

THE FRUIT THAT DID NOT FALL

Cuba found itself forced to fight for its existence against an expansionist power located a few miles off its coast that had declared the annexation of our island and that believed our destiny was to fall into their lap like a piece of ripe fruit. We were condemned to cease to exist as a nation.

Jose Marti was among the glorious legion of patriots who throughout the second half of the 19th century fought against the loathsome colonialism brandished by Spain for 300 years. Marti most clearly foresaw such a dramatic destiny and expressed this view in the last lines he would write prior to engaging in tough combat against a well-equipped and battle-hardened Spanish column. He declared that the primary objective of his struggles were "... preventing in time, by Cuba's independence, that the United States should expand through the Antilles and pounce with that added strength on our lands of America. Everything that I have done up to now and will do in the future shall be done for this purpose."

Today one cannot be a patriot or a revolutionary without thoroughly understanding this profound truth.

Without a doubt, the mass media, the monopoly of technical resources, and the substantial funds earmarked for misleading and making the masses mindless today represent considerable but not insurmountable obstacles.

Cuba showed that —despite being a factory of Yankee colonialism with widespread illiteracy and generalized poverty— it was possible to stand up to the country that threatened to definitively takeover the Cuban nation. No one can argue that at the time there was a national bourgeoisie that was opposed to the empire. In fact, the Cuban bourgeoisie at the time had developed such close ties to the empire that, shortly following the triumph of the Revolution, it sent 14,000 unprotected children to the United States based on the horrendous lie that Cuba was to abolish parental authority. History would come to remember this event as Operation Peter Pan and as one of the worst manipulations of children for political ends ever recorded in the Western Hemisphere.

Barely two days after the triumph of the Revolution the national territory was invaded by mercenary forces —made up of former Batista soldiers and sons of landowners and the bourgeoisie— armed and escorted by the United States with ships from the US Navy fleet including aircraft carriers with equipment ready for action. The defeat and capture of almost the entire force of mercenaries in less than 72 hours, and the destruction of their planes that were operating out of Nicaraguan bases and naval transportation means, represented a humiliating defeat for the empire and their Latin American allies who had underestimated the Cuban people's capacity to fight.

Responding to the stoppage of oil supplies from the US, the previous total suspension of traditional Cuban sugar quotas in the US market, and the ban on trade in place for more than 100 years, the USSR began to supply fuel, to buy our sugar, to trade with our country and, finally, to supply the arms that Cuba could not acquire in other markets.

The idea of a systematic campaign of pirate attacks organized by the CIA, sabotages and military actions by groups created and armed by the US, before and after the mercenary attack and that would culminate with the United States' military invasion of Cuba, gave rise to the events that pushed the world to the brink of total nuclear war that no sides or even humanity itself would have survived.

Those events no doubt cost Nikita Jruschov his job. He had underestimated his adversary, ignored opinions and information, and did not consult his final decision with those of us who were in the frontline. What could have been a significant moral victory became a costly political setback for the

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USSR. For many years the US continued to commit the worst crimes against Cuba and many, such as its criminal blockade, are still carried out today.

Jruschov made extraordinary gestures to our country. At the time I did not hesitate in strongly criticizing the agreement reached with the United States without consultation. But it would be ungrateful and unjust to not acknowledge his extraordinary solidarity at difficult and decisive junctures for our people in their historic battle for independence and their revolution in face of the powerful US empire. I understand that the situation was extremely tense and that he did not want to lose a minute when he made his decision to remove the missiles and the Yankees, very secretly, agreed to not carry out their invasion.

Despite all the decades that have passed and make up more than half a century, the Cuban fruit has not fallen into Yankee hands.

Current news from Spain, France, Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran, Syria, England, the Malvinas and several other parts of the planet are serious and all foretell political and economic disaster due to the foolhardiness of the United States and its allies.

I will limit myself to just a few topics. I must point out that the campaign to select a Republican candidate as the possible future president of this globalized and far-reaching empire has become —I say this in all seriousness— the greatest competition of idiocy and ignorance that has ever been heard. But as I have things to do, I cannot dedicate any time to this topic. I knew it would be like this.

I prefer to analyze some other press dispatches that show the incredible cynicism generated by the decadence of the West. One of these reports, with amazing tranquility, tells the story of a Cuban “political prisoner” who, according to the article, died after a 50-day hunger strike. A journalist from Granma, Juventud Rebelde, radio or any other [Cuban] news agency might make a mistake writing on any given topic, but they would never make up a news story and fabricate a lie.

The article published in Granma confirms that the 50-day hunger strike did not take place. The prisoner was in jail for committing a common crime and sentenced to four years for an assault that left his wife’s face battered. The man’s own mother-in-law went to the police to request their help. All family members were aware of all the procedures taken regarding the medical care he received and were thankful of the efforts carried out by the specialist doctors who attended him. The article goes on to say that he received care at the best hospital in eastern Cuba, as any other citizen would have received. He died as a result of secondary multiple organ failure associated with an acute respiratory infection.

