

JOSÉ ANTONIO ECHEVERRÍA

- Student leader of the FEU,
- Leader of the Revolutionary Directory
- Signatory of the Charter of Mexico
- One of the leaders of the actions of March 13, 1957.

He was born on July 16, 1932 in the city of Cárdenas. From high school he took his first steps in the student struggle. Enrollment in the University in 1950 from the university classrooms begins in the fight against the dictatorship of Carlos Prío. In that same year he was elected delegate of his year at the Faculty of Architecture

In this student center it organizes the so-called Renovation Group in the Faculty of Architecture. At the end of 1951, he organized an act of support for the revolutionary movement that was developing in Puerto Rico.

The coup d'etat of March 10, 1952, surprises him in his hometown. He returns to the University and barricades himself with other students waiting for the weapons promised by Prío. He is part of the students who join the proclamation published by Fidel under the title "Revolución no, Zarpazo" where the coup is condemned and Batista is characterized as an assassin. On April 6, 1952, together with university students, he participated in the symbolic burial of the 1940 Constitution, with which the students demonstrated their opposition to Batista.

He is present at the Torchlight Parade on January 27, 1953 in which the students and youth of the Centennial Generation commemorated the centennial of José Martí's birthday. In the student demonstration held on March 10, 1953, as a condemnation of the first anniversary of the coup, he was arrested and booked by the repressive organs of the dictatorship.

In 1954, he was elected President of the F.E.U. From his position as President of the FEU he launched a call for volunteers to defend the nationalist government of Jacobo Arbenz in Guatemala attacked by the CIA for his nationalist position. The aggression of the Nicaraguan satrap Anastasio Somoza against Costa Rica causes him, along with Fructuoso Rodríguez and Juan P. Carbó to march to that country to face the aggression

He participates in various activities and organizes others aimed at protesting against the electoral farce of 1954 that the Batista government intended to legalize. In February 1955, he created the University Student Directory that adopted a cellular structure and created armed commandos that would protect the protesters. This tactic was used for the first time in the demonstration of December 2, 1955 in Havana and caused the police more than ten wounded including two commanders.

In 1955 he directed student support for the sugar workers' strike movement

In August 1956, he traveled to Mexico in order to meet with Fidel and agree on a joint line of action between the Revolutionary Directorate and the July 26 Movement. This agreement is known by the name of "Pact or Charter of Mexico". This is a step forward in the unity of the revolutionary forces because although it recognizes the operational autonomy of both organizations, it requires cooperation of actions from both and demonstrates the unity of objectives between the two organizations.

As part of the commitment contracted with the people, on March 13, 1957, he organized and carried out the attack on the Presidential Palace and Radio Reloj, thereby attempting to execute the tyrant and to form a revolutionary government. This action immortalizes him and ends the leader's life. In his political will he states:

If we fall, let our blood point the way to freedom. Whether or not our action has the success that we hope for, the shock it will create will make us move forward on the path to victory. But it is the action of the people that will be decisive to achieve it ... "

The death of José Antonio deprived the student body of an experienced leadership and of a consecrated leader, but his effort was not in vain.