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Suggested Readings

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Tribute to Ernesto Che Guevara
40th Anniversary of his Assassination

<http://www.kanaanonline.org/articles/01297.pdf>

*“There are no frontiers in this struggle to the death” ...
“We cannot remain indifferent in the face of what occurs in any part of the
world. A victory for any country against imperialism is our victory, just as any
country’s defeat is our defeat.”
Che*

*“Che’s time is not past -- it is coming”
George Galloway*

A Note from Kana'an

In the last section of this tribute, we included some articles from the imperialist media because we believe that readers should be exposed to such material.

These media have an agenda, though subtle: misinforming and disinforming the public and distorting their awareness of internationalist revolutionaries and the revolutionary struggle throughout the history.

The truth is clear: Che’s legacy today is greater than ever and the inspiration by his ideas and example are more influential in the world and especially Third World countries. Moreover, this influence is increasing parallel to the devastating capitalist and imperialist exploitation of mankind.

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Reflections by Cuban President Fidel Castro

Source: Granma

<http://granma.co.cu/pdf/paginal.pdf>

CHE

I make a halt in my daily struggle to bow my head in respect and gratitude to the exceptional combatant who fell in combat on October 8th, forty years ago; for the example he passed on to us as leader of his Rebel Army Column, crossing the swampy grounds of the former provinces of Oriente and Camagüey, while being chased by enemy troops.

He was the liberator of the city of Santa Clara and the mastermind of voluntary work; he accomplished honorable political missions abroad and served as messenger of militant internationalism in East Congo and Bolivia. He built a new awareness in our America and the world.

I thank him for what he tried and failed to do in his home country, because he was like a flower prematurely severed from its stem.

He left to us his unmistakable literary style. He was elegant, swift and true to every detail of whatever happened to cross his mind. He was a predestinate, but he didn't know it. He still fights with us and for us.

Yesterday, we commemorated the 31st anniversary of the killing of all passengers and the crew of a Cubana airliner blown in mid-air, and we are on the threshold of the tenth anniversary of the cruel and unjust

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imprisonment of the five Cuban anti-terrorist heroes. We likewise bow our heads in respect to them all.

It was with great emotion that I watched and heard the commemoration ceremony on TV.

Fidel Castro Ruz
October 7, 2007
3:17 pm

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Reflexiones del Comandante en Jefe (Espanol)

El Che

Hago un alto en el combate diario para inclinar mi frente, con respeto y gratitud, ante el combatiente excepcional que cayó un 8 de octubre hace 40 años. Por el ejemplo que nos legó con su Columna Invasora, que atravesó los terrenos pantanosos al sur de las antiguas provincias de Oriente y Camagüey perseguido por fuerzas enemigas, libertador de la ciudad de Santa Clara, creador del trabajo voluntario, cumplidor de honrosas misiones políticas en el exterior, mensajero del internacionalismo militante en el este del Congo y en Bolivia, sembrador de conciencias en nuestra América y en el mundo.

Le doy las gracias por lo que trató de hacer y no pudo en su país de nacimiento, porque fue como una flor arrancada prematuramente de su tallo.

Nos dejó su estilo inconfundible de escribir, con elegancia, brevedad y veracidad, cada detalle de lo que pasaba por su mente. Era un predestinado, pero él no lo sabía. Combate con nosotros y por nosotros.

Ayer se cumplió el 31 aniversario de la matanza de los pasajeros y tripulantes del avión cubano hecho estallar en pleno vuelo, y nos adentramos en el décimo aniversario del cruel e injusto encarcelamiento de los cinco héroes antiterroristas cubanos. Ante todos ellos inclinamos igualmente nuestras frentes.

Con mucha emoción vi y escuché por la televisión el acto conmemorativo.

Fidel Castro Ruz

7 de octubre de 2007

3:17 p.m.

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Chronology of Ernesto Che Guevara
AIN Special Service
October 8, 2007

-June 14th, 1928: Born in Rosario, Argentina. Son of Ernesto Guevara Lynch and Celia de la Serna.

-May 2nd, 1930: Before the age of 2, Che suffers his first asthma attack.

-1933: The Guevara family moves to Alta Gracias in the province of Cordoba due to their son's asthma. In 1942, he begins his studies in the Dean Funes National School in Cordoba some 45 kilometres from Alta Gracia.

-In 1946, the family moves to Buenos Aires in an apartment belonging to his paternal grandmother, Ana Isabel. When she falls sick, Ernesto Guevara cares for her for 17 days and after her death, Che announces he would study medicine.

-1947: Enrols in medicine at the University of Buenos Aires.

-October 1950: First trip throughout Latin America.

-December 29th, 1951: on a motorcycle with his friend Alberto Granado to tour South America.

-August 1952: Returns to Buenos Aires. He graduates as a doctor.

-July 7th, 1953: another trip throughout South and Central America accompanied by Carlos "Calica" Ferrer.

-January 3rd, 1954: Meets Cuban Níco Lopez in Guatemala, whom nicknamed Ernesto, Che.

