

# *FEU: A tradition of struggle*

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By María Josefina Arce

It is not possible to talk about the revolutionary struggle in Cuba without referring to the FEU, Federación Estudiantil Universitaria, which today, December 20, reaches its centenary with a history of dignity, resistance and a close link with the whole society.

The student leader Julio Antonio Mella would give life to this organization, which during these one hundred years has preserved its emancipatory, anti-imperialist and social justice thinking.

Thus, its members welcomed with enthusiasm and great commitment the foundation by Mella of the Popular University José Martí, to break the class monopoly of culture. This project contributed to the improvement of the workers and made possible the unity between the working masses and the students.

The FEU has been and is present in important moments of our history. On numerous occasions it took to the streets to defend its rights, the necessary transformation of the university and to denounce the situation of the country, a neocolony of the United States since 1902.

The organization was never oblivious to the political and social situation in Cuba, and many of those young people trained in the classrooms of the university offered their lives for the true independence and sovereignty of the homeland.

Its members were protagonists of transcendental events such as the Assault on the Presidential Palace and the seizure of the Radio Reloj radio station in March 1957. José Antonio Echeverría, president of the FEU at that time, led these actions during the dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista.

After the revolutionary triumph of January 1959, university students were in the Literacy Campaign of 1961 and in Playa Giron defending their conquests from the mercenary invasion of that same year.

Always in the vanguard, they were essential during the COVID 19 pandemic. University students were present in the community-by-community surveys, in the isolation centers and in the support to the elderly to prevent their contagion.

Now in the 100th anniversary of the FEU, in its Tenth Congress they have discussed issues related to the functioning of the organization, teaching and research and international relations.

The meeting was preceded by debates of the young people in the student residences, the different faculties and, for the first time, in the communities to achieve a greater participation in the process of transformation that takes place in those places.

Enthusiasm and joy, but above all commitment to their time and their country defines these young people, who contribute so much to society and who are heirs to a legacy of struggle and resistance of previous generations, who charted the way for a better country.

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