

Cuban President pays homage to poet Bonifacio Byrne on his 160th birthday anniversary



Bonifacio Byrne

Cuban poet Bonifacio Byrne

Havana, March 3 (RHC) –President Miguel Díaz-Canel paid homage Wednesday to Cuban poet Bonifacio Byrne, author of the emblematic poem 'Mi bandera' (My Flag), on the 160th anniversary of his birth.

Writing on his Twitter account, Diaz-Canel revisited the patriotic verses:

“Can't you see it? That's my flag

that has never been mercenary,

**and on which shines a star,
brighter as it stands alone.”**

A poet and playwright, Byrne was born on March 3rd, 1861, in Matanzas. In 1890, he founded the newspapers The Morning and The Liberal Youth. In 1896, he had to emigrate to the United States for political reasons. While in exile, he continued his pro-independence activities, founding the Revolutionary Club in Tampa. During that period, he wrote regularly for the newspaper Patria --the official publication of the Cuban Revolutionary Party founded by José Martí in 1892.

Bonifacio Byrne wrote the poem ‘Mi bandera’ (My Flag) as he was returning to Cuba in 1899 after the Spanish-American War. From the deck of his ship he saw the Cuban and U.S. flags flying together over Morro Castle, a sight which every Cuban patriot would regard then or now with sadness and indignation.

Supporters of the Cuban Revolution value the poem as a necessary lesson in patriotism for all those, who believe that Cuba's freedom can only be obtained with the permission and by the gracious concession of the United States.

“With the faith of stern souls

I say in my loudest voice

that two flags should not stand

in the rightful place of just one: mine!”

Although ‘Mi bandera’ (My Flag) is his best known literary work, he wrote several other poetry books, among them ‘Eccentric’ (1893), ‘Effigies. Patriotic sonnets’ (1897) and ‘Poems’ (1903). He also wrote theater pieces, notably ‘The Anonymous’ (1905) and ‘Sunbeam’ (1911).

Bonifacio Byrne died on July 5th, 1935 in his native Matanzas.

In October 1959, months after the triumph of the Cuban Revolution, Commander Camilo Cienfuegos delivered his last speech to the people. He then resumed Bonifacio Byrne’s patriotic verses to illustrate Cubans’ strong stance against any foreign interference in our country’s affairs.

“If into tiny pieces

my flag is one day torn ...

our dead will raise their arms

and will defend it once again!”

<https://www.radiohc.cu/en/noticias/cultura/249508-cuban-president-pays-homage-to-poet-bonifacio-byrne-on-his-160th-birthday-anniversary>



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