- September 1954: The democratic government of Jacobo Arbenz in Guatemala falls and Guevara travels to Mexico.
- July 1955: He meets Fidel Castro and decides to join the struggle against the Batista dictatorship.
- August 18th, 1955: He marries Hilda Gadea Acosta, a Peruvian economist in Tepetzotlan, Mexico
- February 15th, 1956, Hildita is born. Her godfather is Raul Castro-
- June 1956: A betrayal informs the Mexican police of the preparations of the Cubans and some 30 of them were detained. He spends time in jail.
- November 25th, 1956: Travels on board the Granma yacht with another 81 men headed by Fidel Castro.
- December 2nd, 1956: Landed in Cuba and began the rebel struggle.
- July 21st, 1957: He becomes a Commander of the Rebel Army.
- February 24th, 1958: The first broadcast was launched on Radio Rebelde, created by Che.
- December 28th, 1958: The Ciro Redondo Column 8, under the leadership of Che arrived in the city of Santa Clara from the Sierra Maestra Mountains.
- December 29-31, 1958: Che leads the Battle of Santa Clara which was a hardest blow against Batista.
- January 3rd, 1959: Che enters Havana and sets up headquarters in La Cabaña.
- February 9th, 1959: Che is declared a Cuban citizen.
- June 9th, 1959: He marries Aleida March, member of the July 26th Movement in Santa Clara.
- November 26th, 1959: Is named President of the Cuban National Bank.
- November 24th, 1960: Aleida Guevara is born.

- February 23rd, 1961: Che is named Industry Minister.
- March 20th, 1962: His son Camilo is born.
- August 4th: Che heads a Cuban delegation to the Conference of the Americas in Punta del Este, Uruguay.
- October-November of 1962: He heads the military command in Pinar del Rio during the October Missile Crisis.
- June 14th, 1963: His daughter Celia is born.
- November 5th to the 19th: Visits the Soviet Union and participates in the 47th anniversary of the October Revolution.
- December 11th, 1964: He speaks at the UN General Assembly.
- January of 1965: Travels to China, Mali, Congo, Guinea, Ghana, Benin, Tanzania, Egypt and Algeria.
- March 15th, 1965: Last public appearance: Talks about his trips abroad to members of the Industry Ministry.
- April 1st, 1965: He writes a farewell letter to his parents, sons and daughters and Fidel. Travels to the Congo in July and returns some time later.
- October 3rd, 1965: Fidel makes public Che's farewell letter.
- November 3rd, 1966: Arrives in La Paz and on the 7th in Ñacahuazú. Begins to write his diary.
- March 5th, 1967: First combat with the Bolivian army in Lagunillas.
- March 25th, 1967: Creates the Bolivian National Liberation Army.
- March 27th, 1967: makes public Communiqué No. 1 of the organization in Camiri.
- October 8th, 1967: He becomes a prisoner in El Yuro.

-October 9th, 1967: He is assassinated by Sergeant Mario Terán at 1.30pm in a school in the town of La Higuera.

-October 18th, 1967: Fidel announces his death in Havana's Revolution Square.

-June 12th, 1997: Che's remains and rest of his comrades in arms are identified in Valle Grande.

-October 17th, 1997: Official ceremony when the remains of Che Guevara and his comrades in arms were laid to rest in the Memorial that bears his name in the central city of Santa Clara.

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Che: 'El Commandante came too soon'

By George Galloway

Monday, October 8, 2007

http://www.tehrantimes.com/index_View.asp?code=154467

LONDON (The Independent) -- From Caracas to Cape Town, Chesterfield to Cowdenbeath, one man's admittedly handsome face on a T-shirt tells you more about its wearer than how well he or she fits it. Ernesto "Che" Guevara Lynch, who was murdered by United States agents under orders from Washington 40 years ago, is the face of global rebellion.

He inspires all the more intensely since he could have lived a prosperous bourgeois life as an Argentine dentist. Instead, and despite asthma, he chose a life of action, a motorcycle diarist, a comandante in a triumphant Cuban revolutionary army, a guerrilla leader in the Congo, a martyr in the mountain gullies of Bolivia.

It's true he had a spell as a bank manager -- but it was the governorship of Cuba's revolutionary state bank.

It was the 1950s motorcycle tour that did it. He saw the immiserated wastelands of Latin American, where the poor starved, the

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latifundists larked and the U.S. corporations sucked the blood of South America.

In 1954 he witnessed the overthrow of the reforming Guatemalan government at the behest of the United Fruit Company, run by those scions of the U.S. establishment, the Dulles family. By the time Che Guevara met Fidel Castro a year later he was a rebel.

After, he was a revolutionary. Guevara had absolutely no military background and signed on with Fidel as the rebel “army’s” doctor. In the mountains of eastern Cuba in the late 1950s he became a military leader and a strategist of revolutionary warfare of the first order. It was an old-fashioned ethos: Lead your men (and women) from the front and don’t ask them to do anything you aren’t prepared to do with them.

It was in no small measure due to his military victories that the Cuban Revolution triumphed -- the rebels’ entry into Havana on New Years Day 1959 is memorably recreated in the Godfather II. The Mafiosi and the bordello owners headed for the airport with the barbaric dictator Fulgencio Batista.

