



Chronology of events in José Martí's life

1853

January 28: José Julián Martí y Pérez is born in Havana. His parents, Mariano Martí and Leonor Pérez, were Spaniards; his father came from Valencia, and his mother, from the Canary Islands.

1865

Martí begins studying at the Havana Municipal Boys School with Rafael María de Mendive, a teacher who greatly influences his sense of patriotism.

1868

October 10: The Ten Years War begins against the Spanish colonial power in Cuba.

1869

January 19: Martí has his first political essay published in the single-edition *El Diablo Cojuelo* (*The Crippled Devil*), followed shortly by his own newspaper *La Patria Libre* (*Free Homeland*), which made only one appearance, publishing his dramatic poem "Abdala."

October 21: Martí is arrested and sent to the National Prison, accused of treason. A few days earlier, a group of Spanish Volunteer troops had searched the house of a friend (Fermín Valdés Domínguez) and had found a compromising letter, accusing a former fellow student for "apostasy" for enlisting in the Spanish armed forces. The letter was signed by Martí and Valdés Domínguez, who is subsequently imprisoned for six months.

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1870

March 4: Martí is condemned to six years' hard labor and sent to work in a prison quarry.

August–December: His parents manage to get his sentence commuted to exile—which he began on the Isle of Pines—and then obtain permission for him to live in Spain.

1871

February: Martí arrives in Madrid, after spending a few days in Cádiz. He publishes his short work, *El presidio político en Cuba* (*Political Prison in Cuba*).

May 31: He enrolls in several courses at Madrid's Central University.

November 27: Eight medical students in Havana are shot for protesting against Spanish colonial rule. This has a profound effect on Martí's view of Spain and Cuba's struggle for independence. He writes an ode about the event.

1873

February 15: Martí's short essay "La República española ante de la Revolución cubana" ("The Spanish Republic and the Cuban Revolution") is published as a pamphlet in Madrid.

May: He moves to Zaragoza and enrolls in the Literary University while continuing his other studies.

1874

June–October: During this period, Martí obtains a Bachelor of Civil and Canon Law and Doctoral Degree of Philosophy and Humanities with exceptional grades.

December 1874–February 1875: He travels from Spain to Mexico, stopping over in Paris, Le Havre, Liverpool, New York (where he stays 11 days), Havana, Progreso, Campeche and Veracruz.

1875

February: Martí arrives in Mexico City, where he is reunited with his parents and sisters and meets Manuel Mercado.

May: He becomes a member of the editorial staff of the *Revista Universal*, a newspaper on which he has worked since March.

December 19: His short play *Amor con amor se paga* (*Love Must Be Repaid with Love*) has its first performance.

1876

February 20: Martí begins to work on *El Socialista*, organ of the Great Workers' Circle of Mexico (GCOM).

June: The Workers' Hope (EE) society, whose headquarters were in the capital, names him a representative to the first workers' congress ever held in Mexico, although there is no documentation on his participation.

December 29: He leaves Mexico shortly after General Porfirio Díaz takes power through a bloody civil war.

1877

January–April: Martí arrives in Havana clandestinely, then goes on to Progreso and to Guatemala.

April: He begins teaching at the Normal School in Guatemala.

May 29: He is appointed as a professor at the university of French, English, Italian and German literature.

December 20: Martí returns to Mexico City, where he marries Carmen Zayas Bazán. He also publishes his pamphlet *Guatemala* there.

1878

February 10: The Zanjón Pact is signed in Cuba, ending the Ten Years War and allowing exiles to return to the island.

April 6: Martí resigns from the Normal School in protest against the arbitrary removal of its principal José María Izaguirre. This is his last public opposition to the policies of Guatemalan President Justo Rufino Barrios.

July–August: He travels to Honduras and then to Havana.

October: He immerses himself in the conspiracies of the clubs in Havana attached to the Cuban Revolutionary Committee (CRC), which is based in New York.

November 22: His only son, José Francisco, is born.

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1879

March 18: The Central Revolutionary Club (CCR) is founded in a meeting of conspirators in Havana, and Martí is elected Vice-President.

June: The Cuban Revolutionary Committee names Martí as its deputy delegate on the island.

August 24-25: The so-called Little War of Independence begins in Santiago de Cuba.

