

# *Another encounter between sisters and brothers*



**A new encounter between sisters and brothers**

By María Josefina Arce

Once again the Juan Rius Rivera Solidarity Brigade is among us with its invaluable support, coming from Puerto Rico, that sister Latin American nation, indissolubly linked to the history of Cuba.

Year after year, the Brigade travels to Cuban territory, defying the framework of laws of the criminal economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by the United States against the Cuban people, possessing the independence spirit of the patriot that gives it its name.

Rius Rivera was the highest-ranking Puerto Rican military officer in the Cuban Liberation Army in its struggle for independence from the Spanish colonial empire.

On this occasion, some 100 members of the brigade traveled to our country to participate in various activities and will be with the Cubans in the celebration of July 26, the 69th anniversary of the assaults on the Moncada and Carlos Manuel de Céspedes Barracks, in eastern Cuba.

Despite restrictions and threats, nearly two thousand Puerto Ricans have visited Cuba on the different contingents, in a brave gesture of solidarity with the archipelago, which has also contributed to make visible the hostile policy of the United States towards Cubans and the achievements in various spheres of the revolution.

The brigade has accompanied Cuba since its constitution more than three decades ago in its struggle against the economic siege. Its support for the international campaign for the release of the five anti-terrorist fighters, arrested in 1998 on U.S. soil for monitoring the criminal actions of groups of Cuban origin, based in the city of Miami, was also highlighted.

Cuba and Puerto Rico have marched together in the struggle for their emancipation. The Cuban independence heroes always spoke out for the freedom of the neighboring nation, which contributed to our struggle against Spain in the 19th century.

After the revolutionary triumph of January 1959, the historical leader Fidel Castro, loyal to Martí's ideology, made clear his support for the land of Puerto Rico. Thus he expressed: "... as long as there is a Puerto Rican who defends the idea of independence, as long as there is one, we have the moral and political duty to support the idea of Puerto Rican independence...".

And Cuba has always accompanied that sister nation, a colony of the United States since 1898, which tries to hide that reality under the misleading term of Commonwealth.

Since 1972, Cuba has promoted resolutions in favor of the independence of that country in the UN Special Committee on Decolonization, all of them ignored by Washington.

Precisely in 2022 it will be 50 years since the adoption of the first resolution on the colonial issue of Puerto Rico, which throughout all this time has reaffirmed its status as a Latin American and Caribbean nation, with its own unmistakable national identity.

Cubans and Puerto Ricans have marched together for centuries. They have forged an indissoluble relationship. That is why the new visit to our territory of the Juan Rius Rivera Solidarity Brigade is another encounter between brothers, who have mixed their blood on the battlefield.

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