*. These newspapers showed extreme contempt for the people of the island. Martí denounced with passion and courage their animosity and the offense to the dignity of his countrymen.

defects and abuses that could be remedied. He did not advocate the suppression of free enterprise. He was anti-capitalistic because of his humanitarian approach to economics and his desire for justice for the poor and the working class. "... the rich capitalist", he wrote, "forces the worker to work for the lowest wages... It is the duty of the State to put an end to unnecessary misery"³⁴.

Martí understood the influence that economics exerted on politics. Therefore, he advocated that nations should sell to different nations, and not become dependent on any one market. "Whoever says economic union", he wrote, "says political union. The people who buy command; the people who sell obey"³⁵. Martí viewed with alarm the economic ties Cuba had with the United States, and the danger involved in any closer commercial relations with their neighbor to the North. Realizing the economic importance of the United States and the geographical situation of Cuba, Martí advocated friendlier relations but without any political or economic dependence. He saw the impossibility of maintaining Cuban independence against the will of the United States. "We are firmly resolved", he said, "to deserve, request and obtain its (United States) sympathy, without which independence would be very difficult to obtain and maintain"³⁶.

Martí looked at the Western Hemisphere and saw it divided into two peoples with different origins and customs. This did not mean that their relation should be based on animosity; on the contrary, he felt that with mutual understanding and respect for the sovereignty of every nation, it was possible to be friends.

People devoted to the liberation of their country are often so absorbed in the task that they become narrow-minded and lose touch with events surrounding them. Not so Martí. He was a citizen of America. Like Bolívar, he thought in terms of a continent, he looked at the events of his homeland, but never lost sight of America. He thought of himself as a son of America, and as such, he felt indebted to her³⁷ For Martí, America began in the Río Grande and ended in the Patagonia. "The Americans", he explained, "are one in origin, hope and danger"³⁸. He considered it a magnificent spectacle to see a continent, made up of so many factors, emerging into compact nations. What was needed was the union of all the Latin Americans. "The spiritual union", he said, "is indispensable to the salvation and happiness of the peoples of America"³⁹.

³⁴ Philip S. Forner: *A History of Cuba*. New York, International Publishers, 1963; Vol. II, p. 335.

³⁵ «La conferencia monetaria», *Op. cit.*

³⁶ Letter to Gerardo Castellanos, August 4, 1892, *Epistolario*, Vol. 2, p. 120, as quoted in Manuel I. Méndez: *Martí: Estudio crítico-biográfico*. La Habana, 1941; p. 145.

³⁷ Letter to Fausto Theodore de Aldrey, July 1881, *Epistolario*, Vol. 1, pp. 71-73.

³⁸ Letter to Pío Vázquez, July 1893. *Obras Completas*, Vol. 19, p. 201.

³⁹ Speech About Bolívar, New York, 1893. *Diccionario*, p. 67.

Martí was an advocate of everything that was American. American ideas and institutions had to be the foundation on which the future would be built. American men were needed to eradicate the vices inherited from colonial times and the American past had to be studied carefully. "The history of America", he wrote, "from the Incas on up to today, should be taught very conscientiously"⁴⁰.

Martí had seen the political chaos and confusion of the emerging Latin American nations and the ambitions of *caudillos*, who sacrificed the interest of the people in their desire to remain in power. He had witnessed the political confusion and foreseen the difficulties Cuba was to be faced with. His writings were not a mere rhetorical exercise, but a lively lesson for his contemporaries and future generations.

Each one of his ideas encompassed a moral teaching, directed toward making a better man. Martí fulfilled the concept of the man he had advocated. His dedication to the cause of Cuban independence, his love and faith in humanity, and his honest and sincere life, rank him very high among the founders of America.

⁴⁰ Article in *El Partido Liberal*. México, January 1891. *Diccionario*, p. 65.