Those who would traduce Che, Fidel and the Cuban revolutionaries must say what Cuba would be like now if that dictatorship had held on -- Haiti, the most hellish place in the Western hemisphere is literally not far from Cuba, but metaphorically in a different universe.

By the standards of Cuba’s blood-drenched history, the retribution visited on the dictator’s henchmen was light -- even according to the U.S. ambassador to Havana and the head of the CIA at the time, Alan Dulles.

Che, in particular, defies the right-wing stereotype of the ice-cold, cunning revolutionist. He said that ‘the true revolutionary is guided

by a great feeling of love. It is impossible to think of a genuine revolutionary lacking this quality.'

Even as Cuba, in the grip of the U.S.' embargo, looked to the Soviet Union for support, Che was prepared to criticize the bureaucratism he saw in Moscow.

It's a staple of liberal and conservative cynics that revolutionaries such as Che ineluctably end up mirror images of the monsters they set out to overthrow. No one shatters that lazy cliché more than Che.

Instead of settling down in Havana, he set out to spread revolution in Congo, where the great Patrice Lumumba had been murdered in a UN-supported coup. Nelson Mandela paid tribute to the Cuban role in Africa's liberation struggle. On his release from prison he went to Cuba, rather than any other capital in the world, beneath an illumination of Che's image, Mandela lifted his hands aloft and said: "See how far we slaves have come!."

"There are no frontiers in this struggle to the death," Che told an international conference in 1965. "We cannot remain indifferent in the face of what occurs in any part of the world. A victory for any country against imperialism is our victory, just as any country's defeat is our defeat."

That internationalism, which has become a leitmotif of today's movements, connected him with the masses on every continent. Even the coldest of latter-day Cold Warriors must have been moved by the recent story that a Cuban medical team last year saved the sight of Mario Teran, the Bolivian sergeant who executed Che.

One of the greatest mistakes the U.S. state ever made was to create those pictures of Che's corpse. Its Christ-like poise in death ensured that his appeal would reach way beyond the turbulent

university campus and into the hearts of the faithful, flocking to the worldly, fiery sermons of the liberation theologians.

Which leaves the liberals, who say that they too, as Che put it, ‘. . . tremble with indignation at every injustice,’ but who turn up their noses when the despairing mass of people resort to force against the daily violence of the elite.

They call to mind the admonition of the great black abolitionist Frederick Douglass: ‘Those who profess to favor freedom and yet depreciate agitation... want the ocean without the awful roar of its many waters.... Power concedes nothing without a demand.’

Today, a new generation is struggling for progress -- drawing strength from Hugo Chavez’s Bolivarian revolution, while many of us also remain mindful of the catastrophe that engulfed Allende and the Chilean movement when those who stood in its way were not defanged. To wish Venezuela’s social reforms without Che’s revolutionary steadfastness is to will the first 11 September atrocity -- Santiago, Pinochet, 1973, gunfire drowning the song of a new Chile.

Che’s time is not past -- it is coming. I was struck recently by the remarkable introduction by Lucia Alvarez de Toledo to a compilation of Che’s Bolivian diaries. She met the daughter of the telegaphist in the Bolivian village where Che was taken who had communicated the first written word of his murder.

Toledo writes: “She said she had been there when Guevara had died. She said she was 19 at the time. Then she cast a look around her and said, ‘Look at us. Nothing has changed since then. El Commandante came too soon. We were ignorant and did not understand him... We abandoned him... and here we are just as we were before he came, or maybe even worse.’”

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CHE

40 years of example and unbending commitment to the struggle for human progress

By J Scotlive

On 9 October 1967 Ernesto Che Guevara was executed by a Bolivian army officer at the end of his ill-fated attempt to help foment revolution throughout Latin America.

He was executed at the behest of the CIA, who in their usual misreading of the human spirit and its inextinguishable desire to be free, hoped his death would deal a major blow to the influence of the Cuban Revolution in a part of the world traditionally viewed as America's backyard, there to provide the cheap labour, raw materials, and markets required to maintain the huge profits of US corporations.

But the CIA were wrong, just as successive US administrations have been wrong, in thinking that the ideas for which Che Guevara fought and died could ever be killed with a bullet. The Cuban Revolution continues as a beacon of hope and inspiration for the poor of the undeveloped world. Achievements in the realms of healthcare, education, and science have and continue to astound a world in which the dominant ideology, free market capitalism, has waged an unremitting and determined campaign designed to demonise socialism and socialist ideas. In this, Hollywood has played a key role, with its near total monopoly on film production and, crucially, distribution, churning out film after film designed to reaffirm so-called American values of individualism and the attainment of extreme wealth as the pinnacle of human aspiration, values embodied in the myth of the American dream.

That a tiny island nation with a population of 12 million people, located 90 miles off the coast of Florida, should have the temerity not only to assert its right to independence "both political and economic (on the understanding that you cannot have one without the other)" but also would reject the cultural and ideological hegemony of Rome "i.e. the United States, and could survive for so long, is nothing short of heroic. Che exemplified, and continues to exemplify, the heroism of the Cuban people, and his life and ideas have never been more popular, potent and relevant than they are today.

