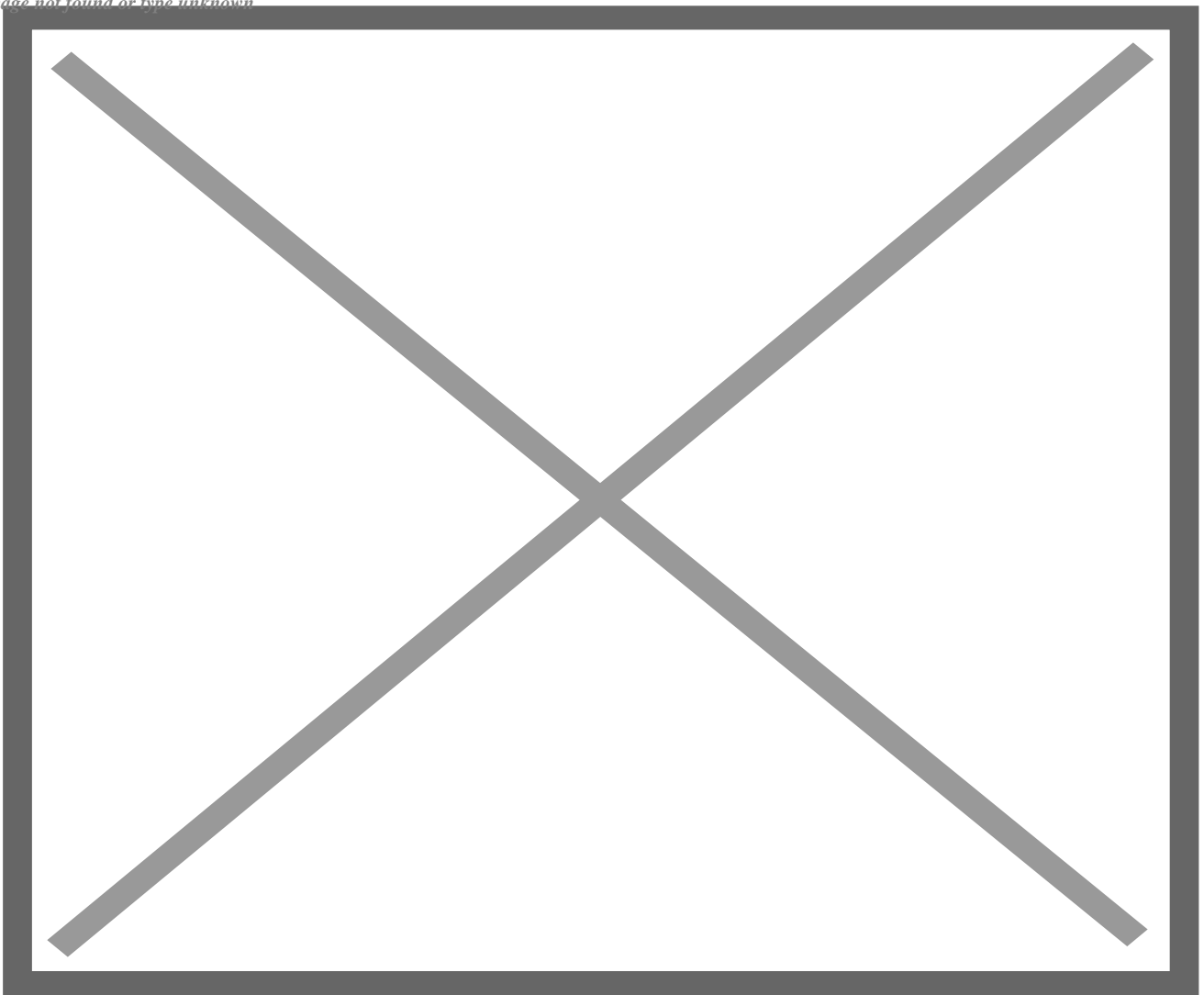


Cuba commemorates the 130th anniversary of José Martí's death in combat

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Havana, May 19 (RHC) -- Cuba pays tribute today to National Hero José Martí on the 130th anniversary of his death in combat during the island's struggle for independence from Spanish colonial rule.

Known as the Apostle, Martí was a distinguished thinker, recognized for his journalistic work and as a poet, a legacy captured in texts such as *The Golden Age* (1878-1882), *Simple Verses* (1891), and *Our America* (1891).

He was the founder of the Cuban Revolutionary Party and an organizer of the Cuban War of Independence, an offensive against Spanish rule in which the maestro fell in combat on Sunday, May 19, 1895, in Dos Ríos.

Also known as "the most universal of Cubans," Martí lost his life when, in his first confrontation, he was hit by a fierce volley of enemy rifle fire, sustaining several wounds.

Despite the recommendation of the General-in-Chief of the Liberation Army, Máximo Gómez, that he remain in the rearguard, Martí marched to the front accompanied by his aide, as his ethics and sense of duty did not allow him to lag behind those he had summoned to combat.

Martí's body was identified and recovered by the enemy, who retreated under constant attacks from Cubans determined to recover it. He was buried in the nearby town of Remanganaguas.

His remains were finally interred in the necropolis of Santa Ifigenia, in Santiago de Cuba, in the east.

In a letter written by the Apostle of Cuban independence to his Mexican friend Manuel Mercado, the day before his death in combat, he said:

"I am now in danger every day of giving my life for my country and for my duty (...) to prevent, in time, with the independence of Cuba, the United States from expanding into the Antilles and falling, with that additional force, upon our lands in the Americas."

In the letter, left unfinished due to the arrival of General Bartolomé Masó and his troops at the camp, Martí stated that "everything I have done until today, and will do, is for this purpose," referring to his concern about the danger that Washington represented for the region.

The letter has been considered by scholars of the National Hero as his political testament, and it demonstrates his marked anti-imperialist character and his opposition to annexationist movements.

More than a century after his death, José Martí remains a central figure in Cuba's collective historical memory and an intellectual reference for humanity.

These days, various initiatives are being organized in Cuba and other countries around the world to commemorate the life and work of the Apostle.

[SOURCE: PRENSA LATINA]

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