

*Camilo: In the hearts of the  
people*

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By María Josefina Arce

"...A big smile and a big heart." This is how intellectual Mirta Aguirre referred in her poem Portrait to Commander Camilo Cienfuegos, one of the most beloved personalities of our history for the Cuban people.

The Lord of the Vanguard, as he was baptized by the Argentine-Cuban guerrilla Ernesto Che Guevara, summarized in his figure and actions all the idiosyncrasy of the Cuban, from his joy and simplicity to his fearlessness and courage.

Camilo was a man of the people, of that people that every October 28 throws flowers into the sea and rivers to pay tribute to him on a new anniversary of his physical disappearance, which occurred a few months after the revolutionary triumph of January 1959 when he was returning from the province of Camagüey.

For many days the people, shocked by the news, searched for the plane in which the beloved revolutionary, who in his short life was an example of loyalty and commitment to the independence of our country, was traveling.

Camilo was one of the 82 expeditionaries of the Granma yacht, which after an eventful voyage from Mexico reached the eastern coasts of the Cuban territory on December 2, 1956 and began the guerrilla struggle against the bloody and surrendering dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista.

In the Sierra Maestra and in the plains he distinguished himself for his courage and daring. He starred in relevant events of the revolutionary epic such as the capture of the town of Yaguajay, in what is now Santi Spiritus province.

With Che and the historical leader of the Cuban revolution, Fidel Castro, he would forge an intense and beautiful friendship. He was one of the few who could make jokes to the Argentine-Cuban guerrilla fighter, while Fidel Castro would unhesitatingly ask him for advice.

As a self-sacrificing fighter who always made sacrifice an instrument to temper his character and forge that of the troops, he was described by his friend and fellow fighter, Che.

Perhaps it was fate that these two great revolutionaries and distinguished figures of the Cuban revolution left us physically, although in different years, in the month of October, in which the people of the Caribbean nation pay them a heartfelt tribute.

They were two greats of history, who dedicated their lives to a just cause, the freedom of Cuba, and who today more than ever are in every Cuban who with their efforts works for the welfare of the country and defends its sovereignty.

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