The legend of Che, for that is what he has come to represent now, a legend, has not only continued unabated since his death, it has grown, grown in parallel with the rise of US imperialism in our time and its countless victims. In every town and every city, from Los Angeles to London, Beirut to Bethlehem, from Nairobi to New Delhi, the iconic image of Che captured by Alexander Korda is as ubiquitous as it is powerful, carried on T-shirts, posters, caps, coffee mugs, carried on a myriad items. It of course doesn't hurt that Che with his movie star looks brought glamour to the concept and meaning of revolution. Yet that is still not enough explain the popularity of the image, even among those living in the relative comfort and luxury of the West. For what the image and the man represents is something transcendent in the human experience, that of an ideal which stands in opposition to the values of self aggrandisement, material success, and blind ambition drummed into us every minute of every day courtesy of advertisers and mainstream entertainment. The antidote to this daily barrage of deadening neoliberal and free market ideology is the ascetic self sacrifice, the primacy of will, and the unshakeable belief in the ability of man to change the course of history and break his chains that the image of Che represents.

A read through his writings today brings home the fierce determination of a man who burned with anger at the injustice, oppression and exploitation suffered by the world's poor. In his address to the United Nations General Assembly in 1964, he said:

“All free men of the world must be prepared to avenge the crime of the Congo. Perhaps many of those soldiers, who were turned into subhumans by imperialist machinery, believe in good faith that they are defending the rights of a superior race. In this assembly, however, those peoples whose skins are darkened by a different sun, coloured by different pigments, constitute the majority. And they fully and clearly understand that the difference between men does not lie in the colour of their skin, but in the forms of ownership of the means of production, in the relations of production.”

Enough that he should deliver such a powerful testament in solidarity with the poor and oppressed of another land, but Che was also a man who lived the principles of internationalism he so eloquently espoused, and he embarked for the Congo a year later in order to give meaning to them, abandoning the relative comfort and status earned him by the success of the Cuban Revolution to risk his life arms in hand like the warrior poet he was.

In a later speech to the Afro-Asian Conference in February 1965, Che offered this admonition:

“There are no borders in this struggle to the death. We cannot be indifferent to what happens anywhere in the world, because a victory by any country over imperialism is our victory, just as any country’s defeat is a defeat for all of us.”

But perhaps his most enduring pronouncement came in his Message to the Tricontinental in 1967. Under the title “Create Two, Three..Many Vietnams”, Che gave his analysis of the world situation as it pertained to the struggle against US imperialism.

“In focusing on the destruction of imperialism, it is necessary to identify its head, which is none other than the United States of America.”

And further on:

“Wherever death may surprise us, let it be welcome if our battle cry has reached even one receptive ear, if another hand reaches out to take up our arms, and other men come forward to join in our funeral dirge with the rattling of machine guns and with new cries of battle and victory.”

Make no mistake, for Che the struggle against imperialism and exploitation could only be won utilising the same kind of force and violence used and utilised without compunction by the oppressor. Not for him non-violence and peaceful protest. His experience, his observation of the poverty and truncated lives suffered by immiserated millions throughout Latin America, Africa, throughout the developing world, instilled in him a rage and a desire to visit retribution on those responsible.

Yet, ironically, this rage, this unbending determination to destroy his enemies, was born of a deep and great love for humanity. It is precisely this love for humanity, for the poor and the oppressed, which continues to lend such power to the Cuban Revolution and, now, to the Bolivarian revolutionary process currently underway in Venezuela with Hugo Chavez at its head. Che’s life and work has inspired Chavez, who in turn has inspired a long awaited and desperately needed shift to the left throughout Latin America. In Bolivia, where Che met his end, Evo Morales has come to power as a champion of the poor and the much maligned indigenous peoples of that tortured land. In Chile, in Ecuador, left leaning governments have also emerged, evidence that Che’ example and devotion to the cause of social and economic justice remains ever present, acting as a guide and a bulwark against that human wrecking machine otherwise known as neoliberalism. And, of course,

the ongoing carnage in Iraq, the brutal occupation of Palestine, such monstrous iniquities would not have gone unchallenged either.

Indeed, given the facts of his life, who could argue that Che would not be calling for all progressive forces wherever they may be in the world to rise up in solidarity with the Iraqi and Palestinian people, calling for the creation of Two, Three! Many Iraqs around the world? Who could argue with that?

Despite such a heroic life and example, there is one incident which sums up more than any speech or article ever could just what Che's sacrifice and the enduring force of the Cuban Revolution he helped inspire means and represents.

In 2006 Mario Teran, an old man living in Bolivia, was treated by Cuban doctors volunteering their services free of charge to Bolivia's poor, just as they have and do to the poor in every corner of the developing world. They performed an operation to remove cataracts from Mario's eyes. It was an operation which succeeded in restoring his sight. Mario Teran is not just any old man.

Mario Teran is the Bolivian army officer who executed Ernesto Che Guevara.

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Thousands March to La Higuera in Tribute to Che Guevara

Source: Granma- Cuba

October 8, 2007

LA PAZ, October 7.-Thousands of people from several countries began a 60 km march to the rural community of La Higuera in southeastern Bolivia on Sunday to participate in a vigil recalling the legendary Argentine-Cuban guerrilla Ernesto Che Guevara 40 years after his murder.

