

# SPEECH MADE BY MAJOR JOSÉ MARTINEZ DURING THE 164<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF THE DEATH OF GENERAL JOSÉ DE SAN MARTÍN

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The Liberator had important roles in history. This is why it is important during this event and in this academic context to make a note on his strategic thoughts and their application to the cause of American independence.

In order to understand his work, it is necessary to remember the main aspects of his professional training and the situation that the United Provinces of the Río de la Plata were going through while he was making his plans.

It is widely known that after being born in the City of Yapeyú, San Martín moved to Spain with his family. There, he joined Murcia Regiment as cadet in 1789 when he was 12 years old. By 1791, San Martín received his baptism by fire with his origin unit fighting against the Moors in the north of Africa. His military professional experience continued growing, especially during the war between France and Spain.

It was during this period that, after his outstanding performance, he was promoted. As lieutenant in Murcia Regiment, a new stage in his military training started: combat at sea, on board of Spanish Navy ships during actions against England. This fact is, for most San Martín's

historiographers, the military experience that helped him design a sea- land plan for the Peruvian Independence.

If we also consider his participation in the war of Spain against Portugal in 1801 and 1807 and in the so-called "Independence War" against Napoleon when he came back to his mother country in 1811, the then Lieutenant Colonel San Martín had served for 22 years and experienced six wars.

It is important to add the sound cultural background he acquired during his endless reading and study activities to his military training. His patient activity of collecting books resulted in a personal library of almost 800 books that went with him to Chile and, then, to Peru during the campaign.

The military and political situation of the territories that, until May 25th 1810, were part of the Viceroyalty of



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the Río de la Plata was dangerous. The lack of awareness from the authorities of the Spanish Courts places these provinces in a situation of rebellion, an intolerant situation for the Spanish authorities.

The border with Paraguay was considered safe although it did not acknowledge the successive governments of Buenos Aires. However, Montevideo was increasingly worrying. Its geographical closeness and the support of Portuguese military forces to Spanish authorities in Montevideo implied both a threat and the possibility to get reinforcements from Spain. In Chile, the 1810 September Revolution, which was not already consolidated, made a Spanish intervention possible.

The main threat obviously came from Upper Peru. The need of Spain to recover its former colonies led to various campaigns, between 1810 and 1815, with North-South direction, with uncertain military results that did not make significant changes.

This scenario encouraged San Martín to carry out actions that, due to his military experience and background, were necessary for the independence of the nations involved.

Is this the reason why he came back to the country where he was born? Within this organized frame of action, he proposed the plan, called Continental Plan by history, to his Supreme Director.

This plan, which was a model in its essence and, even more, during its execution, was very valuable as it could change all ideas that up to that moment were implemented to strengthen the purposes of the May Revolution.

After only five years of the independence of the

Viceroyalty of the Río de la Plata, the first San Martín's troops entered the city of Lima. The Peruvian people, gathered in the main square, heard from the General: Peru is, from now on, free and independent due to peoples' will and the justice of their cause...

His liberating campaign ended in this way. However, the following events in his country made it impossible for the General to be present in a place where his compatriots were at fight. Therefore, in February 1824, together with his daughter Mercedes, he went to Europe rejecting all offers for government positions, honor and economic awards.

An austerity life took him through different places in the Old Continent until he set up in Paris. But, in 1848, revolutionary movements in that city made him leave to go to London. Because of his health condition, he stopped in Boulogne Sur Mer, a few kilometres away from Port de Calais.

There, after having fought with his sword for his ideas with unconditional dedication, the Liberator rested until he died. He was a soldier who acted according to his strong ideas and even waiving unthinkable things.

Officers from friendly countries who honour us with your presence: You, as the rest of the people present here, are witnesses of the value that Liberator General San Martín represents for the Independence of America.

We can see his unbreakable faith in the cause he fought for; his persistence, his sacrifice and clarity of thought who made him an outstanding person.

This is our tribute from this simple vocational dedication place and be his legacy part of our present and future.