September 17: Martí is arrested and accused (without process of law) of being linked to the insurreccional movement.

September-December: He is deported to Spain, from where he leaves clandestinely for France and then New York.

1880

January 9: A few days after his arrival in New York, the Cuban Revolutionary Committee resolves to make Martí one of its directors.

March 26: He becomes acting Chairman of the Committee when General Calixto García, its Chairman, leaves for Cuba. General García is taken prisoner in August, and the war ends unsuccessfully.

1881

January: Martí travels from New York to Caracas, Venezuela.

February-March: He works as a teacher in the Santa María and Villegas schools.

June: He contributes to *La Opinión Nacional* in Caracas.

July 1: The first issue of *Revista Venezolana* (*Venezuelan Magazine*), which Martí finances and edits, is published. After the second issue of the publication is distributed, General Antonio Guzmán Blanco, President of Venezuela, accuses Martí of interfering in the internal affairs of the country and orders him to leave Venezuela.

August 20: From New York, he writes what is considered to be his first feature article for *La Opinión Nacional*.

1882

April: Martí's book of poems *Ismaelillo*, written in Caracas, is published in New York.

July 15: He writes his first feature article for *La Nación* of Buenos Aires.

July 20: Martí asks Generals Máximo Gómez and Antonio Maceo to help organize the pro-independence forces and oppose those who seek Cuba's annexation to the United States.

1883

March: Martí begins to work on *La América* magazine. The following year, he becomes its editor.

1884

October 10: Martí's first public speech in New York commemorating the beginning of Cuba's first War of Independence in 1868.

October 20: Martí writes to General Máximo Gómez explaining that he is withdrawing his support for the revolutionary activities of Generals Gómez and Maceo—whom he had joined as soon as they reached New York—because he is concerned that they are putting personal aims ahead of the interests of the movement.

1885

His novel *Amistad funesta* (*Ill-Fated Friendship*) is published (as Adelaida Ral) as a serial in *El Latino Americano* of New York.

1886

May 15: Martí sends in his first feature article to *El Partido Liberal* of Mexico.

1887

April 16: Martí is appointed Uruguay's Consul in New York.

October 10: He gives a speech to pro-independence emigrés, one of many on this anniversary of the "Cry of Yara" in 1868.

November 30: He is elected Chairman of the Executive Committee that was set up to organize revolutionary activities by emigrés and Cubans on the island. (Five months later, he acknowledges that no significant advances had been made.)

1889

March 25: The daily New York *Evening Post* publishes Martí's "Vindication of Cuba," a letter replying to two anti-Cuban articles that had appeared in the U.S. press. He includes both of those articles and his reply in a pamphlet, *Cuba y los Estados Unidos* (*Cuba and the United States*), which he translated and for which he wrote the introduction.

July: The first issue of *La Edad de Oro* (*The Golden Age*), a magazine for children of the Americas, appears. In the following months, he put out three more issues.

September 28: He writes his first feature article about the Pan American Congress, which is to begin in Washington on October 2. He warns of the expansionist designs of the United States in Latin America—a theme he develops in his address to the Latin American literary society ("Mother America") in December.

1890

January: Along with Rafael Serra, Martí founds *La Liga* (The League) in New York for the education and advancement of black Cuban workers in that city.

July 24: Martí is named Consul of the Argentine Republic in New York. A week later, he also becomes Paraguay's Consul.

1891

January 1: Martí publishes his important essay "Nuestra América" ("Our America") in *La Revista Ilustrada* of New York.

February–April: As Uruguay's delegate, Martí attends the sessions of the American International Monetary Commission and actively defends the rights of Latin America.

October 11: He resigns as the Consul of the Republics of Argentina, Uruguay and Paraguay.

October: His *Versos sencillos* (*Simple Verses*) is published.

November 26 and 27: Martí travels to Florida and gives important speeches at meetings of Cuban exiles. He joins the Patriotic Cuban League.

November 28: In the farewell that the exiles in Tampa give him, the resolutions drafted by Martí, which seek to unify the Cubans revolutionary movement, are approved.

1892

January 5: The Cuban Revolutionary Party is formed with aims and statutes which Martí had written and discussed with the leaders of the main organizations in Key West.