The march began in the town of Vallegrande where an estimated 7,000 people arrived, filling the town with multi-colored tents. Most of them weren't born in 1967 when Guevara led a guerilla movement that lasted nearly nine months in Bolivia.

The vigil is a prelude to the main ceremony set for Monday in which President Evo Morales will participate, said Osvaldo Peredo, one of the organizers of the Second Che Guevara International Conference, which began Friday with cultural presentations, colloquiums, expositions and concerts, reported AP.

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Monday's commemoration takes place at an air strip near Vallegrande where the remains of Che and other comrades were secretly buried until exhumed and repatriated to Cuba in 1997.

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Worldwide Tributes to Che Guevara

Source: Granma- Cuba

October 8, 2007

VALLEGRANDE, Bolivia, October 7.- More than 600 persons that learned how to read and write in this small town in eastern Bolivia are paying tribute to the ideals for which revolutionary Ernesto Che Guevara gave his life, said Cuban Ambassador to Bolivia Rafael Dausa on Monday.

The Cuban diplomat presided over the symbolic graduation of those who had learned how to read and write in Vallegrande, reported Prensa Latina.

Ambassador Dausa was accompanied by a group that included Colonel Leonardo Tamayo, a survivor of Che Guevara's Bolivian guerrilla detachment.

Speaking on behalf of the women that learned how to read and write, Panfila Orellana read a letter crediting the governments of Evo Morales and Fidel Castro for having achieved victory in this battle against ignorance.

According to the Bolivian Ministry of Education, at the end of October the town of Vallegrande will be proclaimed a territory free of illiteracy, joining 40 other territories of the South American nation that have already achieved this success.

Also present were Two Star General Rogelio Acevedo, and Brigade General Enrique Acevedo, both of whom fought with Che in the rebel army against the US backed dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista. Among the Bolivians attending the ceremony were Senator Antonio Peredo, Mining Minister Luis Alberto Echazu and the Mayor of Vallegrande, Ignacio Moron.

Simultaneously, a photo exhibition is on display in Vallegrande with 35 snapshots of Che taken by photographers from the United States, Cuba, Venezuela and Bolivia.

THE HIRED ASSASSINS HAD PURSUED CHE

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The hired assassins of Operation Condor (which spread terror on all political opposition in numerous South American countries in the 1960s, 70s and 80s) participated in the pursuit of Che, states a recently declassified document that was donated in Vallegrande, Bolivia to the Ernesto Che Guevara Foundation.

Paraguayan educator, Martin Almada, a winner of the Alternative Nobel Peace Prize, delivered the document discovered in the archives of the Operation Condor to Oswaldo Chato Peredo, director of the Ernesto Che Guevara Foundation.

Operation Condor imprisoned, assassinated and disappeared some 100,000 people during a coordinated effort by the military dictatorships then in power.

IN OTHER NATIONS

From **Managua**, the capital city of **Nicaragua**, it was reported that President Daniel Ortega saluted the heroic guerrilla fighter during a public meeting that took place in the municipality of El Sauce: Long live Che!, said Ortega during a political-cultural celebration.

Meanwhile, in **Valparaiso, Chile**, a ceremony took place with the participation of Harry Villegas (Pombo) a survivor of Che's guerrilla Bolivia detachment. During the tribute, Guillermo Teiller, President of the Chilean Communist Party, launched an appeal to raise a wave of solidarity all around the world, against the criminal blockade imposed by the United States against Cuba. He also demanded the release of the Cuban Five, serving long sentences in US prisons for gathering information to fight terrorism against their country.

Cubans and Venezuelans joined in the tribute to Che that took place at the Cuban Consulate in Caracas. In Montevideo, Uruguay, a homage turned into a solidarity with Cuba rally, called by the Coordinating Committee in Support of the Cuban Revolution, and the House of Che in that city.

In Russia the figure of the Argentinean-Cuban guerrilla made the newspaper headlines as well as on TV networks. News agencies, international TV channels, newspapers and broadcasting services and newspapers gave coverage

to the commemoration of this important date in Latin America and world history.

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Che's Legacy Looms Larger than Ever

By Patrick J. McDonnell*

Los Angeles Times Staff Writer

Source: Los Angeles Times

<http://www.latimes.com/news/printedition/front/la-fg-che8oct08,1,7824411.story?coll=la-headlines-frontpage>

<http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/world/la-fg-che8oct08,0,2503429,full.story?coll=la-home-center>

It's been 40 years since the militant revolutionary was executed in a Bolivian schoolhouse. To leftist governments across Latin America, he's still a beloved icon.

By Patrick J. McDonnell *
Los Angeles Times Staff Writer

October 8, 2007

LA HIGUERA, Bolivia — It was a long fight, but the Cubans have finally conquered this forlorn Andean hamlet, four decades after Ernesto "Che" Guevara was executed in the adobe schoolhouse here.

Cuban physicians provide healthcare, Cuban educators oversee literacy classes, and the Cuban-donated library features Che-as-superhero comic books. A monumental bust of the beret-topped revolutionary who helped Fidel Castro seize power in Cuba dominates the central plaza.