The patient had received all the available medical care from a country that possesses one of the best medical systems in the world and that provides these services free-of-charge, despite the empire’s blockade against our country. It simply represents a duty in a country where the Revolution proudly respects, as it always has for more than 50 years, the principles that gave it its invincible force.

Given their excellent relations with Washington, it would be best if the Spanish government went to the United States to take a look at what happens in Yankee prisons, their ruthless treatment of millions of prisoners, their electric chair policy, and the horrors committed against prisoners and public protesters.

On Monday, January 23, Granma published a full-page, hard-hitting editorial entitled Cuba’s Truths. The article details the exceptional degree of shamelessness in the latest campaign of lies launched against our Revolution by some governments “traditionally committed to anti-Cuban subversion.”

Our people are well aware of the standards that have governed over the irreproachable conduct of our Revolution since the first combat and that has never been sullied throughout more than half a century. They also know that they can never be pressured or blackmailed by their enemies. Our laws and regulations will invariably be abided by.

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This is worthwhile to point out with total clarity and openness. The Spanish government and the beat-up European Union, in the midst of an acute economic crisis, should know what to abide by. It is a disgrace to read declarations from both regions in news reports that are full of shameless lies attacking Cuba. Try to save the Euro first if you can, try to resolve chronic unemployment that increasingly affects young people, and respond to the indignados who have only received attacks and constant beatings from the police.

We cannot ignore that those who currently govern in Spain are admirers of Franco, who sent members of the Blue Division along with SS and SA Nazis to kill Soviets. Close to 50,000 of them participated in the bloody attacks. In the most cruel and painful operation of that war, the Leningrad Blockade where one million Russian citizens died, the Blue Division were part of the forces that attempted to strangle the heroic city. The Russian people will never forgive that horrendous crime.

The rightwing fascists led by Aznar, Rajoy and other servants of the empire must know about the 16,000 fatalities suffered by their predecessors of the Blue Division and the Iron Crosses that Hitler awarded the officials and soldiers of that division.

It is not a surprise then to see how the Gestapo police are treating the Spanish men and women who demand the right to work and bread in the country with the highest unemployment in Europe.

Why do the mass media outlets of the empire lie so shamelessly?

Those who control those media outlets are determined to deceive and make the world mindless with their gross lies, maybe believing that they represent the main recourse necessary to maintain the global system of domination and plunder, especially against those victims close to the mother country —the close to 70 million Latin Americans and Caribbean people who live in this hemisphere.

The fraternal republic of Venezuela has become one of the main targets of this policy. The reason is obvious. Without Venezuela, the empire would have imposed its Free Trade Agreement on all of the people of the continent living south of the United States; an area that holds the planet's largest reserves of land, fresh water and minerals as well as great energy resources, which, when managed in solidarity with the other people in the world, constitutes resources which cannot and must not fall into the hands of transnationals that impose a suicidal and despicable system.

It is enough, for example, to look at the map to understand the criminal dispossession carried out against Argentina of a piece of its territory in the far south. In the Malvinas, the British employed their decadent military apparatus to assassinate inexperienced Argentine recruits dressed in summer clothing in the middle of winter. The United States and their ally Augusto Pinochet shamelessly supported England in this endeavor. Currently, with the London Olympics on the horizon, British Prime Minister David Cameron is once again proclaiming, as did Margaret Thatcher, his right to use nuclear submarines to kill Argentines. The British government is unaware that the world is changing and that the disdain felt in our hemisphere by the majority of the people against the oppressors is growing with each day.

The case of the Malvinas is not alone. Does anyone know how the conflict in Afghanistan will end? A few days ago US soldiers committed outrages against the bodies of Afghani combatants, killed by NATO drone aircraft.

Three days ago a European news agency published an article stating that Afghani President Hamid Karzai gave his support of a negotiated peace settlement with the Taliban, stressing that it must be resolved by citizens in his country. Hamid Karzai added that the peace and reconciliation process belongs to the Afghani nation and that no foreign country or organization can take away this right from Afghanis.

An article in the Cuban press written in Paris reported, "Today France suspended all its military training

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and support operations in Afghanistan and threatened to move up the date for the withdrawal of its troops after an Afghani soldier killed four French military officers in the Taghab valley in the province of Kapisa...Sarkozy gave instructions to Defense Minister Gerard Longuet to immediately travel to Kabul, and warned of the possibility of an early withdrawal of troops.”

When the USSR and the Socialist Camp disappeared, the United States government thought that Cuba would not be able to support itself. George W. Bush had already prepared a counterrevolutionary government to preside over our country. The same day that Bush began his criminal war against Iraq, I requested that our authorities stop with the policy of tolerance towards the counterrevolutionary leaders in Cuba that had been hysterically calling for an invasion of Cuba. In reality, their actions constituted an act of treason against the Homeland.

Bush and his stupidities reigned for eight years at a time when the Cuban Revolution had already lasted for more than half a century. The ripe fruit has never fallen into the lap of the empire. Cuba will never become another force used by the empire to expand over the people of the Americas. Marti's blood will not have been shed in vain.

Tomorrow I will publish another Reflection article to complement this one.

Fidel Castro Ruz
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