March 14: The first issue of *Patria*, which Martí financed and edited, appears. As the voice of the Cuban Revolutionary Party, its goal is to promote the cause of Cuban independence.

April 8: Martí is elected a delegate of the Cuban Revolutionary Party. He is reelected in each of the next three years.

April 10: The Cuban Revolutionary Party is proclaimed in Key West, Tampa and New York.

July 3: Martí begins the first of many trips to places where the Cuban emigrés live, doing intensive organizational work.

September 11: In La Reforma, Santo Domingo, Martí meets with General Máximo Gómez, who will be commander-in-chief of the war for independence.

1893

May: Martí clarifies the Cuban Revolutionary Party's position on the armed uprising in Cuba, which the Party had not ordered.

July: He meets General Antonio Maceo in Costa Rica after having conferred with Gómez in Montecristi, Santo Domingo, some days earlier.

1894

April 8: Martí meets with Gómez in New York.

June: He visits Costa Rica and exchanges views with Generals Antonio and José Maceo concerning war preparations.

July-August: He goes to Mexico seeking political and financial support.

December 8: Martí writes and cosigns—with Commander Enrique Collazo, representative of the conspirators on the island, and Colonel José María Rodríguez, on behalf of General Gómez—the *Fernandina* Plan for an uprising, which he sends to Cuba.

1895

January: A traitor alerts U.S. authorities, who seize both the ships that were to have taken the expeditionaries to Cuba and their supplies and equipment, thus frustrating the *Fernandina* Plan.

January 29: From New York Martí sends the order for the uprising to the island.

February 7: He arrives in Montecristi, Santo Domingo, where he meets with General Gómez.

February 24: Cuba's War of Independence begins.

March 25: Martí and Gómez sign the Manifesto of Montecristi.

April 9: Martí and a small group of revolutionaries set out by boat for Cuba.

April 11: After many vicissitudes, Martí manages to land at Playita, in the eastern part of the island, together with Generals Máximo Gómez and Francisco Borrero, Colonel Angel Guerra, César Salas and Marcos del Rosario.

April 15: General Gómez informs Martí that the Chiefs of Staff have resolved to recognize him as Cuban Revolutionary Party Delegate and to give him the rank of Major-General in the Liberation Army.

May 2: Martí writes a manifesto in the form of a letter to the editor of the *New York Herald*, which he and Gómez sign.

May 18: He writes his last letter (to Manuel Mercado) which he never completes.

May 19: Martí is fatally wounded in his first armed combat against enemy troops at Dos Ríos, Oriente Province.

Introduction

José Martí (1853–1895) was a revolutionary writer in every sense of the word. Born of Spanish parents in colonial Cuba, he witnessed the oppressive measures imposed on the island by the Spanish colonial administration. Early in his life he made the decision to fight for the liberation of his country and similarly oppressed Antillean peoples. But Martí was not merely a political revolutionary: he was a revolutionary in literature who gave expression to the emerging ideas and emotions of a modernizing world in a language and style that perplexed and fascinated many of his contemporaries. Manuel Gutiérrez Nájera (1859–1895), for example, wrote of the Cuban that at times he could not follow his ideas, “because his ideas have sturdy wings, strong lungs, and rise inordinately ... [in his] magical style we lose ourselves from time to time, like Reynaldo in the garden of Armida...”

Martí's conscious resolve to devote himself to revolutionary political and literary ideals became clear shortly after the first Cuban war against Spain (1868). During this period he participated in the publication of clandestine newspapers and circulars, including *El Diablo Cojuelo* (*The Crippled Devil*), and later, *La Patria Libre* (*Free Homeland*). In the latter, in 1869, he published a dramatic poem, “Abdala,” in which the main character sacrifices his life to defend his country against its oppressors. For a while the colonial regime took no action against Martí; but in 1869, when he and a friend, Fermín Valdés Domínguez, signed a letter questioning the political behavior of one of their classmates, Martí was accused of treason against the Spanish colonial regime. He was tried and condemned to six years' hard labor in the quarries of San Lázaro in Havana.

The San Lázaro experience is recorded in a political essay “Political Prison in Cuba,” published in 1871, that is both moving and revealing: moving, because it records an adolescent's reaction