"Great men like Che never die," said Ubanis Ramirez, one of hundreds of Cuban doctors and teachers imported by leftist Bolivian President Evo Morales, whose office features a likeness of Guevara crafted from coca leaves. "His lesson is with us always."

Sympathizers from across the globe will make the trek to this remote corner of Bolivia this week to mark the 40th anniversary of the capture and killing of Guevara, militant leftist icon and global brand, the radical chic face adorning countless T-shirts, posters, album covers and tattoos.

Today, the ideological legacy of this peripatetic militant may loom larger than ever in Latin America, abetted by the election of a "Pink Tide" of leftist governments from Nicaragua to Argentina. Socialism is in, the Cubans are on the march, and Che is the defiant embodiment of it all.

To his critics, Guevara was a trigger-happy megalomaniac whose bloody example led thousands to their deaths in futile uprisings that only hardened military repression from Guatemala to Chile.

But to the legions of devotees who subscribe to his personality cult, Guevara is forever the doomed idealist, the poetry-loving *guerrillero* and "most complete human being of our age," in the words of Jean-Paul Sartre.

"Our side is moving forward, and we don't have to go to the mountains and fight like Che did anymore," said Osvaldo Peredo, who heads Bolivia's Che Guevara Foundation and lost two brothers in guerrilla wars, one fighting alongside Che.

Cuban doctors and petro-dollars from Hugo Chavez's Venezuela are the new arsenal in a nonviolent insurrection that Guevara, committed to armed struggle, could never have envisioned.

"Finally, Che's dream is coming true," said former Mexican Foreign Minister Jorge Casteñeda, a Guevara biographer who casts Che more as wayward fanatic than inspired visionary. "Cuba's export of revolution is finally succeeding in many countries in Latin America, thanks to Chavez and his oil."

A legendary guerrilla leader in the Cuban Revolution that ousted dictator Fulgencio Batista in 1959, Guevara stumbled in his 1960s struggles. Virtually exiled from Cuba after differing with Castro and Cuba's Soviet patrons, he suffered an ignominious defeat alongside anti-U.S. rebels in Congo before meeting his demise in a secluded Bolivian canyon at the end of a quixotic 11-month campaign.

But, 40 years later, Guevara has scored big in the contested battleground of memory, emerging as a kind of secular saint, freeze-framed at age 39 between the Summer of Love and the abyss of 1968. Hollywood sees box-office cachet in Che: Director Steven Soderbergh is filming a new biopic starring Che look-alike Benicio Del Toro.

"Today Che is associated in the collective conscience with values -- his ethics, his principles, his willingness to lose his life for an ideal," biographer Pacho O'Donnell

wrote recently in the Argentine weekly *Veintitres*.

Guevara, a physician with no formal military training, was also something else, critics say: prolific executioner, dogmatic totalitarian and co-designer of the Cuban police state and indoctrination apparatus.

His detractors contend that his short life may appear to his admirers more James Dean than Chairman Mao, but his politics were more Comrade Stalin than Mahatma Gandhi.

"What's left is a kind of idealistic, romantic aura," said Jorge Lanata, an Argentine journalist who has written about Guevara. "It's more culture than political."

Guevara, keen to ignite "many Vietnams," chose impoverished Bolivia in part because of its proximity to his Argentine homeland, where he hoped to jump-start an insurgency. Today's Cuban volunteers in Bolivia live by the credo "*Seremos como El Che!* (We will be like Che!)" the communist island's signature chant.

"All my life we communist pioneers pledged to be like Che," said Jose Valledaris, 45, a Cuban engineer who was watering shrubbery inside the Guevara mausoleum at a former military airstrip in nearby Vallegrande, where the bodies of Guevara and six fellow combatants were dumped in a ditch 40 years ago and buried. "Now I'm here, in the footsteps of Che."

A renovated laundry shack behind the nearby Señor de Malta Hospital has become one of the most venerated stops on the "Che tour." It was here that the triumphant Bolivian military displayed Guevara's body as a war trophy atop a concrete washtub, and Freddy Alborta photographed the Christ-like figure of the pale, posthumous Che, his eyes wide open -- an iconic image distributed worldwide. Che pilgrims scrawl memorial graffiti on every available cranny.

"Man is nothing more than his ideas," someone wrote in French.

Another added in Italian: "He who speaks to the heart never dies."

Someone else in Spanish: "We await your orders, *comandante!*"

A decade ago, remains apparently belonging to the rebel were disinterred and taken to Cuba, although questions remain about whether the bones were Guevara's.

In an ironic twist, the press has reported that among the Bolivians benefiting from eye surgery by Cuban doctors is none other than Mario Teran, the Bolivian soldier who executed Guevara.

"Four decades after Mario Teran attempted to destroy a dream and an idea, Che returns to win yet another battle," reported Granma, the Cuban Communist Party newspaper. "Now an old man, Señor Teran can, once again, appreciate the colors of the sky and the forest, enjoy the smiles of his grandchildren and watch football games."

Here in La Higuera, Guevara's image is as ubiquitous as in any college dormitory. Impoverished villagers hawk Che memorabilia and seek tips via guide services or the repetition of dubious Che anecdotes.

Around here, there's no business like Che business.

"I don't know much about Che, but he attracts tourists, and that's a good thing," said Limbert Arteaga, 29, mayor of the nearby town of Pucara, who was overseeing a health fair featuring tuberculosis screening by Cuban physicians. "I know he was a good man. He tried to help others."

Some villagers are even willing, for a modest gratuity, to display their home altars to Santo Ernesto, a sight that probably would have appalled Guevara, an atheist.

"We ask Che that nothing bad will happen to us," said Manuel Cortez, 62, who lives a few yards from the schoolhouse where Guevara was killed, now a museum. "We have faith in Che."

Today's Che lovefest is a marked departure from the state of affairs 40 years ago, when villagers expressed suspicion and mystification. In his diary of the Bolivian campaign, Guevara writes that he was despondent about the hostility of the locals he had come to liberate, so distinct from the peasants of Cuba's Sierra Maestra.

"The *campesino* masses don't help us in anything and instead they betray us," an exasperated Guevara wrote a week before he was killed.

By the time he and the bedraggled remnants of his guerrilla band arrived here, hundreds of commandos trained by U.S. Green Berets were hot on his trail. He was captured Oct. 8 after being wounded in the foot during a firefight in a dense ravine known as El Churo, about two miles away. He weighed about 100 pounds after

months of privations. A bullet had disabled his carbine and punched a hole in his trademark beret.

"He was completely demoralized, nothing like the photo of the heroic guerrilla," said retired Bolivian Gen. Gary Prado, the captain of the squad that captured Guevara. "He was dying of hunger, dirty, disheveled. It made you sorry to see him."

Contradicting the notion that Guevara vowed never to be captured alive, Prado says the rebel willingly surrendered, seeming relieved. "I'm Che Guevara and I'm worth more to you alive than dead," he told his captors, according to Prado.

He was shackled and marched to the schoolhouse.

The next day, President Rene Barrientos, a U.S.-trained general, decided Guevara would be summarily executed. The volunteer warrant officer, Teran, fired the fatal shots sometime after 1 p.m., according to accounts.

Guevara's widely reported but probably apocryphal last words: "Fire, coward, it is a man you are going to kill!"

The autopsy cited eight bullet wounds, but none to the face that would soon be flashed across the globe.

Ernesto Guevara, saint to some, devil to others, bohemian, adventurer and implacable foe of capitalism, was dead. And the myth of the immortal Che was born.

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* Andrés D'Alessandro of The Times' Buenos Aires Bureau contributed to this report.

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Cuba remembers Che Guevara 40 years after his fall

By Rosa Tania Valdes

Source: Reuters

8 October 2007

SANTA CLARA, Cuba (Reuters) - Communist Cuba paid tribute on Monday to its poster boy, Ernesto "Che" Guevara, 40 years after the guerrilla fighter was captured and executed in Bolivia.

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The man he helped to power in Cuba's 1959 revolution, Fidel Castro, was too ill to attend a memorial rally at the mausoleum where Guevara's remains were placed when they were dug up from an unmarked Bolivian grave in 1997.

Castro marked the anniversary in a newspaper column that was read out at the rally, saying the Argentine-born doctor sowed the seeds of social conscience in Latin America and the world.

"I make a halt in day-to-day combat to bow my head, with respect and gratitude, before the exceptional fighter who fell 40 years ago," Castro wrote.

Guevara was captured by CIA-backed Bolivian soldiers on October 8, 1967, and was shot the next day in a schoolhouse. His bullet-riddled body, eyes wide open, was put on display in a hospital laundry room and later buried in an unmarked grave. He was 39.

About 10,000 Cuban workers and students gathered on Monday before a monument of the guerrilla fighter carrying a rifle in Santa Clara, the city in central Cuba that Guevara "liberated" in 1958 in the decisive battle of the Cuban revolution.

"Che was loved, in spite of being stern and demanding. We would give our life for him," said 80-year-old Tomas Alba, who fought under Guevara's command.

A billboard quoted Castro saying: "We want you to be like Che."

Guevara remains a national hero in Cuba where he is remembered for promoting unpaid voluntary work by working shirtless on building sites or hauling sacks of sugar. To this day, he appears on a Cuban banknote cutting sugar cane with a machete in the fields.

He was central bank governor and industry minister in the early years of Castro's rule. He advocated nationalizing private businesses and dreamed of a classless society where money would be abolished and wages unnecessary.

'MANY VIETNAM'S'

But he left Cuba in 1966 to start a new anti-U.S. guerrilla movement in the

jungle of eastern Bolivia, hoping to create "two, three, many Vietnams" in Latin America.

Posters of the long-haired Guevara wearing a soldier's beret with a single star turned the revolutionary outlaw into an international folk hero and symbol of rebellion.

The image, based on a picture taken by Cuban photographer Alberto Korda, has been massively reproduced on T-shirts, mugs, baseball caps, Swatch watches, bikinis and other products of the capitalist consumer society he fought against.

Fidel Castro, 81, has not appeared in public since an intestinal illness forced him to hand over power to his brother Raul 14 months ago. As Castro fades from the political stage and Cubans debate reforms to an inefficient state-run economy, no one is advocating Guevara's economic policies anymore.

In a speech at the memorial rally, Communications Minister Ramiro Valdes said Castro "is recovering" and urged Cubans to unite around Raul and the ruling Communist Party.

"We will never renounce our Communist ideals," said Valdes, a former guerrilla commander in the Sierra Maestra mountains.

Citing Guevara's call to resist U.S. imperialism wherever it exists, Valdes said Cuba would make no concessions to Washington's demands for political change on the island. Cuba would never come "under the Yankee boot," Valdes said.

Cuba stopped exporting armed revolution to Latin America in the 1980s. One of the last shipments of weapons was used in Chile to ambush military dictator Augusto Pinochet in 1986. Pinochet survived the attack.

The one-party state built by Castro with Guevara's help 90 miles away from the United States has endured CIA-backed invasion plans and assassination plots, and the hostility of 10 U.S. administrations.

"In almost five decades of extensive covert efforts to roll back the Cuban revolution, the capture and death of Che stands as really the only CIA success story," said Peter Kornbluh, an expert on Latin America at the National Security Archives, a public interest documentation center in

Washington.

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Doctors in shadow of Che
by Lola Almudevar

Source: Miami Herald

7 October 2007

In the unpretentious courtyard of Residencia Solar, a hostel in this small town in southeastern Bolivia, Cuban doctors take their lunch break.

On the television, a newscaster in Havana is recounting events from their Caribbean island.

But soon the men and women will return to work at the local hospital, Nuestro Senor de Malta, where the body of famed revolutionary Ernesto "Che" Guevara was displayed publicly after he was shot dead 40 years ago on Tuesday.

Guevara, an Argentine who played a leading role in the Cuban revolution, came to Bolivia in November 1966, intent on inspiring further uprisings to challenge U.S influence and ruling elites in Latin America.

Less than a year later the Bolivian military, with CIA assistance, captured him and shortly afterward executed him in the nearby village of La Higuera.

He had failed to win widespread support among Bolivia 's peasants for his ideas and guerrilla tactics. Some Bolivians still don't think much of Guevara.

"There was nothing of the heroic guerrilla about him," said Gary Prado, the Bolivian army captain who captured Guevara in 1967. "It was a sorry

sight to see him . . . dirty and banged up. He was depressed obviously because of the circumstances -- his dream was over, and his adventure had ended in failure."

Today, Bolivia's leftist president, Evo Morales, embraces the defense of poor peasants and indigenous and maintains close relations with Cuba.

Yet the Cuban medical personnel in Vallegrande still face the same suspicion and hostility toward outsiders that played a part in Guevara's downfall.

"People say we have come here without papers; that we are not really doctors," said gynecologist Ledecel Gamez. "But we came here with all of our professional documentation, immigration papers, everything. From the start we wanted to show that we are professionals with a job to do. Not part of a plan to militarize Bolivia, as the opponents say."

There are 33 Cuban medical personnel in Vallegrande and the surrounding area -- with more than 800 spread throughout Bolivia. Cuba will have financed the construction of 44 new hospitals by the end of 2007 in this, the poorest country in South America.

Even before Morales came to power 18 months ago, Cuba had been cooperating with Bolivia in the health field since 1985. But with the political alliance between Morales and Fidel Castro now stronger, that help has increased.

According to the Cuban Embassy in the capital city of La Paz, the Cuban International Medical Brigade had provided more than six million free consultations by the end of August and saved almost eight thousand lives.

But residents of Vallegrande, which is in Santa Cruz, one of the wealthier and most fervently anti-Morales regions of Bolivia, are unconvinced.

"Maybe they are helping with the development in this town. They must have helped some people. But I think they come here to try and influence us with

communism and their ideas from Cuba and Guevara. It's pure politics," said student Sandro Maldonado.

Residents here, particularly the older generation, still hang pictures of Guevara in their living rooms and believe the man who first trained as a doctor can perform miracles. But that does not mean they support the Cuban doctors.

"I sometimes go to mass for Che Guevara because he was a good person. But that does not mean I support Evo Morales or socialism," says Consuelo Medina, a local hotel owner.

This week her hotel will be fully booked as thousands of people from all over the world descend on Vallegrande for commemorative events and to discuss Guevara's ideas.

"Che is greater and more present than ever -- he is more acclaimed and his ideas bring people together. His influence has grown and you can see that in the way that our leaders admire him," said Chato Peredo, president of the Che Guevara Foundation and a former Bolivian guerrilla.

But when the visitors leave, it will only be the ailments in Vallegrande that bring Cuban doctors and local people together.

Physician Ileana Marina, the coordinator of the Cuban medical staff in Vallegrande, says that only strengthens her resolve.

"The propaganda makes us stronger -- in fact, it makes us laugh because in reality we only came here to give, and we are giving the most precious gift, which is health. We give it without barriers or frontiers based on color or wealth or status," she said, wearing a Che Guevara T-shirt.

"Vallegrande is an incalculable and symbolic story -- for us to be here, in

the place where Ernesto Che Guevara was assassinated means we are representing Che. It is the greatest thing we can do. It makes us proud."

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